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ALS H403

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
May 18 1892

My dear Foster

Do you want me to go to the Society of Authors Dinner? I am steward & have taken my ticket – but as I cannot hear a word that is said & there will be nothing to look at, I would gladly be let off – If necessary I could make a point of catching a cold on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Is Mr Leach going to publish his lecture on “Hardy Climbers & Creepers”<sup>1</sup> They are just the things I want to know about. What with gales of wind, cold and lack of rain gardening here is pursued under difficulties – but we are getting on by degrees.

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> Mr W. C. Leach, FRHS, read a paper on hardy climbing and trailing plants to the Royal Horticultural Society on 17 May 1892.

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ALS H404

Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
May 23 1892

My dear Foster

What unaccountable People the Department folks are! I made sure they had sent you a duplicate of the inclosed papers so did not send them on.

Very glad you don't want me at the dinner.

We shall be delighted to see you here. My wife is writing to yours to arrange for any time that may be convenient.

And I shall get heaps of wrinkles out of you about the garden which is my chief interest in life at present.

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

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ALS H405

Hodeslea  
 Staveley Road  
 Eastbourne  
 May 25 1892

My dear Foster

I said at the end of my last note that my wife was about to write to yours to arrange for a visit.

Unfortunately early yesterday morning the poor dear was seized with a very sharp attack of abdominal pain & I had to have Farnell<sup>1</sup> who came twice yesterday & eventually succeeded in palliating it. However, it's not gone yet & she will be in bed for days I expect.

It is all along of that mysterious something that nobody can make out but which I believe to be a [maculear] or omental tumour – I live in constant dread of what it may do next. However, I hope we shall tick over & see you here before long yet.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> Henry Dawson Farnell, FRCS (1852–1923), Huxley's doctor in Eastbourne.

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ALS H406

Hodeslea  
 Staveley Road  
 Eastbourne  
 June 12 1892

My dear Foster

I have just received the inclosed from A. H. Hassall<sup>1</sup> who I thought was as extinct as the dodo. Unless I do him wrong his paper is likely to be more voluminous than luminous – but it will be respectable and I am quite willing to present it if you see no objection and will instruct Rix to write to Fortnum for the MS.

Please let me have back the letter with a line to say if I may write to Hassall that the paper is received.

1892

My wife has been having considerable ups & downs – but I am happy to say she is, on the whole, much better – We had to give up Oxford but I hope she will be well enough by Saturday to receive the Hookers, who have planned to pay us a visit – and we shall look for you, if all goes well, later on.

Ever yours very kindly

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Hill Hassall (1817–1894), physician and public health advocate. ‘On the colour of the leaves of plants and their autumnal changes’ was received by the Royal Society on 21 June 1892, and communicated by Huxley in November. It was published as an appendix to Hassall’s *The narrative of a busy life: an autobiography*, London, New York, Longmans, Green, 1893.

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ALS H407

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
June 27 1892

My dear Foster

My wife has been writing to Mrs Foster to arrange for your visit which will be heartily welcome.

Now I don’t want to croak. No one knows better than I, the fatal necessity for any one in your position – more than that, the duty in many cases of plunging into public functions, & all the guttle, guzzle, and gammon therewith connected.

But do let me hold myself up as the horrid example of what comes of that sort of thing – for men who have to work as you are doing & I have done. To be sure you are a “lungy” man & I am a “livery” man – so that your chances of escaping candle-snuff accumulations with melancholic prostration are much better. Nevertheless take care – the pitcher is a very valuable piece of crockery & I don’t want to live to see it cracked by going to the well once too often.

I am in great spirits now about the new University movement and have told the rising generation that this old hulk is ready to be towed out into line of battle, if they think fit – which is more commendable to my public spirit than my prudence.<sup>1</sup>

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> In July 1892 Huxley accepted the presidency of the Association for Promoting a Professorial University for London. For Huxley and London University Reform see *Life and letters*, vol. 2, pp. 307–317.

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Huxley Papers 4:361

Shelford

[1892 or 1893]

My dear Huxley

I am very vexed about the 16th but they fixed the date a long while ago, to suit what I thought was my convenience – can't shift now – but I hope we shall be able to find some other time.

Don't you worrit about me I'm all right. I never let myself be overworked & I never whip up the unwilling horse. I really don't work very hard – only I manage to impress folk with the idea that I am working hard.

And remember you did not take to gardening until after you were hit. I have used the remedy for years. Whenever I have had a hard bit, I take to the garden – & think I am doing a religious duty while I am digging.

Ever thine

M. Foster

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ALS H409

Cors-y-Gedol Hotel

Barmouth

Wales

Aug. 23 1892

My dear Foster

I am very glad you think I have done rightly about the P.C.;<sup>1</sup> but in fact I could hardly help myself.

