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Huxley Papers 4:142

Casalini, West Cliff  
Bournemouth  
March 20 1888

My dear Foster

I sympathise this very strongly with Brady (whose letter I return herewith) and if he will go to Styria and stand over v. L with a big stick while he makes the requisite corrections – I am ready to subscribe 5/- toward the cost of the stick. Otherwise it is the old story of taking the horse to the water and being able to make him drink. Practically, I see nothing for it but to put an official note such as you suggest. What a hideous amount of trouble the man has given! He wrote to me the other day that he was going to ask for another grant & asked for support. I answered diplomatically.

I like your notion of our climate – we had yesterday a North Easter that I positively dare not face & today the whole county is covered with snow. The only satisfaction is that from all accounts the weather is worse elsewhere.

If I could get rid of the oppression that will come on now & then in the left half of my thorax I should be alright. Expect I shall have to get high air before it will go.

Ever yours  
T. H. H.

How about the new statutes?

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Huxley Papers 4:324

Shelford  
March 22 [1888]

Dear Huxley

Please read Welby's letter, & my reply, & tell me if you think it will do – ie make comments on it and send it on to Hooker asking him to do the same & send it to me as soon as possible. Evans has seen it. – and

Ever thine  
M. Foster

Thanks for letter re v. L.

*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 195

Bournemouth

April 7, 1888

My dear Foster

“Let thy servant’s face be white before thee.” The obituary of Darwin went to Rix yesterday! It is not for lack of painstaking if it is not worth much, but I have been in a bad vein for work of any kind, and thought I should never get even this simple matter ended.

I have been bothered with praecordial uneasiness and intermittent pulse ever since I have been here, and at last I got tired of it and went home the day before yesterday to get carefully overhauled. Hames<sup>1</sup> tells me there is weakness and some enlargement of the left ventricle, which is pretty much what I expected. Luckily the valves are all right.

I am to go and devote myself to coaxing the left v. wall to thicken *pro rata* – among the mountains, and to have nothing to do with any public functions or other exciting bedevilements. So the International Geological Congress will not have the pleasure of seeing its Honorary President in September. I am disgusted at having to break an engagement, but I cannot deny that Hames is right. At present the mere notion of the thing puts me in a funk.

I wish I could get out of the chair of the M.B.A.<sup>2</sup> also. . . . I know that you and Evans and Dyer will do your best, but you are all eaten up with other occupations.

Just turn it over in your mind – there’s a dear good fellow – just as if you hadn’t any other occupations.

With which eminently reasonable and unselfish request believe me

Ever yours

T. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> See letter 194.

<sup>2</sup> Huxley was the first president of the Marine Biological Association.

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Huxley Papers 4:325

Shelford  
 Cambs  
 Ap. 9 [1888]

My dear Huxley

I am very sorry to hear your account of yourself – though, in order to draw consolation from evil – one is to a certain extent relieved at being able to point to something as being the reason why you have not picked up after the pleurisy as you ought.

Further this ventricular laxity is capable of much amendment – and I see every reason to hope that with the fine weather which, with that faith which overcometh everything, we trust is still in store for us – and some Swiss air, care will make you quite stout & vigorous again.

All the same you are quite right in knocking off everything – you have fought a good fight (some poor beggars wish you had not fought quite so stoutly) – and you have a perfect right to take your ease, until – well until digitalis & mountain air having braced up your ventricle you will be longing for some more fisticuffs. As to the Geol. Congr. they will be able to get on without you – though between ourselves I don't see quite the grit among the G's that I could wish. Judd<sup>1</sup> is not all things – I can't for instance get the Delta business pushed on very much. As to the M.B.A. – it would be a good thing if you could make up your mind to allow your name to remain as President until after the building is opened which will be in June<sup>2</sup> – it would be rather a blow if you openly resigned before that – your absence from the ceremony, as from the business meetings will not put much responsibility on you – & as soon as the buildings are opened you can retire – On the whole I am inclined to be more hopeful about the business – As you saw from circular, Lankester practically retires from the management as soon as we appoint a new Director who is to be Sec. to Council too. – And if we get a good man I think we shall do.

