

Enfield 2 Apr. 1830.

Dear Madam,

I have great pleasure in letting you know that Miss Isola has suffered very little from fatigue on her long journey. I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two. But I am a very unpractised traveller. She has had two tolerable nights' sleep since, and is decidedly not worse than when we left you. I remembered the Magnesia according to your directions, & promise that she shall be kept very quiet, never forgetting that she is still an invalid. We found my sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her; and, after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six. The incidents of our journey were trifling, but you bade me tell them. We had then in the coach a rather talkative Gentleman, but very civil, all the way; & took up a servant maid at Stamford going to a sick Mistress. To the latter, a participation in the hospitalities of your nice rusks & sandwiches proved very agreeable, as it did to my companion, who took merely a sip of the weakest wine and water with them. The former engaged me in a discourse for full twenty miles on the probable advantages of Steam Carriages which, being merely problematical, I bore my part in with some credit, in spite of my totally un-engineer-like faculties. But when, somewhere about Stanstead, he put an unfortunate question to me as to the probability of its turning out a good turnip season; and when I, who am still a turnip- from a potato ground, innocently made answer that "I believed it depended very much upon boiled legs of mutton," my unlucky reply cost Miss Isola a laughing to a degree that disturbed her tranquillity for the moment in our journey. I am afraid my credit sank very low with my other fellow-traveller, who had thought he had met with a well-informed passenger, which is an accident so desirable in a Stage Coach. We were rather less communicative, but still friendly, the rest of the way. How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to christen an "Anastoe in a cross road," and which I wish were worthier of the Lady they refer to. But I trust you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a Lady's good name. Your candour must acknowledge that they are written strait. And now, dear Madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my sense of the friendly reception I found at Farnham. Mr Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him.

on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good Master of the Family at Farnham, though heartily I should rejoiced to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think we agreed at Farnham, that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged person. My sister, and Miss



Mr. Williams
Bristol
London All Saints

Wm. S. Edmunds



I must just add a line to tell you that I have just received your letter of the 11th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well. I have just received the letter of the 11th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well. I have just received the letter of the 11th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well.

Isola, join in respects to Mr. Williams and yourself, and I beg to be remembered kindly to the Miss Hammonds, and the two Gentlemen whom I had the good fortune to meet at your house. I have not forgotten the Election in which you are interesting yourself, and the little that I can, I will do immediately. Miss Isola will have the pleasure of writing to you next week, and we shall hope at your leisure to hear of your own health. I am, Dear Madam, with great respect,
Your obliged Charles Lamb

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LETTER - CHARLES LAMB
to Mrs. Williams

~~TO MRS. FROST~~

APRIL 2, 1830

CHARLES LAMB, A. L. S., 2 April 1830, to
Mrs. Grace Williams.

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Dear Madam,

I have great pleasure in letting you know that Miss Isola has suffered very little from fatigue on her long journey. I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two. But I am a very unpractised traveller. She has had two tolerable nights' sleeps since, and is decidedly not worse than when we left you. I remembered the Magnesia according to your directions, & promise that she shall be kept very quiet, never forgetting that she is still an invalid. We found my Sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her; and, after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six.

The incidents of our journey were trifling, but you bade me tell them. We had then in the coach a rather talkative Gentleman, but very civil, all the way, & took up a servant maid at Stamford going to a sick mistress. To the *latter*, a participation in the hospitalities of your nice rusks & sandwiches proved very agreeable, as it did to my companion, who took merely a sip of the weakest wine and water with them. The *former* engaged me in a discourse for full twenty miles on the probable advantages of Steam Carriages, which being merely problematical, I bore my part in with some credit, in spite of my totally un-engineer-like faculties. But when, somewhere about Stanstead, he

put an unfortunate question to me as to the "probability of its turning out a good turnip season;" and when I, who am still less of an agriculturist than a steam-philosopher, not knowing a turnip from a potato ground, innocently made answer that "I believed it depended very much upon boiled legs of mutton," my unlucky reply set Miss Isola a laughing to a degree that disturbed her tranquillity for the only moment in our journey. I am afraid my credit sank very low with my other fellow-traveller, who had thought he had met with a *well-informed passenger*, which is an accident so desirable in a Stage Coach. We were rather less communicative, but still friendly, the rest of the way. How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to Christen an "Acrostic in a crossroad," and which I wish were worthier of the Lady they refer to. But I trust you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a Lady's good *name*. Your candour must [*at deleted*] acknowledge that they are written *strait*. And now, dear Madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my sense of the friendly reception I found at Fornham. Mr. Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him [p. 2] on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good Master of the Family at Fornham, though heartily I should rejoiced to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think we agreed at Fornham, that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged, person.

My Sister, and Miss Isola, join in respects to Mr Williams and yourself, and I beg to be remembered kindly to the Miss Hammonds and the two Gentlemen whom I had the good fortune to meet at your house. I have not forgotten the Election in which you are interesting yourself, and the little that I can, I will do immediately. Miss Isola will have the pleasure of writing to you next week, and we shall hope, at your leisure, to hear of your own health, &c. I am, Dear Madam, with great respect,

Your obliged Charles Lamb.

[Postscript in Miss Isola's hand:] I must just add a line to beg you will let us hear from you—my dear M^{rs}. Williams. I have just received the forwarded letter. Fornham we have talked about constantly, and I

felt quite strange at this house the first day. I will attend to all you said, my dear Madam.

ALS, 2 pages. Single sheet, 22.2 x 18.5 cm.

Wove paper. Watermark: HAGAR & SON | 1828.

Seal: heavy, red.

Postmarks: 1. AP | [blurred] | 1830; 2. NIGHT | AP · 2 | 1830.

Address: (center panel of p. 2) Mr^s. Williams | Rectory | Fornham All Saints | Bury St. Edmunds.

Provenance: Unknown.

Published in Lucas, III, 257–259 (no. 828), with 2 substantive and 20 accidental (and 1 substantive and 2 accidental in the postscript) variations from the Lewis MS.

Notes: 1. Enfield is in Middlesex, near Epping Forest.

2. Emma Isola, daughter of Charles Isola of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and later wife to the publisher Edward Moxon, was when orphaned adopted by Charles and Mary Lamb. While visiting the Williamses in February she caught a cold that verged on pneumonia. Lamb's first letter on the subject was written on 26 February.

3. The "Election" in which Mrs. Williams was interested seems to have been a Church of England or University (possibly both) appointment.

4. The MS of "Acrostic in a crossroad" is not with the letter in the Lewis Collection—or anywhere that I know of—but Lucas prints it (III, 259):

Go little Poem, and present
Respectful terms of compliment;
A gentle lady bids thee speak!
Courteous is *she*, tho' thou be weak—
Evoke from Heaven as thick as manna

Joy after joy, on Grace Joanna:
On Fornham's Glebe and Pasture land
A blessing pray. Long, long may stand,
Not touched by Time, the Rectory blithe;
No grudging churl dispute his Tithe;
At Easter be the offerings due

With cheerful spirit paid; each pew
In decent order filled; no noise
Loud intervene to drown the voice,
Learning, or wisdom of the Teacher;
Impressive be the Sacred Preacher,
And strict his notes on holy page;
May young and old from age to age
Salute, and still point out, 'The good man's Parsonage!'

5. Here published by permission of Methuen & Company, Limited, 11 New Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4.

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Mrs. Williams
Rectory
Fornham All Saints
Bury St. Edmunds.