Years & years ago I was talking to Donnelly about these things & I told him that so far as myself was concerned – I would have nothing to do with official decorations – didn't object to other people having them especially heads of offices like Hooker & Flower – but preferred to keep clear myself – But I added that there was one thing I did not mind telling him because no English Government would ever act upon my opinion – and that was that the P.C. was a fit & proper recognition for science & letters – I have no doubt that he has kept this in mind ever since – in fact Lord Salisbury's letter (which was very handsome) shewed he had been told of my obiter dictum – Donnelly was the first channel of inquiry whether I would accept, and was very strong that I should.

1892

So you see if I had wished to refuse it would have been difficult & ungracious. But, on the whole, I thought the precedent good – Playfair tells me he tried to get it done in the case of Faraday & Babbage thirty years ago<sup>2</sup> – & the thing broke down. Moreover a wicked sense of the comedy of adorning such a pernicious heretic – helped a good deal.

The worst of it is I have just had a summons to go to Osborne<sup>3</sup> on Thursday and it is as much as I shall be able to do.

We have been in S. Wales in the neighbourhood of the Colliers & are on our way to the Wallers for the Festival week at Gloucester. We hope to get back to Eastbourne in the latter half of September & find the house clean swept & garnished. After that by the way is not nice to say that we shall hope to have a visit from Mrs. Foster & you.

With our love to you both.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley.

I am glad you are resting – but oh why another Congress!

<sup>1</sup> In mid-1892 Huxley was admitted to the Privy Council.

<sup>2</sup> Playfair had recommended to the Prince Consort that eminence in science should be recognised by the Crown and that Michael Faraday (1791–1867) and Charles Babbage (1791–1871) should be the first to be honoured by being appointed to the Privy Council. Babbage, however, refused unless he alone were appointed. This was not accepted and no further steps were taken. See Wemyss Reid, *Memoirs and correspondence of Lyon Playfair*, London, Cassell, 1899, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Osborne House, Isle of Wight.

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ALS H410

Athenaeum Club

Pall Mall

Oct. 8 1892

My dear Foster

Was not Tennyson a Fellow of the Royal Society?<sup>1</sup> If so, should not the P. & C.<sup>2</sup> take some notice of his death & delegate somebody to the funeral to represent them? Very likely you have thought of it already.

1892

He was the only modern poet – in fact I think the only poet since the time of Lucretius – who has taken the trouble to understand the work & tendency of the men of science.

I hope you have got back properly renovated & that Mrs Foster is equally flourishing.

We have been gadding about on the whole very pleasantly & properly – though my wife has had one or two bouts – but not bad ones.

I am just up for the day tailoring & trusteeing.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup>Tennyson was elected FRS in 1865; he died on 6 October 1892.

<sup>2</sup>President and Council.

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ALS H411

Hodeslea

Staveley Road

Eastbourne

November 9 1892

My dear Foster

I enjoyed our dinner very much – but I ate or drank something I ought not & developed a jolly disturbance in the course of the next two days. However I am all right again now & consequently unpenitent.

Dyer is capable of making me defend Judas Iscariot or even Gladstone if he attacked them. I hope he has not hardened Sidgwick's<sup>1</sup> head about the Gresham University.

I am delighted to say that Paget<sup>2</sup> has taken up the game & I am going to a Comm<sup>c</sup> of the University this day week – to try my powers of persuasion. If the senate can only be got to see where salvation lies and strike hard without any fooling over details we shall do a great stroke of business for the future generations of Londoners.

As to the physiology book<sup>3</sup> I do not exactly see that I have any right to ban anybody (& especially you) from publishing anything – Of course I do not want the Elementary Lessons to be extinguished – but they have had a long innings.

1892

I leave it to you absolutely to decide the question – so as to be fair all round.

I inclose a letter from Hassall. I have told him to send the papers straight to the R.S. & I would advise you of it. Was the first any good?

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

What an awful business about poor Connie Lubbock that was. Such a charming child as I knew her.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900), one of the commissioners considering statutes for a proposal for Gresham University in London.

<sup>2</sup> Sir James Paget, first baronet (1814–1899), surgeon and vice-chancellor of the University of London.

<sup>3</sup> M. Foster and Lewis E. Shore, *Physiology for beginners*, London, Macmillan, 1894. See letter 363.

<sup>4</sup> Hon. Constance Mary Buxton, wife of Sydney Buxton, under-secretary to the Colonial Office, and daughter of John Lubbock, died suddenly on 3 November 1892, aged thirty-two.

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ALS H412

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Dec 5 1892

My dear Foster

The braying of my donkey has prevented me from sending a word of sympathy about the noise made by yours. Mr Carl [*sic*] Pearson is, as you will see more fully, I hope tomorrow, in the “Times”, a nice person to have to transact confidential business with!<sup>1</sup> However, I am not altogether sorry, as he is about the most impracticable pedant I ever met with.