I dare say Evans will be willing to be the Pres. – however that we can prepare for when the time comes, nothing much can I think happen now before the building is opened – so that you ought not to be uneasy about being Pres. till then.

The Statutes oh dear! Hooker & the Hookerites have made a dead set at them but for all that I think we shall put them through – But it is such hard work to get things through with

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that old stick as President – if Evans & I did not fight back to back I don't think anything would be done.

By the bye you might amuse yourself by looking over this scheme for Gov. Grant.

I will see to the obit. of D.

Ever thine

M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> See letter 257.

<sup>2</sup> The building of the Marine Biological Association was opened in Plymouth on 30 June. W. H. Flower presided at the ceremony in Huxley's place.

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 195

Bournemouth

April 10, 1888

My dear Foster

I send by this post the last – I hope for your sake and for that of the recording angel – of ——. <sup>1</sup> I agree to all Brady's suggestions.

With all our tinkering I feel inclined to wind up the affair after the manner of Mr Shandy's summing [up] of the discussion about Tristram's breeches – “And when he has got 'em he'll look a beast in 'em.” <sup>2</sup>

Ever yours

T. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> *Life and letters* has footnote here: ‘The Heathen Deutscheree’, presumably von Lendenfeld, see letter 256.

<sup>2</sup> Laurence Sterne, *The life and opinions of Tristram Shandy*, 3, lxi.

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 196

April 12 [1888]

I am quite willing to remain at the M.B.A. till the opening. If Evans will be President I shall be happy.

— is a very good man, but you must not expect too much of the “wild-cat” element, which is so useful in the world, in him.

I am disgusted with myself for letting everything go by the run, but there is no help for it. The least thing bowls me over just now.

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Huxley Papers 4:328

Shelford

Ap. 14 1888

Dear Huxley

Many thanks for comments. I will incorporate what I can & keep your note for the Ctee when it meets to discuss the draft.

I think your notice of Darwin is admirable – just the kind of thing wanted for the Proc. – & the clear statement of what the “Origin” really is will be very useful and be very profitably on record. I have jotted down a few printers’ errors in the copy which I send you.

You don’t say when you are off – let me know when you are in London else write so that I may catch a sight of you. Are you quite sure Abney knows the climate of Grindelwald in spring – I dare say when it is frozen & snowed up in winter it seems relatively warm – but I should have fancied it would be cold in spring when the snows are melting. I should have thought the Lake of Geneva – at Glion or part of the way up to Glion would have been more suitable.

Mrs F. is away – gone up to town to see & hear Cocquelin [*sic*]<sup>1</sup> & the French play or she would have asked me to thank Mrs Huxley for her letter.

Ever thine

M. Foster

P. S. Don’t want to bother you – but could not someone – Howes [illegible] – just write on your lines some text to accompany the plates of spirula which are prepared – it seems a pity to throw them away.

<sup>1</sup>The French actor Benoît-Constant Coquelin (1841–1909) was in London appearing in a number of French plays including the production of Eugène Scribe’s *Oscar; ou Le mari qui trompe sa femme*.

*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 196–197

Casalini,  
West Cliff,  
Bournemouth  
April 18, 1888

My dear Foster

I am cheered by your liking of the notice of Darwin. I read the “Life and Letters,” and the “Origin,” Krause’s “Life,”<sup>1</sup> and some other things over again in order to do it. But I have not much go in me, and I was a scandalous long time pottering over the writing.

I have sent the proof back with a variety of interpolations. I would have brought the “Spirula” notes down here to see what I could do, but I felt pretty sure that if I brought two things I should not do one. Nobody could do anything with it but myself. I will try what I can do when I go to town. How much time is there before the wind-up of the Challenger?

We go up to town Monday next, and I am thinking of being off the Monday following (Ap. 30). I have come to the same conclusion as yourself, that Glion would be better than Grindelwald. I should like very much to see you. Just drop me a line to say when you are likely to turn up.

