

Shrewsbury

[CD wrote the following six letters shortly before his thirteenth birthday while on holiday from school at the family home in Shrewsbury. The letters were written straight into a 'Memorandum book' so it is clear that they were never sent through the post but were either to an imaginary recipient or intended to be read by someone in the household, possibly CD's youngest sister, Emily Catherine Darwin, known as Catherine.]

To Dear Friend 1 January 1822

January 1st 1822

My Dear friend

I think it is a most abominable thing, the minute Erasmus went out of the room, they began abusing him for being out of temper, you must know that he is not well, and that he hath got the rheumatism, and very pale, and particularly Maryan¹ of course you know how peevish Maryane is when she is unwell² but just the reverse I think Erasmus very good humered to day he came back from enquiring about his ticket, on purpose, because he thought I should like it, the reason was because he was going to draw for Cam bell Bible,³ and I must now conclude

so therefore your

Note this day I received this ye cabinet

To Dear Friend 2 January 1822

My Dear friend

I think Erasmus is quite good humered to day as he was yesterday and they have not abused at all, I hope you will help me in looking out and washing the fossils out of the plate closet, as soon as you can conveniently, I hope you received yesterdays letter—

I remain, *you know what*

A PUG, January 2^d 1822

Shrewsbury

To Dear Friend 3 January 1822

January^{the} 3 1822

My dear friend

I hope you like that inquisitive man Monseur Beodoes,⁴ when I was a boy I used to think him a most impertinent man but you may differ in your opinion, he always used to be asking about my father and other things; In you last letter you told me you knew, who, my sisters at Shrewsbury were talking of, I think Papa you will inform me in return of post

I remain—yours Tobe Case

P.S. M^r Bayly⁵ was formerly a *devilish* boor but I dare say he is not *so to you*

To Dear Friend 4 January 1822

My Dear friend,

You must know that I am very sorry about shakespeare when Maryane, told me to put it up, and I like Mariane excessively, she is so very good to M^{iss} Jone,⁶ I will tell you a little accident that happened to me of course you know M^{iss} Jones is in bed, and when I went there with Mariane last night, while she stooped there I went in town and bought the cakes, and I came back sooner than Mariane was ready, and that foolish old man shoed in the bedroom then there was a bit of Kick-hoop, not that I went quite in, oh no, quite the reverse

Your affectionate

Justice brust with a nose as big as your fist

PS I hope you were not much alarmed at M^{iss} Clare⁷ accident

January 4, 1822

To Dear Friend 4 January 1822

My Dear friend

you must know that after my Georgraphy, she said I should go down to ask for Richards poney, just as I was going, she said she must ask me not a very decent question, that was whether I wash all over every morning no then she said it was quite disgustin then

1822

she asked me if I did every other morning, and I said no then she said how often I did, and I said once a week, then she said of cour you wash your feet every day, and I said no, then she begun saying how very disgusting and went on that way a good while, then she said I ought to do it, I said I would wash my neck and shoulders, then she said you had better do it all over then I said upon my word I would not, then she told me, and made me promise I would not tell, then I said, why I only wash my fett once a month at school, which I confess is nasty, but I cannot help it, for we have nothing to do it with, so then Caroline pretended to be quite sick, and left the room, so then I went and told erasmus, and he bust out in laughing and said I had better tell he to come and wash them her self, besides that she said she did not like sitting by me or Erasmus for we smelt of not washing all over, there we sat arguing away for a good while.

I remain your affectionately

Justice [burst/ w[ith] a nose as big as your fist

January the 2, 1822

The second letter today

To Dear Friend 12 January 1822

My Dear friend

I hope you had a pleasant ride yesterday on Domben I had a very pleasant walk at first we were very dull but afterward we were quite merry till Curnell Burg Leighton⁸ stoped us and walked with us in the quarry I have had such fun with nany and May about some stuff* that I thought very shocking it is in paling [skin] I thought it rogue⁹ I believ(e) it cost eighteen pence a saucer of it— and that [Maryan] called very dear

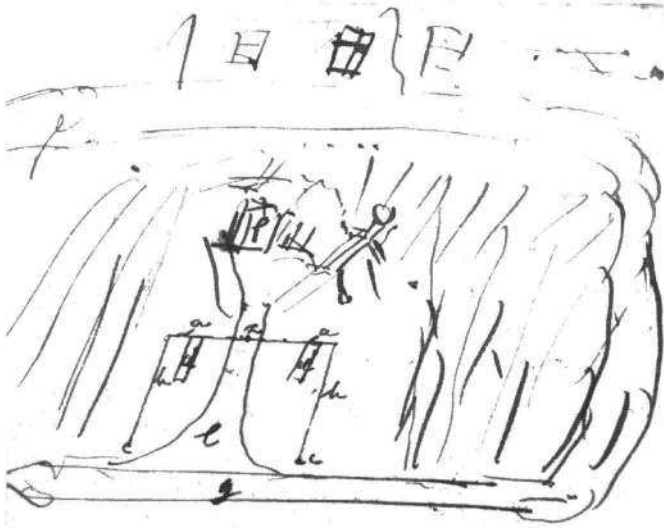
I remain your Pug puller

*that stuff in the washroom

January 12th. 1822—

remember next summer to make two cave one for warlike instru-ments, the othe(r) for relics. Note spoon, old spear knife squirt if it can be found, and the name cut on the ash tree over the seat in the bank by the nut tree I belife that is all ove[r] the lief a plan of a machine

Shrewsbury



x a pin drove in the bark on which a piece of wood can turn up and down, aa the piece of wood, bb two pieces of string going down [over] the bank, cc two weights insted of springs, dd two pieces of coulored rag or ribbon e the tree on whi(ch) I sit, g the bank, f [*one word illeg*] when the red rag is pulled up come to me, when the other lie still.