Who has got hold of the Times? Somebody who was at the dinner appears to have written the leader.<sup>2</sup> Though possibly they may have got the short-hand writer’s proof soon enough. The other article simply shews that the writer has never been on the Council & has no notion of what our real difficulties are. Little Beale’s<sup>3</sup> kick up in the Times today (all meant for me – I fancy) is droll – if he expects me to notice him he is mistaken.

I talked both with Kelvin & Evans & they were of one mind the attacks (I hear there was a worse in the Standard) had best be let alone.

Let not thine heart be vexed because of these sons of Belial – It is all sound & fury with nothing at the bottom of it & will leave no trace a year hence. I have been abused a deal worse – without the least effect on my constitution or my comfort.

In fact, I am told that Harrison is abusing me just now like a pickpocket in the Fortnightly<sup>4</sup> & I only make the philosophical reflection, No Wonder! & doubt if the reading it is worth half a crown.

Ever yours affectionately

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> Karl Pearson had sent an open letter to Huxley in *The Times* stating his reasons for his resignation of the secretaryship of the Association for Promoting a Professorial University for London (*The Times*, Dec. 3 1892, p. 11, issue 33812, col. E). Huxley replied to Pearson in *The Times* ('A Professorial University for London', *The Times*, Dec. 6, 1892, p. 11, issue 33814, col. E) stating that he was under the impression that the proceedings of the committee meeting were then still confidential.

<sup>2</sup> The anniversary meeting and dinner was reported in the leader of *The Times* (Thursday, Dec. 1, 1892, p. 9, issue 33810, col. D). A correspondent had written 'A criticism of the Royal Society' published the same day (*The Times*, Thursday, Dec. 1, 1892, p. 4, issue 33810, col. D) in which he criticises the exclusiveness, scholasticism, and depreciation of standards of the Royal Society.

<sup>3</sup> Lionel Smith Beale (1828–1906), professor of medicine and physician to King's College Hospital, had written a letter to *The Times* in support of the leader and article of 1 December to which Huxley refers.

<sup>4</sup> Frederic Harrison, 'Mr Huxley's controversies', *Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1892: 417–437; T. H. Huxley, 'An apologetic irenicon', *Fortnightly Review*, Nov. 1892: 557–571; 'Mr Huxley's ironicon [sic]', *Fortnightly Review*, Dec. 1892: 713–721.

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ALS H413

Hodeslea

Eastbourne

Dec 16/18[?] 1892

My dear Foster

You will have seen in "Nature" this week & I hope approved of my "apologia" for the R.S. Probably you will not have recognised it as mine on account of the extreme mildness of its tone! But I thought it best not to write in my own name & so was careful of the editorial judiciality.<sup>1</sup>

If there were no other reason than the publication of this stupid malevolence you must not think of giving up the Secretaryship for some time to come – Depend upon it there is no one in the Society except perhaps the Bealian homuncules, who would but be uncommonly sorry to lose you. & the "Criticism" will be forgotten three months hence.

But there is another very strong reason & that is the necessity of filling the place with the right sort of man – they don't grow on the bushes.

One could do no more ill service to a friend than to let him outstay his welcome in such a post. If I had ever heard a word indicative of such a feeling in the Society you should know it. But everything that has come my way is just in the opposite direction. I do not believe there is any officer more popular with the Fellows.

1892

So possess your soul in patience and do not think of giving up until you feel the thing too much of a burden.

With best wishes from us all to you all.

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

Are you inclined to join our Association?<sup>2</sup> I think we are going to get something done as the Senate of the U.L. has come into line with us & I hope University College will do the same.

<sup>1</sup> 'Criticism of the Royal Society', *Nature*, 1892, 47: 145–146.

<sup>2</sup> The Association for Promoting a Professorial University for London.

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ALS H414

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Dec 23 1892

My dear Foster

I had a hard morning's work at University College yesterday – and what with the meeting of the previous evening & that infernal fog – I felt so seedy that I made up my mind to go straight home and be quiet.

I telegraphed to you as soon as I reached Eastbourne – but it turned out that there was no telegraph station at Shelford – so I directed to Trinity College & hope it reached you in time.

There has been a bitter north-easter all day here & if the like has prevailed at Ham<sup>1</sup> I am glad I kept out of it – as I am by no means fit to cope with anything of that kind to-day. I do not think I was bound to offer myself up to the names of the departed, however satisfactory that might have been to the poor old man. Peace be with him!

1892

Anyhow a good 2 days' work was done [illegible] the University & I hope that University College will now come into line with us, & that will be conclusive.