Poor Arnold’s death<sup>2</sup> has been a great shock – rather for his wife than himself – I mean on her account than his. I have always thought sudden death to be the best of all for oneself, but under such circumstances it is terrible for those who are left. Arnold told me years ago that he had heart disease. I do not suppose there is any likelihood of an immediate catastrophe in my own case. I should not go abroad if there were. Imagine the horror of leaving one’s wife to fight all the difficulties of sudden Euthanasia in a Swiss hotel! I saw enough of that two years ago at Arolla.<sup>3</sup>

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> Ernst Krause, *Erasmus Darwin*, transl. from the German by W. S. Dallas, with a preliminary notice by Charles Darwin, London, John Murray, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) died suddenly on 15 April.

<sup>3</sup> See letter 204.

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ALS H372

4 Marlborough Place  
Abbey Road, N.W.  
May 10 1888

My dear Foster

Collier wrote me that he will be delighted to do replica for R.S.<sup>1</sup>

If same size 200 guineas. If only head 80 gs. If size of Hooker portrait 100 gs. He can change currencies if needful.

These are his ordinary terms but from what he says I don't think there is likely to be any difficulty in his part about money.

I was sorry I could not come to executive subcom<sup>e</sup> today.

Ever yours

T. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> A copy of Huxley's 1883 portrait by John Collier, painted in 1891. See entry for Collier, *Oxford DNB*, vol. 12, p. 647.

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 202

Hotel Kursaal, Maloja,  
Ober Engadine  
Aug 17, 1888

My dear Foster

I know you will be glad to hear that, at last, I can report favourably of my progress. The first six weeks of our stay here the weather was cold, foggy, wet, and windy – in short, everything that it should not be. If the hotel had not been as it is, about the most comfortable in Switzerland, I do not know what I should have done. As it was, I got a very bad attack of “liver,” which laid me up for ten days or so. A Brighton doctor – Bluett<sup>1</sup> by name, and well up to his work – kindly looked after me.

With the early days of August the weather changed for the better, and for the last fortnight we have had a perfect summer – day after day. I soon picked up my walking power, and one day got up to Lake Longhin, about 2000 feet up. That was by way of an experiment, and I was none the worse for it, but usually my walks are of a more modest

1888

description. To-day we are all clouds and rain, and my courage is down to zero, with prae-cordial discomfort. It seems to me that my heart is quite strong enough to do all that can reasonably be required of it – if all the rest of the machinery is in good order, and the outside conditions are favourable. But the poor old pump cannot contend with grit or want of oil anywhere.

I mean to stay here as long as I can; they say it is often very fine up to the middle of September. Then we shall migrate lower, probably on the Italian side, and get home most likely in October. But I really am very much puzzled to know what to do.

My wife has not been very well lately, and Ethel has contrived to sprain her ankle at lawn-tennis. Collier has had to go to Naples, but we expect him back in a few days.

With our united love to Mrs Foster and yourself.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

I was very pleased to hear of a secret<sup>2</sup> my wife communicated to me. So long as I was of any use, I did not care much about having the fact recognised, but now that I am used up I like the feather in my cap. “Fuimus.” Let us have some news of you.

<sup>1</sup> George Augustus Bluett, a medical graduate of Trinity College Dublin (M.B., c.1873).

<sup>2</sup> His award of the Copley Medal. See letter 282.

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Huxley Papers 4:332

Shelford

Cambs

Aug 20th 1888

England

My dear Huxley

I was delighted to get your letter this afternoon – & especially to hear such a good account of yourselves. Depend upon the machine which carried up 2000 ft in vertical space will be able to carry you what is the equivalent horizontally in time – it will enable you to do a lot of mischief yet.

I have been going to write to you ever so many times, & probably should have done so, had I felt sure you were still at the Maloja – you talked of going on to Pontresina – I am glad you did not – you are far better at Maloja.



What would have been your condition had you stayed in England I do not know – we have had horrible weather first wet & cold and now dry & cold – with the interesting phenomenon of icy cold south wind – fires ready every day, great coats, comforters etc etc – a kind of mixture of March & chill October.

