

Samuel Butler.

15, Cliffords Inn,
London. E.C.

Feb. 11 1902

My Dear Jones

How I am to fill this sheet I know not - if I succeed the feeding of the 5000 will be a small miracle in comparison, for I have as it were but a single literary loaf & fish for my nucleus.

Talking of fishes did you see what I am told was in the Daily Mail about the sea-gulls? I was going last Friday over London Bridge to Delph Street where I have a big job on (every thing seems to come at once) and saw thousands of gulls and people on the bridge feeding them. They were lovely, but they are unprincipled.

A man was walking over London Bridge last week with a crate of fresh herrings on his head. The gulls swooped down on the fish in such numbers that he was powerless against them, & half his fish were gone before he could get his crate down on to the pavement.

The job at Delph Street will cost me

near £100. Sanitary inspector of course; but it is a good job done - entire reconstruction of drains & a lot more. The houses are prebored and will stand a large increase of rent, so that I shall be a gainer rather than loser by the job.

Alfred & I have again been to Atwell Road this afternoon & were again starved - but I do not think we have taken any harm. Sanitary inspector of course. I don't suppose I shall get out of it all under £200, & lucky if that covers it. The rents here too will stand some increase but it is a nuisance.

I told you of my visit to the Fuller Maiklands - but I forgot to say that they told me Nice is very full of small-pox now. So you had better not go & stay with Cattie. They were very full of going to Sicily in April & May, & it seems quite on the cards that I may meet them & put them through Trapani & Mt. Eryx. We shall see.

I sent my letter to the Spectator - I submitted it first to Rendall (Editor of the Atendum), as well as to Grant Richards and they both cordially approved of my sending, but they doubted whether the Editor would insert it. Rendall said that several

people had written to him admiring my Sonnet, & one or two indignantly, but these last fewer & less important.

By the last post I am sure to have a line from Longman declining to publish a new edition of *Six Voto* at his own risk. I was bound to offer it to him before trying Grant Richards. As soon as he has declined it I can see whether G. R. will do it or no. If he will not I shall again appeal to Shaw for counsel.

I have this morning received a long & most flattering review of *Erubon* & *Erubon Revisited* from the *New Z. Canterbury Press*. They are very proud of the fact that *Erubon* began in their own paper, & nothing is good enough for me. I must show it to Grant Richards when I take him *Six Voto*, & will send it on to you when he has seen it. It is far the most flattering article that I have ever had.

I am puzzled by something in my correspondence - Do you remember our getting two bottles of some spirit or liqueur from Varese - one of which I was to take to my father? I remember sending him some honey from Promontogno as soon as I got home, but I am pretty sure

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that on earlier occasion - say 1883 or 1882 I had ~~sent~~ ^{taken} him a bottle of liqueur which he examined in my presence to see whether or no it had been tampered with. Do you remember my ever saying any thing to you about this? I find that some years ago I made a note to this effect as regards the Promontogno honey, which note letters now read prove to have been wrong - but the incident is so strongly vivid in my mind that I cannot believe it to be an unconscious invention of my own. Please help me if you can.

Erubon (the *2d* book) was casually mentioned quite friendly wise in last Friday's *Times* literary supplement.

Moore, an Oxford don, has published the last 12 books of the *Odyssey* - Merry did the first 12 some years ago. Not a word about my theory. I am told, but have not seen the book, that there is no mention of what I have said about *Trapani* & *Mt. Snyx* in *Douglas Sladen's Sicily* - I shall not break my heart in either case.

There; my loaf & fish have held out better than I feared they would, but I fear the loaf has been rather unleavened, & the fish but as one of those Mediterranean gray mullets which we get in *Wain* restaurants. However, I have done my best. With very kind regards to your sister, I am, yours - S. Butler.

SAMUEL BUTLER, A. L. S., 11 February 1902, to
HENRY FESTING JONES.

[printed heading, with day, month, and year digit in MS]

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My dear Jones

How I am to fill this sheet I know not—If I succeed the feeding of the 5000 will be a small miracle in comparison, for I have as it were but a single literary loaf & fish for my nucleus.

Talking of fishes did you see what I am told was in the Daily Mail about the sea-gulls? I was going last Friday over London Bridge to Delph Street where I have a big job on—(everything seems to come at once) and saw thousands of gulls and people on the bridge feeding them. They were lovely, but they are unprincipled. A man was walking over London Bridge last week with a crate of fresh herrings on his head. The gulls swooped down on the fish in such numbers that he was powerless against them, & half his fish were gone before he could get his crate down on to the pavement.