It will be greatly appreciated if you write from us. I told Weldon<sup>2</sup> to write to you.  
Ever yours very kindly  
T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> Richard Owen's funeral.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Frank Raphael Weldon (1860–1906), then Jodrell Professor of Zoology at University College London and member of the Association for Promoting a Professorial University for London.

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ALS H415

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Dec 28 1892

My dear Foster

It did not occur to me that even a Government officer could be such an ass as to put "Shelford" under Great – I would not believe the clerk when he said there was no Shelford & made him look again.

You will have seen that the Critic has "one for his nob".<sup>1</sup> These people are sure to tell some big lie if you give them rope enough.

Kelvin is down here staying with his brother-in-law. He is convinced that Dewar did not write the criticism – but can make no guess who did. I have heard Horsley suggested but cannot believe that horrible – Item Brudenell Carter – was he ever up for the Royal Society?<sup>2</sup>

Depend upon it, it was the right course to have all this persecuting rubbish dragged out to light. If I had not allowed myself to be influenced against my own judgement – the Critic would have been answered in the "Times" at once – But that is put straight.<sup>3</sup>

I am very glad you will join the Association. C.P.<sup>4</sup> is not a bad fellow- but only one of these just men, who need no repentance, but do greatly need common sense & knowledge of the world.

1893

I wish somebody in University College were strong enough to keep that weary wordy pedant Young<sup>5</sup> in order – I hear he rules the road there.

Ever yours very kindly

T. H. Huxley

Just received your note. Glad you like the cuff.

<sup>1</sup> Critic, 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, Dec. 24, 1892, p. 8, issue 33830, col. A. A letter replying to Huxley's anonymous writing in *Nature* criticising the exclusivity and permanence of the council members and questioning the reason for Lord Kelvin's election as president of the Royal Society.

<sup>2</sup> James Dewar (1842–1923), chemist and physicist, Fullerian Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution; Victor Alexander Haden Horsley (1857–1916), physiologist and surgeon; Robert Brudenell Carter (1828–1918), ophthalmic surgeon who was on the editorial staff of *The Times*.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from "The Writer of the Article in *Nature*", *The Times*, Dec. 27, 1892, p. 5, issue 33832, col. F. Huxley replied that to his knowledge "no other candidate was so much as mentioned in the council".

<sup>4</sup> Presumably Carl (Karl) Pearson.

<sup>5</sup> Sir George Young, third baronet (1837–1930), civil servant and member of the council of University College, London, who took a prominent part in the Association for Promoting a Professorial University for London.

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ALS H416

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Jan 4 1893

My dear Foster

The "Critic" has put his head out again & as you will see I have given him another sound whack on it.<sup>1</sup> I hope it will not be necessary to do any more. But I wish you could let me have the exact facts about the water company business in case I may want to use them.<sup>2</sup>

I have a strong suspicion that our friend J. E.<sup>3</sup> must have been working for the Presidency more vigorously than was known – & that "Critic" has got hold of the fact & imagines all the officers were with him.

If this is the true solution of the mystery I quite understand why he should be so anxious that "Critics" attacks should remain unanswered?

We have been spending a dullest Christmas here as neither dare venture to London this weather.

Best wishes to you all

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> The correspondence between the anonymous critic and Huxley regarding the election of Lord Kelvin continued. Critic, 'Letter to the Editor', *The Times*, Tuesday, Jan. 3, 1893, p. 6, issue 33838, col. B; The author of the article in *Nature*, 'Letter to the Editor', *The Times*, Jan. 4, 1893, p. 4, issue 33839, col. D.

<sup>2</sup> The critic in his letter to *The Times* on 24 December had argued that the Royal Society and the London County Council had set up a "quasi-independent commission of inquiry into the London water supply, alongside of the Royal Commission now dealing with the same subject", which was not a question of improving natural knowledge, but political and commercial, and therefore not an affair of the Royal Society. See following letter.

<sup>3</sup> John Evans.

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Huxley Papers 4:363

Shelford

Cambs

Jan. 5. [1893]

Dear Huxley

The critic evidently does not mean to let the matter drop, & I take it we shall have to meet him. Moreover the second letter yesterday in big type means that some one in Times, probably Brudenell Carter, is backing him up. I take it big type means the Times thinks the matter important. I wonder at Brudenell Carter taking it up – since he is a candidate this year perhaps he thinks he can force our hands.

As to water business, not having documents at hand I can't be quite sure of some details, but have written to Rix to send me copies of letters. In the main it was as follows. The L.C.C. wrote to us to ask us if we could give them any information about the viability of pathogenic organisms in water, such as water supply –

Since I wrote above I have looked up my copy of minutes of Council – which I now send you – please let me have them back when you have done with them.