Well we ie Margaret Mercy & I have taken places in the Calais–Bale [*sic*] Train for Sept 10 (Monday I must go to that dreadful Bath Brit. Ass – but we leave there Sunday all being well – & hope to catch a late [steamer] at Bale on the Tuesday morning. Our present plans are from Bale to Zürich & thence by Vorarlberg rail [Landbeck], the [Finstermäz] & Stelvio Pass to Bormio. It will be very delightful if we can then drop upon you somewhere – our idea was to drop from Bormio down to Menaggio on Lake Como – & to stay there until it was time to take the Gottardo home in order to catch engagements on Oct 2. – but, within that time, we are ready to make any change in order to foregather with you – so let us know your plans. I have left no room for other news – but there is none. Old Stokey stuck to the Talking Shop to the last – & I have had no end of righteousness accounted to me for helping to entertain Bishops at Cambridge.

Best Love

Ever thine

M. F.

Entertaining Bishops knowingly is not the same as entertaining angels unawares.

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 203

Hotel Kursaal

Maloja

Sept 2, 1888

My dear Foster

A sharp fall of snow has settled our minds, which have been long wavering about future plans, and we leave this for Menaggio, Hotel Vittoria, on Thursday next, 6<sup>th</sup>.

All the wiseacres tell us that there are fresher breezes (*vento di Lecco*) at Menaggio than anywhere else in Como country, and at anyrate we are going to try whether we can exist there. If it does not answer, we will leave a note for you there to say where we are gone. It would be very jolly to forgather.

I am sorry to leave this most comfortable of hotels, but I do not think that cold would suit either of us. I am marvellously well so long as I am taking sharp exercise, and I do my nine or ten miles without fatigue. It is only when I am quiet that I know I have a heart.

1888

I do not feel at all sure how matters may be 4000 feet lower, but what I have gained is all to the good in the way of general health. In spite of all the bad weather we have had, I have nothing but praise for this place – the air is splendid, excellent walks for invalids, capital drainage, and the easiest to reach of all places 6000 feet up.

My wife sends her love and thanks Mrs. Foster for her letter, and looks forward to meeting her.

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

Wash yourself clean of all that episcopal contamination or you may infect me!

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 203–204

Hotel Kursaal  
Maloja  
Sept 24, 1888

My dear Foster

As ill luck would have it, we went over to Pont Resina to-day (for the first time), and have only just got back (5.30). I have just telegraphed to you.

All our plans have been upset by the Föhn wind, which gave us four days' continuous downpour here – upset the roads, and flooded the Chiavenna–Colico Railway. We hear that the latter is not yet repaired.

I was going to write to you at the Vittoria, but thought you could have hardly got there yet. We took rooms there a week ago, and then had to countermand them. If there are any letters kicking about for us, will you ask them to send them on?

By way of an additional complication my poor wife gave herself an unlucky strain this morning, and even if the railway is mended I do not think she will be fit to travel for two or three days. We are very disappointed. What is to be done?

I am wonderfully better. So long as I am taking active exercise and the weather is dry, I am quite comfortable, and only discover that I have a heart when I am kept quiet by bad weather or get my liver out of order. Here I can walk nine or ten miles up hill and down dale without difficulty or fatigue. What I may be able to do elsewhere is doubtful.

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

It would do you and Mrs. Foster a great deal of good to come up here. Not out of your way at all! Oh dear no!

Zürich

Oct. 4, 1888

My dear Foster

I should have written to you at Stresa, but I had mislaid your postcard, and it did not turn up till too late.

We made up our minds after all that we would as soon not go down to the lakes – where the ground would be drying up after the inundations – so we went the other way over the Julier to Tiefenkasten, and from T. to Ragatz, where we stayed a week. Ragatz was hot and steamy at first – cold and steamy afterwards – but earlier in the season, I should think, it would be pleasant.

Last Monday we migrated here, and have had the vilest weather until to-day. All yesterday it rained cats and dogs.