Papa told me that Fridy perhaps I should go to Walcut to see all the beutiful things there but he told me not to set my mind upon it so therefore your affectionate pug whom you gave a good cough.

Remember this time ask Downs, the drums shall beat, the fifes shall play— and it is all for the sake of—

I went to Athelton where I say Miss reynols and I like her very much I think her very pretty but I do not know she was a friend of Mariane and Caroline he[r] mothe[r] is half a quaker and I like her very murch, I believe Miss Reynols is going to be marriend to a clergyman, and has been under trial 1 2 3 4 or 5 year before Mrs Reynols would let her may him, and he has given some living, but I am not shure about this¹⁰ I like M^r and M^{rs} W Cluide¹¹ very much indeed particularly M^r Clude but I dont thing Erasmus does for your must know he was with me indeed I dont think Erasmus liked it all together but I am [oky] I did, I think Miss and young M^{aster} Clude much mor[e] [talkative]

Edinburgh

['As I was doing no good at school, my father wisely took me away at a rather earlier age than usual, and sent me (October 1825) to Edinburgh University, with my brother where I stayed for two years' (Autobiography, p. 46.)]

To Robert Waring Darwin [23 October 1825]

[Edinburgh]

Sunday morning.

My dear Father

As I suppose Erasmus has given all the particulars of the journey I will say no more about it, except that altogether it has cost me 7 pounds— We got into our lodgings yesterday evening, which are very comfortable & near the College— Our Landlady, by name M^{rs}. Mackay, is a nice clean old body, and exceedingly civil & attentive— She lives in “11 Lothian Street Edinburg” & only four flights of steps from the ground floor which is very moderate to some other lodgings that we were nearly taking— The terms are 1£—6^s for two very nice & *light* bedrooms & a nice sitting room; by the way, light bedrooms are very scarce articles in Edinburg, since most of them are little holes in which there is neither air or light. We called on D^r. Hawley the first morning, whom I think we never should have found had it not been a good natured D^r. of Divinity who took us into his Library & showed us a map, & gave us how find him: Indeed all the Scotchmen are so civil and attentive, that it is enough to make an Englishman ashamed of himself—

I should think D^r. Butler or any other fat English divine would take two utter strangers into his library and show them the way! When at last we found the Doctor & having made all the proper speeches on both sides we all three set out and walked all about the town; which we admire excessively; indeed Bridge Street is the most extraordinary thing I ever saw, and when we first looked over the sides we could hardly believe our eyes, when, instead of a fine river we saw a stream of people—

Edinburgh

We spend all our mornings in promenading about the town, which we know pretty well, and in the Evenings we go to the play to hear Miss Stephens, which is quite delightful. She is very popular here, being encored to such a degree that she can hardly get on with the play— On Monday we are going to Der F^r.¹ (I do not know how to spell the rest of the word)— Before we got into our lodgings we were staying at the Star Hotel in Princes St. . . .

The introductory lectures begin next Wednesday, and we were matriculated for them on Saturday: we pay 10^s. & write our names in a book, & the ceremony is finished; but the Library is not free to us till we get a ticket from a Professor—

We have just been to church and heard a sermon of only 20 minutes. I expected from Sir Walter Scott's account, a soul-cutting discourse of 2 hours & a half—

I remain Y^r. affectionate son | C. Darwin.

To Caroline Darwin 6 January 1826

Edinburgh.

Jan. 6th. | 1826—

My dear Caroline,

Many thanks for your very entertaining letter, which was a great relief after hearing a long stupid lecture from Duncan on *Materia Medica*— But as you know nothing either of the Lecture or Lecturers, I will give you a short account of them.— D^r. Duncan is so very learned that his wisdom has left no room for his sense, & he lectures, as I have already said, on the *Materia Medica*, which cannot be translated into any word expressive enough of its stupidity. These few last mornings, however, he has shown signs of improvement & I hope he will “go on as well as can be expected.” His lectures begin at eight in the morning.— D^r. Hope begins at ten o'clock, & I like both him & his lectures *very* much. (After which Erasmus goes to M^r. Lizars on Anatomy”, who is a charming Lecturer) At 12, the Hospital, after which I attend Munro on Anatomy— I dislike him & his Lectures so much that I cannot speak with decency about them. He is so dirty in person & actions.— Thrice a week we have what is called Clinical Lectures, which means lectures on the sick people in the Hospitals—these I like *very* much.— I said this account should be short, but I am afraid it has been too long like the Lectures themselves.—