I have only to add that the Ctee – which was chosen from the then council – appointed Marshall Ward & young Percy Frankland to conduct the inquiry<sup>1</sup> – that the Gov. Grant gave the £250 – that the L.C.C. afterwards gave another £250 – & that the Treas. is applying to Gov. Grant for a corresponding additional £250 – & that we have added Burdon-Sanderson to the Ctee.

The 1st report of the Ctee is in the Proc. R.S. – the 2nd report is just about to be presented. They have already got out some interesting results, & are working very well.

All this of course was entered into before the Water Commission was started.

Frankland (junr) at a meeting of the Ctee, told us he had been asked to give evidence before the Commission, & wanted to know whether the Ctee objected to his doing so. We told him that the inquiry he was conducting for us was a scientific inquiry (though having practical bearings) & that his relations to the Ctee in no way interfered with his giving evidence – I believe Marshall Ward has also been before the Commission, but am not quite sure.

You will note how Critic wrests this matter for his own ends – as he has done the President business.

I really don't think J. E. did very much – of course it was very clear to all his friends that he wished to be President – & had he been acceptable to the Society I should have been glad to see him there for he has worked hard for the Soc. This is what Critic calls “if I had my way.”

Were you not rather amazed at the letter just below yours in yesterdays Times.<sup>2</sup> Poor old Owen had only been in his grave a few weeks before his mantle fluttered on someone else's shoulder. But old Owen had the courage to carry the matter to the Society chief – whereas Critic remained quiet at Anniversary meeting with his MS's thunderbolt in his pocket.

Ever thine  
M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> Harry Marshall Ward (1854–1906), professor of botany, Royal Indian Engineering College; Percy Faraday Frankland (1858–1946), then professor of chemistry, University College, Dundee.

<sup>2</sup> “A Fellow of above thirty years' standing who has served more than once on the Council”, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *The Times*, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 1893, p. 4, issue 33839, col. D – the author endorses the remarks of “the Critic” on the system of employment of Fellows of the Royal Society as paid secretaries rather than honorary secretaries.

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ALS H417

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Jan 8 1893

My dear Foster

I diagnose symptoms in the “Times” pretty accurately & I was quite sure from the first that Buckle<sup>1</sup> thought he had got hold of safe information & (in that case, very properly) meant to worry the business out – that was why I thought it ought to be answered in the “Times” – and I think still that an official statement of the facts about the water business ought to be sent to the Times.

I should send the passages I have marked in red with the address of the names of the persons appointed by the Com<sup>e</sup>. to conduct the inquiry – with the further particulars mentioned in your letter.

I do not know what course you & your colleagues may have determined upon – but my veracity is pretty deeply pledged in this matter to Buckle – and I should like to justify myself for the strong accusation I have made.

Of course I have a right to use confirmed minutes of Council – But I should like to use (without mentioning my authority of course) the further information in your letter.

Of course if an official statement is made I need not bother my head any more.

I wish this beastly weather were over to-day is vile – even here.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> George Earle Buckle (1854–1935), editor of *The Times*.

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ALS H418

Hodeslea  
 Staveley Road  
 Eastbourne  
 Jan 15 1893

My dear Foster

I did not mean that the R.S. should take any notice of “Critic” – but that the President or Secretary should send a statement of the facts about the water business to the Editor of the Times – who could put it in with the ordinary formula “The following statement has been sent to me for publication.”

Now that “critic” has not come up to Times – I do not think he has another sound in him – it is all the easier to do without sacrificing dignity.

I do not mind telling you (but keep the knowledge strictly to yourself) that I have had direct communication with Buckle on the subject & have said to him a great deal more than could be put into print.

However, I do not think it is needful or desirable for me to meddle any more so long as critic keeps quiet – And even if he does I would rather leave everything to the effect of a plain official statement of the facts – one of the chief uses of which will be to disquiet Buckle with his informant – The “Times” very much objects to having mares’ nests built in its columns.

Ever yours very kindly

T. H. Huxley

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Huxley Papers 4:367

Nine Wells  
Great Shelford  
Cambridge  
Jan. 15 93

My dear Huxley

I think that on the whole you ought to come unless the day should be a very horrible one in which case you would have ample excuse. If you have to speak you will know what you can say. I take it great stress will be laid on his having got the Museum built.<sup>1</sup>

You did not send me back my “minutes” if you do so at once, I will prepare statement & if my colleagues agree send it in – but I rather fancy the Times means to drop the hot potato – in which case is not silence the best?

Ever thine  
M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> Meeting about the Owen memorial.

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ALS H419

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Jan 16 1893

My dear Foster

I am inclined to think that I had better attend the meeting at all costs. But I do not see why I should speak unless I am called upon to do so.

I have no earthly objection to say all that I honestly can of good about Owen’s work – and there is much to be said about some of it – on the contrary, I should be well pleased to do so.