To-day we are off to Neuhausen (Schweitzerhof) to have a look at the Rhine falls. If it is pleasant we may stop there a few days. Then we go to Stuttgart, on our way to Nuremberg, which neither of us have seen. We shall be at the “Bavarian Hotel,” and a letter will catch us there, if you have anything to say, I daresay up to the middle of the month. After that Frankfort, and then home.

We do not find long railway journeys very good for either of us, and I am trying to keep within six hours at a stretch.

I am not so vigorous as I was at Maloja, but still infinitely better than when I left England.

I hope the mosquitoes left something of you in Venice. When I was there in October there were none!

My wife joins with me in love to Mrs. Foster and yourself.

Ever yours very faithfully

T. H. Huxley.

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Huxley Papers 4:334

Shelford  
 Cambs  
 England  
 Oct 8 [1888]

My dear Huxley

I was delighted to get your letter & hear that you were safely out of that beastly hole Ragatz in which to tell the truth I did not like your going – We had four or five very pleasant days at Stresa – & reached home safely last Monday 1st, after a brief trip which was in every way successful & pleasant except for our having missed you. We were almost minded to run up to you at Maloja and indeed had made contingent arrangements with a coach man at Varenna (opposite Menaggio) to drive us straight up from there – but the uncertainty of the weather and of your staying there turned the scale – luckily for I suppose if we had gone up we should have found you just flown.

The weather here is horribly cold – dry & partially sunny – but bitter N E & N winds chilling one to the bones – I trust you are better off at Stuttgart or wherever you are.

I don't think I have any news – everyone asks tenderly after you & will be glad to see you back – But you ought not to come to London – I hope you are thinking about some cottage somewhere in Surrey.

You may reflect that you have done the English tourists a good service this summer. At most table d'hôtes in the Lakes I overheard people talking about the joys of Maloja – & giving themselves great air on account of their intimacy with “Professor Huxley”!! Wife who is very flourishing joins in all good wishes to all of you.

Ever thine  
 M. Foster

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 206

4 Marlborough Place  
 Oct 20 1888

My dear Foster

We got back on Thursday, and had a very good passage, and took it easy by staying the night at Dover. The “Lord Warden” gave us the worst dinner we have had for four months, at double the price of the good dinners. I wonder why we cannot manage these things better in England.

1888

We are both very glad to be home again, and trust we may be allowed to enjoy our own house for a while. But, oh dear, the air is not Malojal! not even at Hampstead, whither I walked yesterday, and the pump labours accordingly.

I found the first part of the fifth edition of the Text-book<sup>1</sup> among the two or three cwt. of letters and books which had accumulated during four months. Gratulire!

By the way, S.K. has sent me some inquiry about Examinations, which I treat with contempt, as doubtless you have a duplicate.

Ever yours very faithfully  
T. H. Huxley

<sup>1</sup> M. Foster, *A text book of physiology*, fifth edition, largely revised, London, Macmillan, 1888–91.

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 208–209

4 Marlborough Place  
Oct. 28, 1888

My dear Foster

No fear of my trying to stop in London. Hames won't have it. He came over and overhauled me the other day. As I expected, the original mischief is just as it was. One does not get rid either of dilatation or its results at my time of life. The only thing is to keep the pipes clear by good conditions of existence.

After endless discussion we have settled on Brighton for November and December. It is a hateful place to my mind, but there is more chance of sunshine there (at this time) than anywhere else. We shall come up for a week or two on this side of Christmas, and then get away somewhere else out of the way of the east winds of February and March.

I do not think that the Hazlemere country would do for us, nor indeed any country place so long as we cannot regularly set up house.

Heaven knows I don't want to bother about anything at present. But I should like to convince — that he does not yet understand the elements of [his subject]. What a copious inkspilling cuttlefish of a writer he is!

Ever yours  
T. H. Huxley

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Huxley Papers 121:92

The Royal Society  
Burlington House, London, W.  
November 1, 1888

Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you, that the President and Council of the Royal Society have awarded to you the Copley Medal for your investigations on the Morphology and Histology of Vertebrate and Invertebrate Animals, and for your services to Biological Science in general during many past years.

