

THE MATHEMATICAL GAZETTE  
A SCHOOLBOY'S LETTER, 1732

The Hon. T. Lennard Barrett writes to his aunt from Harrow *Original spelling retained*. Barrett Lennard Archives (D/DL C43/3).

Dear Aunt,

March the 29, 1732

As you have always been exceeding good to me, for which I shall never be able to make you a Return, I beg you'd now please to grant me this Request viz. to Leave off Learning Mathematicks, this Dear Madam may att first seem an unreasonable thing, but I hope the Reasons which I am now going to give you will make you, according to your usual goodness, grant me this Request.

You Very well know, Dear Madam, that I have been an old Border, & therefore ought not to be slighted by Weston, which I have been very much. For This Morning I heard that Mr Weston was going out with some off the Gentlemen to teach them to measure Ground; upon this Report I took my hat and stood among the Rest off those who were going, when to my Great Surprise Mr Weston came down Stairs and bid me begon, for I only wanted to be Idle & told me I shou'd not go with him. This has netled me very much because the Boys he took out with him were no farther advanc'd in Mathematick's than I, As for his saying I only wanted to be Idle, I hope you will believe me when I tell you upon my Honour that the Chief and only end of my Desire to go out a measuring was to be instructed in that Art. Neither do I think I ever gave him half so much Reason to think me prone to Idleness as Barnet and Philips who went with him. If You will be so good then, Dear Madam, to grant me my earnest Request of Leaving off Mathematicks, I shall be exceedingly oblig'd to you.

You may Rember, Dear Aunt, that I have often told you that Mr Evans taught me Mathematicks in private, I shall still continue to Learn Mathematicks of Mr Evans who is more able to teach me than Weston. For I can assure you I have learnt more from Mr Evans than I ever did from Weston. I hope I have now given you Sufficient Reasons for my Desiring to Leave Learning Mathematicks from Mr Weston; I therefore beg you'd be so good to me (Dear Madam) as to Grant my Desire. There is an old Saying one Story is good till another is told, but I can assure you on my Honour that what I have told you is true. I beg therefore that if you grant me my Request, that you will not be mov'd by Weston's fawning and funning, who cares no more for you nor I than what money he can make off us, else he woul'd not have us'd you in the manner he did when you came from Lady Lennards, to give you old heartychoaks for supper & to Lay you in Bed with frowsy Bet Rosam, to be devoured by Buggs.

The Quarter is now begining, therefore tis a very fit time to Leave off Mathematicks. I beg you'd Let me have a Letter from you as soon as possible, in which I hope to recieve Orders to tell Mr Weston that I Don't Learn Mathematicks any Longer off him, which will be an inexpressible pleasure to,

Dear Aunt,

Your most Dutifull Nephew,

T. Lennard Barrett.

P.S. I shall take Double pains in Latin and everything else. I shall be so far from losing the Mathematicks I have already got that I don't doubt to make great improvements in them under Mr Evans' Care. Pray Don't tell Weston I Learn of Mr Evans.

[Per Dr. B. E. Lawrence.]