But I have no reparation to make – if the business were to come over again, I should do as I did – my opinion of the man’s character is exactly what it was – and under the circumstances there is a sort of hypocrisy about volunteering anything – which goes against my grain.

1893

The best position for me would be to be asked to second the resolution for the statue – then the proposer would have the field of personal fiction & butter-boat all to himself.

I am not sure that the time has not gone by for the statement – But “Critic” may come out of his hole again in which case I would have the statement ready.

I enclose the minutes.

Ever yours  
T. H. H.

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ALS H420

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
May 23 1893

My dear Foster

Your letter has been following me about.

I had not got rid of my influenza at Oxford, so the exertion & the dinner parties together played the deuce with me.<sup>1</sup>

We had got so far as the Gt. Northern Hotel on our way to some connections in Lincolnshire – when I had to give it up & retreat here – to begin convalescing again.

I do not feel sure of coming to the Harvey affair after all<sup>2</sup> – But if I do it will be alone and I think I had better accept the hospitality of the college – which will by no means be so jolly as Shelford – but probably more prudent – considering the necessity of dining out.

The fact is, my dear friend, I am getting old.

I am very sorry to hear you have been doing your influenza also – It’s a beastly thing – as I have it – no symptoms except going flop.

Ever yours,  
T. H. Huxley.

Nobody sees that the lecture is a very orthodox production on the text (if there is such a one), “Satan the Prince of this world.”

<sup>1</sup> Huxley had delivered the Romanes lecture in Oxford on 18 May 1893 on ‘Evolution and ethics’, *Collected essays*, vol. 9, pp. 46–116. See Desmond, *Huxley*, pp. 596–599.

<sup>2</sup> Huxley delivered a speech at the Harvey dinner at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, on 21 June 1893.

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ALS H421

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Nov 10 1893

My dear Foster

Best thanks for your thoughtfulness for me. But I work for a ticket & got my doctor's leave yesterday my wife having unnecessarily called him in.

So if the weather is no worse tomorrow – (there's an easterly gale blowing here at present) – you will see me. Perhaps we might lunch at Athenaeum afterwards?

Ever yours  
T. H. H.

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ALS H422

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Nov 29 1893

My dear Foster

I am in rather a shakey & voiceless condition & unless I am more up to the mark tomorrow morning, I shall have to forego the dinner<sup>1</sup> & what is worse the chat with you afterwards.

I believe the influenza's demon isn't exorcised yet – there are no pigs about on Beachy Head as I would wish him to change residence.

Ever yours very kindly  
T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup>Royal Society annual dinner.

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Huxley Papers 4:369

Nine Wells  
Great Shelford  
Cambridge  
Dec. 2. 93

My dear Huxley

I need hardly say that I was sorely disappointed but still more sorry for the cause. Let me have a line to say that it was not the influenza after all. The dinner was very successful and in spite of Kelvin & Stokes being of course tedious, every one almost was gratified. Your absence was of course by [word missing] many of us, but I am really glad you did not come. The Friday morning was detestable – & my first thought on seeing what sort of day it was, was relief that you had not to travel.

You will doubtless have seen today's Times.<sup>1</sup> From the look which Buckle gave me at the dinner I feel sure he had a bowie knife up his sleeve. What makes him (Buckle) play this game towards me?

This letter only confirms my previous diagnosis as to the writer.

The Go. Grant Ctee refused last summer an application for a grant for experiments or rather for apparatus to be set up in the Royal Institution anent liquid gases. Taking what the article in the Times says about the Grant Ctee and what it says about Trinity College, together leaves I think no doubt.<sup>2</sup>

If you are well & all right tell me what you think we ought to do.

Ever thine  
M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> An anonymous correspondent wrote a long letter to *The Times*, in which he heavily criticised the Royal Society for its emphasis on biological subjects, its selection of members of council including the over-representation of fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, and its allocation of funding. *The Times*, Dec. 2, 1893, p. 11, issue 34124, col. A.

<sup>2</sup> From the next letter, Foster is probably implicating James Dewar as the author of the letters.

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ALS H423

Hodeslea  
 Staveley Road  
 Eastbourne  
 Dec 4 1893

My dear Foster

I read the "Times" article when it came out; and I have read it again since I received your letter this morning – it is much more cautiously written than last year's epistle – But coarser & with a more obvious animus.

The most execrable blunder if it is not rather a wilful misrepresentation is about the new members of Council – The rule of putting on a proportion of men who have not served before is kept out of sight.

My impression is that for the present the thing should be left alone. But next year if I had to deal with the matter, I should put Dewar<sup>1</sup> on the Council.

Secondly, if I were President, I should deal with the whole question of the administration of the Society in my address – of course without any allusion to the articles.

But I cannot honestly say that Kelvin's last effort impresses me with the notion that he is the man to do this sort of thing well & it had better not be done at all than done badly.

