

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON PAPERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 22/12/1852 (6 p.m. 11 Chester St., Belgrave Square)

Returning to London after a short absence (i.e. since the day before yesterday) I received this evening (too late for a reply by post) your Letter without date. In reply to it I can but express my very earnest hope that it may be granted me to reach Brighton and to become more associated with you on 31st. All particulars as to Trains and times of arrival etc I will make knowu to you a day ← ? or two before that which is fixed for the journey. I did hope ere now to have seen ere now Hartley and Mrs Keate again. Thornton the Rector of Chilton near Basingstoke tempted me to go down to his parochial Meeting yesterday (and a most gratifying assemblage it was) and I had concluded that nothing would be easier than to take the Reading Train from Basingstoke, and so to reach dear Hartley once again. Just however at the moment that I was preparing to write to Mrs Keate and say so, came a missive from Sir John Pakington fixing an early hour on Friday for me to see him. This cut up my whole plan: for could I even have reached Hartley this afternoon I must have proceeded on my way early tomorrow: and a visit of a few hours would not have satisfied me. I do frankly admit I do shrink from the first approach to the wellknown place and the wellknown inhabitants of it. But that must be got over; and on my return from Cuddesdon, I will if it please God, accomplish my purpose of visiting them; and will write to Mrs Keate ere many days are over.

I found 17 letters awaiting me; and had, before that, more than forty unanswered, although I must have written a hundred or more since my landing. How to keep pace with my correspondents (many of them personally unknown to me) I know not. It is the same as to visits. Every leisure moment I spend riding in a Fly: and yet with all my assiduity (I) have not gone through more than a third of my List. At Mr Thornton's I met Mr Keble: but had little opportunity of conversing. He preached yesterday. A good plain sermon: but I thought rather deficient in what the French term unction; which from him I should not have expected. He has invited me to go to see him: which on my next tour into Hants I should like to

Broughton to Coleridge, 22/12/1852 (cont 2)

do. About preaching at St Paul's. It is with much concern I say that my present powers are hardly equal to it: nor have I yet been into a pulpit since my arrival in England. The medical advice given to me was, not to attempt it for three months at least; and every morning brings with it such an unpleasant hoarseness that the wisdom of this counsel, and the necessity of my complying with it are equally apparent. Will you have the goodness to offer this as my excuse for not doing as I have been requested; and I trust it will be thout (sic) a sufficient one. On the Festival of the Circumcision I will do my best to administer the Holy Communion; but so uncertain am I, until the moment arrives, what my ability may prove that you will much oblige me by having another administrator ready to act as my substitute in case of my failing. If I had thought for a moment how lond ago it is since Captain Shadwell was at Sydney, and what his age must now be, I should hardly have jumped to the conclusion that he was the bridegroom elect. But one forgets how time runs away. Sir John Patteson kindly left his Card inscribed with the date of his leaving Town (last Monday) but my own early departure on that day prevented my trying even to see him. Park Crescent I will try to reach tomorrow on returning from a visit of reverence to the widow of my most upright and cordial friend Norris of Hackney. The Portrait I will talk to you about when we meet.

The above comprehends I believe all that I need say at present; and therefore I now turn to another of the 56 unanswered epistles now before me: desiring only, before concluding, to express my sincere regard for Mrs Coleridge and all whom you have around you...