I am directed to express on the part of the President & Council, the hope that you will be able to be present at the Anniversary Meeting of the Society on Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, and so receive the medal from the hands of the President in person.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

M. Foster  
Sec. R.S.

Prof. T. H. Huxley

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 210

10 Southcliff Terrace  
Eastbourne  
Nov. 9, 1888

My dear Foster

We came here on Tuesday, on which day, by ill luck, the east wind also started, and has been blowing half a gale ever since. We are in the last house but one to the west, and as high up as we dare go – looking out on the sea. The first day we had to hold on to our chairs to prevent being blown away in the sitting-room, but we have hired a screen and can now croon over the fire without danger.

*A Priori*, the conditions cannot be said to have been promising for two people, one of whom is liable to bronchitis and rheumatism and the other to pleurisy, but, as I am so fond of rubbing into Herbert Spencer, *a priori* reasonings are mostly bosh, and we are thriving.

With three coats on I find the air on Beachy Head eminently refreshing, and there is so much light in the southern quarter just now, that we confidently hope to see the sun once more in the course of a few days.

As I told you in my official letter, I am going up for the 30<sup>th</sup>. But I am in a quandary about the dinner, partly by reason of the inevitable speech, and partly the long sitting. I should very much like to attend, and I think I could go through with it. On the other hand, my wife declares it would be very imprudent, and I am not quite sure she is wrong. I wish you would tell me exactly what you think about the matter.

The way I pick up directly I get into good air makes me suspect myself of malingering, and yet I certainly had grown very seedy in London before we left.

Ever yours

T. H. Huxley

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Huxley Papers 4:336

Shelford

Cambs

Nov 10 1888

My dear Huxley

Obviously the E. Wind is the thing for you to live on – & I only hope it is suiting Mrs Huxley as well as it clearly does you. Today even here we have once more seen the sun & I hope you have had enough of it to remove one or two great coats. As to the dinner, I quite agree with Mrs Huxley – of course it would be very delightful to see you there – but I am sure it would be a risk – if I were you I would dismiss at once all thoughts of coming.

I even doubt whether you ought to come to the meeting, if the weather is bad at the time. It may however be left until the time. If the weather is good & you feel “fit”, come – but if not, don’t.

It is much more important that you should not have any backsliding at the beginning of the winter, than that you should be present at Burlington House.

This is my private advice given in the teeth of all my feelings.

We are in some trouble at home. My boy<sup>1</sup> who was doing very well at Univ. Coll. Hosp. – has had a (very) slight haemoptysis & has got some little mischief at his right apex. They are all confident of the thing passing away – but he has had to give up all his London work – & will probably have to take a voyage. Moreover in spite of the good prognosis, one can’t help being very anxious. Best love to the wife.

Ever thine

M. Foster

<sup>1</sup> Foster’s son, Michael Foster junior.

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*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 210–211

10 Southcliff Terrace  
 Eastbourne  
 Nov. 13, 1888

My dear Foster

We are very sorry to hear about Michael Junior. *Experto crede*; of all anxieties the hardest to bear is that about one's children. But considering the way you got off yourself and have become the hearty and bucolic person you are, I think you ought to be cheery. Everybody speaks well of the youngster, and he is bound to behave himself well and get strong as swiftly as possible.

Though very loth, I give up the dinner. But unless I am on my back I shall turn up at the meeting. I think that is a compromise very creditable to my prudence.

Though it is blowing a gale of wind from S.W. to-day there is real sunshine, and it is fairly warm. I am very glad we came here instead of that beastly Brighton.

Ever yours very faithfully

T. H. Huxley

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Huxley Papers 4:338

Shelford  
 Dec. 9. [1888]

My dear Huxley

Your letter (Dec. 4) to Dickins in re. Elem. Biol. has brought about a dead lock – and since I have nothing to do, they have informally asked me to try and bring about an agreement.