In the meanwhile – say three months hence – might it not be well to appoint a Committee of the Council plus the Presidents of the chief societies in London – or delegates appointed by them – to consider the relation between the R.S. & the others as recipients & publishers of papers and otherwise – and see what can be thrashed out?

Just turn this over in your mind.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

I am better – but have to mind my Ps & Qs.

<sup>1</sup> James Dewar, see letter 342, note 2.

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Huxley Papers 4:371

Nine Wells  
Great Shelford  
Cambridge  
Dec. 5. 1893

My dear Huxley

I am sure you will want to come to Tyndall's funeral,<sup>1</sup> and it seems unnatural to suggest that you should not. But if, as is exceedingly probable, the weather is bad, the risk for you will be very great, even though I shall be there, and ready to watch that you do not unnecessarily expose yourself.

I of course know nothing of the arrangements, having only seen notice in the Times.

I shall be in London tomorrow Wednesday, up to 4.30 pm – at the R.S. part of the time at least – i.e. in the morning and from 3 pm onwards. I shall be at R.S. on Thursday also from 11am to 6pm. I tell you this in case you may wish to communicate with me.

I feel confident in leaving the decision with Mrs Huxley – and this time you will be fully obedient.

As to the Times while I feel that the officers & Council can do nothing – & that it is undesirable for any one to controvert the writer in the Times, yet seeing that he accuses us or rather me of unfairly spending the £4000, I can't help feeling that something should be done.

Your last remarks lead me to send you the herewith enclosed document which, though private of course, can certainly be seen by you. You will see that we have for some time been on the line you suggest.

With kind regards to Mrs Huxley, I won't attempt to say anything about the blow it must be to both of you.

Ever thine  
M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> John Tyndall died on 4 December following an accidental overdose of chloral administered by his wife.

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ALS H424

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Dec 12 1893

My dear Foster

We got back last evening – I was very used up – to my shame, best said, far more done than my wife.

Mrs James & her friend who took us in turned out to be wonderfully kind good people & made us stay till Monday morning. Then we took train to Godalming & had a look at Leonard's new home & got here by four or five o'clock.

We went to see Mrs Tyndall on Sunday morning and talked over many matters with her. She has a wonderfully strong nature, but I am not at all satisfied with her physical condition & fear a break down. We wanted her to go away for a month or six weeks even, but she had much to say on the other side & it is unkind to press people too far?

With our love to both of you

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

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ALS H425

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Jan 4 1894

My dear Foster

This comes with our love & good wishes to you all & hope that the thermometer is not down to 12°F with you as it is with us.

Doctor won't listen to my going to London, at any price, just now and to my great regret I must give up the Pye Smith's dinner. So I write about the vacancy that poor Milnes Marshall's slip<sup>1</sup> has resulted in the May examinerships.

I fancy Miall of Leeds<sup>2</sup> would take the work – and it would be a very good thing to get hold of him as he is a very good man much trusted in these parts and belongs neither to Cambridge nor Oxford nor London.

Turn this over in your mighty mind.

1894

Has Marshall left any family – and if so any provision for them. If so I think we must set about doing something even if we have to cut short one subscription to memorials (which really are becoming nuisances) for the purpose.

Ever yours  
T. H. H.

Thermometer down to 12° in my garden.

Stokes is here beaming. – He went to the top of Beachy Head the day before yesterday in an east wind with the thermometer at 28° & so put me to shame.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Milnes Marshall (1852–1893), professor of zoology, Owens College, Manchester, had died in a climbing accident in the Lake District.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Compton Miall (1842–1921), professor of biology at Leeds.

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Huxley Papers 4:373

Nine Wells  
Great Shelford  
Cambridge  
Jan. 7. 1894

My dear Huxley

Best wishes to you & the wife for the New Year from all of us.

You are quite right to shirk the G. H. Lewes dinner – but it may be postponed & it may be fine then – let us hope so.

Miall ought certainly to be considered – I must however find out whether he was one of poor Marshall's lieutenants & knows the ropes. I will write again about it.

I don't feel sure that Marshall was married; I am making inquiries touching his finances etc – but I think it extremely probable that the Owens people will, quite apart from finances, get up a memorial. He worked very hard for that place.

Do you know we had formed a plan to swoop down on you at Eastbourne last Friday – coming down to the hotel for a day or two – but a cold I caught gave it the first check & this weather gave a complete stop. We have beaten you; we were at 11.7 this morning – but the therm[ometer] has run up since.

Ever thine  
M. Foster

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ALS H426

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
Jan 9 1894

My dear Foster

I have just written to Pye Smith to excuse myself on grounds of superior orders. I really dare not face this weather in London. A thaw has just set in rather worse [hygromically] than the past.