The job at Delph Street will cost me [p. 2] near £100. Sanitary inspector of course; but it is a good job done—entire reconstruction of drains, & a lot more. The houses are freehold and will stand a large increase of rent, so that I shall be a gainer rather than loser by the job.

Alfred & I have again been to Attwell Road this afternoon & were again starved—but I do not think we have taken any harm. Sanitary inspector of course. I dont suppose I shall get out of it all under £400, & lucky if that covers it. The rents here too will stand stand [sic] some increase but it is a nuisance.

I told you of my visit to the Fuller Maitlands—but I forgot to say that they told me Nice is *very* full of small-pox now—So you had better not go & stay with Cattie. They were very full of going to Sicily in April & May, and it seems quite on the cards that I may meet them & put them through Trapani and Mt. Eryx. We shall see.

I sent my letter to *The Spectator*. I submitted it first to Rendall (Editor of the *Athenaeum*) as well as to Grant Richards and they both cordially approved of my sending, but they doubted whether the editor would insert it. Rendall said that several [p. 3] people had written to him admiring my Sonnet, & one or two indignantly, but these last fewer & less important.

By the last post I am sure to have a line from Longman declining to publish a new edition of *Ex Voto* at his own risk. I was bound to offer it to him before trying Grant Richards. As soon as he has declined it I can see whether G. R. will do it or no. If he will not I shall again appeal to Shaw for counsel.

I have this morning received a long & most flattering review of *Erewhon & Erewhon Revisited* from the New Z. Canterbury Press. They are very proud of the fact that *Erewhon* began in their own paper, & nothing is good enough for me. I must show it to Grant Richards when I take him *Ex Voto*, & will send it on to you when he has seen it. It is far the most flattering article that I have ever had.

I am puzzled by something in my correspondence. Do you remember our getting two bottles of some spirit or liqueur from Varese—one of which I was to take to my father? I remember sending him some honey from Promontogno as soon as I got home, but I am pretty sure [p. 4] that on an earlier occasion—say 1883 or 1882 I had sent [canceled and superscribed "taken"] him a bottle of liqueur which he examined in my presence to see whether or no it had been tampered with. Do you remember my ever saying anything to you about this? I find that some years ago I made a note to this effect as regards the Promontogno honey, which note letters now read prove to have been wrong—but the incident is so strongly vivid in my mind that I cannot believe it to be an unconscious invention of my own. Please help me if you can.

Erewhon (the old book) was casually mentioned quite friendly wise in last Friday's *Times Literary Supplement*.

Monro, an Oxford don, has published the last 12 books of the *Odyssey*—Merry did the first 12 some years ago. Not a word about my theory. I am told, but have not seen the book, that there is no mention of what I have said about Trapani & Mt. Eryx in Douglas Sladen's *Sicily*. I shall not break my heart in either case.

There; my loaf & fish have held out better than I feared they would, but I fear the loaf has been rather unleavened, & the fish but

as one of those Mediterranean gray mullets which we get in train restaurants—However, I have done my best.

With very kind regards to your sister,—I am, Yours—

S. Butler—

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Notes: 1. Butler died 18 June, four months and a week after writing this vigorous letter.

2. His real estate career, as developer and landlord, commenced in 1887, following his father's death the previous 29 December. See, for example, Jones, I, 352–353; II, 52.

3. Alfred Emery Cathie in 1887 came to work for Butler—as clerk, valet, assistant—and was with him to the end.

4. Jones's sister Cattie lived in Nice. In April 1902 Butler and Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Fuller Maitland convened in Sicily for a tour of *The Authoress's* (of the *Odyssey*) home place.

5. His letter to the editors of *The Spectator*, 8 February (and published in the next issue, 15 February, page 253), was occasioned by its review, on the same day, of the revised *Erewhon*, 1901.

6. Vernon Rendall was editor of *The Athenæum*. Grant Richards published, at the behest of G. B. Shaw, *Erewhon Revisited*, 1901.

7. Butler's sonnet "Not on Sad Stygian Shore" had appeared in *The Athenæum* for 6 January 1902, page 18.

8. Both Longman and Richards rejected the new edition of *Ex Voto*, but the latter did publish the posthumous *The Way of All Flesh*, 1903.

9. On 17 February Butler wrote at length to O. T. J. Alpers of Christchurch, New Zealand, as to his gratification at the Canterbury *Press* review. Alpers did the *Press's* 28 July Butler obituary.

10. The Promontogno honey-jar was still on Butler's mind—in a letter to Jones—14 February.

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