The main point is as to the dog fish & fowl. What you say is very just, but on the other hand, as a matter of experience here at Cambridge, Balfour first and Sedgwick after him, have found the dog fish of the greatest use. There is no difficulty about getting specimens (far easier to get than many others [lyties], hydra etc) – it is easy to dissect, it is (is it not?) on the vertebrate high road, and where the men have laid hold of it, they take to the frog much more kindly and much more intelligently. Sedgwick who is to my mind a very excellent teacher and whose judgement in these matters has considerable weight with me assures me that experience of now several years leads him to trust largely to the dog fish, and to make it so to speak the pièce de resistance – when this is done, the frog is laid hold of with much greater ease.



But if the Dog Fish comes in the Bird must go out – the two together are too much – the poor lads can only take in what their noddles will hold, and the syllabus as it is is quite big enough for them. It is only elementary facts, they can be expected to grasp, & are not the [illegible] characters in a certain sense a speciality? The dog fish gives a broad sample vertebrate type and the mammal a highly finished one – the bird is another highly finished one not a half way house between the two. Did time & brains permit it would be most desirable to have the bird too – but the frog and the mammal being accepted by all, old & young, the youngsters seem very distinctly to have made up their mind that of the two they think the dog fish more useful & workable than the bird. The embryology asked for is too elementary to need special avian knowledge necessary “the first five days” is the thing.

Then as to amphioxus, it is of course off the line – but it is an eye opener – the mere facts of it give the bridge from invertebrate to vertebrate – it does not take much time – & it has the advantage of being studied by the same method as many of the invertebrata viz by sections – & in this way too serves as a bond between the two kingdoms. Practically there is no more difficulty in getting the specimens, than in the case of many of the other types – “private study” candidates will have, of course, to go to “shops” for their specimens in Biology as they have for their apparatus in chemistry.

As you will see by the remarks on syllabus I should suggest to treat amphioxus somewhat differently from dog fish, frog or rabbit – by putting it in another category.

Your other criticisms I have tried to meet by suggested verbal changes – the main points however are Dog fish v. Bird & amphioxus.

It is very wrong of me in my ignorance of morphology to offer any opinion to you – but the Univ. Lond. seem to be in great distress and I thought as almost the only representative of the intervening generation your pupil – & master of some of the younger examiners, I might put in my oar.

Now don't go & write to me I don't want to hear any more about it – but write to Dickins – the Ctee meets on Wednes. next that is if you have anything further to say.

I hope you are none the worse for the Copley journey – I am all right again.

Ever thine

M. Foster

The Archbishop of Canterbury has elected his cousin Halchett Jackson at Oxford not Lankester!!!<sup>1</sup>

Further notes on syllabus

- 1) Put in external forms but don't say anything about nomenclature the lads are always ready enough to learn names,
- 2) As to the Mollusk, these younger people all insist that they must have Lumbricus – if so the mollusk must go out, for reasons similar to those referring to bird – the two cases indeed seem very similar.

I had suggested putting in Fowl between Rabbit & Lumbricus in paragraph about ova – but after all the structure of the bird's egg is involved in the development of Fowl.

<sup>1</sup> Due to the illness of H. N. Moseley, the Linacre Professor of Comparative Anatomy at Oxford, Lankester had applied for the post of his deputy.

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... I am very sorry I cannot agree with your clients about the examination. They should recollect the late Master of Trinity's aphorism that even the youngest of us is not infallible.<sup>1</sup>

I know exactly upon what principles I am going, and so far as I am at present informed that advantage is peculiar to my side. Two points I am quite clear about – one is the exclusion of *Amphioxus*, and the other the retention of so much of the Bird as will necessitate a knowledge of Sauropsidan skeletal characters and the elements of skeletal homologies in skull and limbs.

I have taken a good deal of pains over drawing up a new syllabus – including dogfish – and making room for it by excluding *Amphioxus* and all of bird except skeleton. I have added Lamprey (cranial and spinal skeleton, *not* face cartilages), so that the intelligent student may know what a notochord means before he goes to embryology. I have excluded *Distoma* and kept *Helix*.

The Committee must now settle the matter. I have done with it.

<sup>1</sup> William Hepworth Thompson (1810–1886), master of Trinity College Cambridge, “We are none of us infallible, not even the youngest among us” (1878), see *Oxford DNB*, vol. 54, pp. 478–480.