I will be a good *boy*, and tell something about Johnson again (not but what I am very much surprised that Papa should so forget

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himself as to call me, a Collegian in the University of Edinburgh, a boy.) he has changed his lodgings for the third time, he has got very cheap ones, but I am afraid it will not answer, for they must make up by cheating.— I hope you like Erasmus' official news, he means to begin every letter so.— You mentioned in your letter that Emma was staying with you, if she is not gone ask her to tell Jos. that I have not succeeded in getting any [titanium], but that I will try again. Tell Katty and Susan I shall be very grateful if they will write to me, it is so pleasant receiving letters; and I hope, although our correspondence has begun late, you will send me many more nice affecting letters about dear little black nose. Erasmus thinks I shall have more pleasure in seeing it than all the rest of the families put together. You seem to hold the same opinion with regard to my dear little nephew.— I want to know how old I shall be next Birthday. I believe 17, & if so I shall be forced to go abroad for one year since it is necessary that I shall have completed my 21st. year before I take my degree. Now you have no business to be frowning & puzzling over this letter for I did not promise to write a good hand to you.

I remain your af— dear Caroline, | C. Darwin.

Love to Papa & tell him I am going to write to him in a few days—

To Susan Darwin 29 January [1826]

Edinburgh.

Jan 29.

My dear Susan

The whole family have been so very good in writing to me so often that I do not know whom to begin to thank first, so to save trouble I return my humble thanks to you all, from my Father down to little Kitty.— The Gaieties of Edinburgh are now just beginning, last week there was an Assembly, & shortly there will be another. Erasmus & () intended to have gone to the first, but mean to make it up by going to the next.— We also have been very dissipated.— We dined at D^r. Hawley's on Saturday, & had a very pleasant party, after which we went to the Theatre, with a M^r. Greville I believe a relation of the great Botanist, D^r. Greville. D^r. Hawley has procured some information about my Fathers questions & will write it shortly to him. Next Friday we are going to the old D^r. Duncan, & I hope it will be a pleasanter party than the last; which a very specimen of stupidity. What an extraordinary old man he is, now being past 80,

Edinburgh

& continuing to lecture. D^f. Hawley hints that he is rapidly failing. I have been most shockingly idle, actually reading two novels at once. a good scolding would do me a vast deal of good, & I hope you will send one of your most severe one's.— What an entertaining book Granby is;² do you remember Lady Harriet talking about inhaling (Ni)tric Oxide? Johnson has actually done it, & describes the effects as the most intense pleasure he ever felt. We both mean to get tipsey in the Vacation.— The old M^f. Wedgwood, I see in Ure's Chem. Dic., did nothing else but hold his nose & kick. It occasionally brings on fainting. Erasmus knows a man in Cambridge, who when in that state had the faculty of hearing, but not of motion or speech & to his horror, heard them consulting whether they should open the Temporal Artery. . . . I am going to learn to stuff birds, from a blackamoor I believe an old servant of D^f. Duncan: it has the recommendation of cheapness, if it has nothing else, as he only charges one guinea, for an hour every day for two months.

I rem.n— | Charles Darwin . . .

To Caroline Darwin 8 April [1826]

[Edinburgh]
 April 8th

My dear Caroline

I dare say I shall not be able to finish this letter, but I cannot help writing to thank you for your very nice and kind letter. It makes me feel how very ungrateful I have been to you for all the kindness and trouble you took for me when I was a child. Indeed I often cannot help wondering at my own blind Ungratefulness. I have tried to follow your advice about the Bible, what part of the Bible do you like best? I like the Gospels. Do you know which of them is generally reckoned the best? Do write to me again soon, for you do not know how I like receiving such letters as yours. The weather has been very pleasant for these few last days, but nevertheless I long to return very much. D^f. Hope has been giving some very good Lectures on Electricity &c. and I am very glad I stayed for them. The Classes are beginning to thin. I think I shall stay about nine days or a fortnight longer. But as my money will not last out for the latter period I should be much obliged if my Father would send up a £5 or £10 pound bill. I should also be much obliged if it could be sent up **directly**: as you will not receive this letter for three days, and I get the answer in another three.

1826

I hope Eras. has got his books safely, let me know in the next letter, as I mean to go as far as Glasgow by the canals and from thence on “terra firma” to Shrewsbury, but sending my books per sea. How shockingly untidy this letter is, but I think you have a sympathy for untidiness, not that I mean to say that yours are half as bad as this.

I will send my next and last John Bull³ to Shrewsbury for your edification. I hope you received the last and studied it well. I said in the beginning of this very tidy epistle that I never should be able to finish it, which is now verified.

Love to all. Do not show this. | Your affect., Dear Caroline |
Charles Darwin . . .

[No letters survive from CD's second year at Edinburgh. CD's brother, Erasmus Alvey Darwin, had decided to pursue his medical studies in London; CD, left on his own, found medicine less and less to his liking, and engaged in broader studies in natural history. A notebook of zoological observations made in March 1827 records his observations on two marine invertebrates, *Flustra* and *Pontobdella muricata*, which he reported to the undergraduate Plinian Natural History Society of the University on 27 March 1827.]