It would have been very jolly if you had cropped up here – but I am very glad you kept out of the bitter cold.

We might have managed a cup of tea for Mrs Foster & some 'baccy for you – beyond that burst pipes and kitchen ranges unlightable – we should have been puzzled to carry hospitality.

However please tell Mrs Foster (I don't trust you) with my wife's love & mine that I look to her to pay us a visit when the weather is decent & the kitchen fire is alight.

With all good wishes from us both

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

Pye Smith tells me he is going to get spliced – not that he uses that vulgar phrase – well “it's never too late to m-----arry” & I hope the lady is charming.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pye-Smith married Emily Gertrude Foulger on 7 March 1894.

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ALS H427

Hodeslea  
 Staveley Road  
 Eastbourne  
 Jan 15 1894

My dear Foster

I fancy from what you said in your last letter (a [illegible] is Pye Smith?) that Langley<sup>1</sup> is not back yet, so perhaps you may explain a mystery.

The London & North Western Railway has been so good as to send me a warrant for £97.1.9 – being interest on £6,667 stock minus income tax – without further note or comments. I had half a mind to advertise my thanks in the “Times” & add my readiness to accept more – But it suddenly occurred to me that the money might belong to the G. H. Lewes Trust<sup>2</sup> & that probably I ought to sign the warrant & send it to somebody.

Any how I will keep it till light comes.

I was very sorry I could not come to the dinner but I have been out of sorts.

Ever yours  
 T. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> John Newport Langley was one of the trustees of the G H Lewes Trust.

<sup>2</sup> See letter 296.

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Huxley Papers 4:375

Nine Wells  
 Great Shelford  
 Cambridge  
 Jan. 16. 1894

Dear Huxley

I have no doubt it is G. H. Lewes money – it is just the  $\frac{1}{2}$  yearly sum. Langley is away but returns today or tomorrow – & I will tell him about it. Meanwhile I don't see why his being away should lead to the warrant coming to you – I suppose it is a result of the recent transfer – but L. ought to secure the money. You ought not to be bothered about it. I am sorry you don't chirp about yourself. I hoped this warmer weather would pick you up.

1894

Milnes Marshall was not married – & his father is well to do – so no need of anything there – His place at Manchester will have to be filled, don't commit yourself.

We are all flourishing.

Ever thine

M. Foster

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ALS H429

Hodeslea  
Staveley Road  
Eastbourne  
May 30 1894

My dear Foster

Did anything come of your friend's inspection of my Southampton "Docker"?<sup>1</sup>

We were to have been away on a visit to one of our daughters at Lyme Regis – but my poor wife got another of her spasmodic colic attacks & knocked all that on the head.

With our love & hope you are all well.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup>George Sparks, a dock labourer in Southampton, had written to Huxley the previous year about his observations with a microscope. See *Life and letters*, vol. 2, 365–366.

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Huxley Papers 4:377

Nine Wells  
Great Shelford  
Cambridge  
June 1 [1894]

Dear Huxley

Very sorry to hear of the wife's attack she is most unlucky. Hope she is better now.

We have taken steps about the Porter man. My lieutenant Shore<sup>1</sup> is a Southampton man – he tried to see the genius at Easter but failed. He is going to make another try soon & see what we can do. "We have him on the list".

1894

The son, wife & grandson the latter is well, plump, bright & in every way satisfactory!!  
Hope I shall see you soon.

Ever thine  
M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Erle Shore (1863–1944), Cambridge physiologist.

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Huxley Papers 4:330

Nine Wells  
Great Shelford  
Cambridge  
June 10 [1894]

Dear Huxley

You may remember that a year or more ago I wrote you about a little book on Physiology intermediate between my Primer & your Element. Lessons which my Lieutenant Shore, with my name as partner, at Mac's biddings was preparing to do.<sup>1</sup> I wrote you because it might clash with your Elem. Lessons. You kindly made no objections. I thought at the time I had asked you also whether we might borrow some of the figs in the Elem Lessons & that you had said yes to that too – But when I said this to Mac the other day doubts began to crop up – and so I now write to hope you will say yes.

How are you standing this beastly weather or perhaps the blessed Eastbourne is not chilled & drenched as we are.

Gadow is sending in to R.S. what appears to be an important paper on the morphology of the vertebrae<sup>2</sup> – There are so few men now who know or care anything about this. Do you think you would like to renew your youth & “report” on it!!

“Damn his impudence” never mind.

Best wishes from all of us

Ever thine  
M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> M. Foster and Lewis E. Shore, *Physiology for beginners*, London, Macmillan, 1894. See letter 338.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Gadow (1855–1928), Cambridge morphologist. A joint paper with E. C. Abbott, ‘On the evolution of the vertebral column of fishes’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*. B, 1895, **186**: 163–221, was received on 20 June 1894.