

DERBYSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL  
AND  
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**Letters of a Derbyshire Squire and Poet  
in the early Nineteenth Century.**

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Edited with notes by the REV. PREBENDARY  
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THE six letters here published were written by Francis Noel Clarke Mundy, of Markeaton Hall, Derby, to his friend and former schoolfellow, the Rev. Philip Williams, between the years 1805 and 1813. The son of Wrightson Mundy, who built the existing house at Markeaton, he was born in 1739 and succeeded his father in 1762. He was twice married; first in July, 1767 to Elizabeth Ayrton, who died in the following year without issue, and secondly in 1770 to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Robert Burdett of Foremark, by whom he had two sons, Francis, who succeeded him, and Charles Godfrey, who married Harriet Massingberd, heiress of Ormsby, co. Lincoln.

He was High Sheriff of Derbyshire in 1772, and died Oct. 23, 1815; his wife had predeceased him in 1807. He had a sister Mary, who in 1768 married Nicholas [Heath] Nicholas, of Boys Court, Kent, and lived at Bowbridge, in the parish of Mackworth. Nicholas died there in 1807;

his widow survived him till 1819. She is the "Mrs. Nicholas," who is frequently mentioned in the letters. Another sister, Millicent, married Richard French, of Abbots Hill, Derby, and their eldest son, Richard Forester French, who took the name of Forester, is the Dr. Forester of the letters.

F.N.C.M. was educated first at Repton, where he entered in 1749, later at Warwick, and afterwards at Winchester and New College, Oxford, where he matriculated in November, 1757, and was "created" M.A. in 1762. He only appears, however, on the "Long Roll" of Winchester for the year 1756, being then a Commoner in Fifth Book. As we know that he was at Warwick in 1752, when he befriended Richard Lovell Edgeworth there, the probability is that he remained there, till he went to Winchester for one year before going up to Oxford. A letter from Edgeworth, dated Jan. 10, 1801, and preserved among the Markeaton papers, speaks gratefully of the elder boy's kindness, nearly 50 years before. He was the author of two "admired poems" as the phrase then ran: "Needwood Forest" (1776) and "The Fall of Needwood," written after the timber in the Forest had been cut down for the building of warships.

He was on terms of friendly correspondence with Miss Anna Seward, "The Swan of Lichfield," whose letters show a marked, not to say enthusiastic, admiration of his poetry; and his own copy of "Needwood Forest" contains a number of congratulatory verses, sent him by persons of literary note, such as Dr. Erasmus Darwin, and others. "Needwood Forest" was first printed at Lichfield in 1776, and was reprinted by Drewry of Derby in 1811. "The Fall of Needwood" appeared in 1808, also printed by Drewry, and both poems were re-issued in a smaller form, with several other pieces, by Richardson of Derby, in 1830.

He has also been credited by some with the authorship

of some "Epistles to the Great, from Aristippus in Retirement," of which three appeared anonymously in 1757, and a fourth in the following year, as well as with that of a small volume of "Poems" printed at Oxford in 1768; but the authorship of the Epistles of Aristippus is assigned by Halkett and Laing in their *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature* to John Gilbert Cooper, and this certainly seems more reasonable, than that Mundy should have composed these poems, while still an undergraduate at Oxford.

He was for many years Chairman of Quarter Sessions and his bust by Chantrey, with a long and eulogistic inscription may be seen in the Grand Jury Room of the County Hall in Derby.

His correspondent, Philip Williams, came of a family long and closely associated with Winchester and New College. He was born in 1742 and was thus three years Mundy's junior. He appears in the list of those elected "ad Winton" in 1755, and is placed in Fifth Book "media pars." Next year he is Mundy's class-mate in the Senior Fifth, and stays on at Winchester till he becomes Head of the School in 1759. He matriculated as Scholar of New College, March, 1760, and was Fellow of New College, 1762-69, and of Winchester College, 1769-1819. He held the living of Compton, Hants., from 1781, and was Prebendary of Winchester from 1797 till his death in Dec., 1830. He also held other livings in the neighbourhood, and was Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons (Charles Woolfram Cornwall) from 1784 to 1789. He married Sarah, eldest daughter of the Rev. Thomas Collins, B.D. Second Master of Winchester College, and by her, who died 1787, had two sons; Philip, a barrister, who is mentioned in these letters as doing very well in his profession, and Charles (b. 1784) who was tutor to the son of the Lord Chesterfield, who occurs so often in the correspondence. This latter was Philip Stanhope (b. 1755)

who in 1773 succeeded his cousin (the Lord Chesterfield of the *Letters to his Son*) as 5th Earl. He was twice married, and the death of the second Countess is mentioned in one of the letters, and incidentally helps to fix its date as 1813. His house at Bretby (now the Derbyshire County Council Orthopædic Hospital), is uniformly spoken of in the letters as "Bradby." The other undated letter may be assigned to the year 1809, by its mention of "Mr. Wardle's motion," *i.e.* the resolution brought forward on Jan. 27 of that year by Col. G. Ll. Wardle for an enquiry into the alleged sale of military honours by the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke, which resulted in the Duke's resignation of his office as Commander-in-Chief. In another instance, it seems possible, if not probable, that the date "January 11th, 1809," should be read as "1810" for reasons given in the note appended thereto.

The letters breathe, throughout, the spirit of warm friendship, ripening in the later examples into that of genuine affection. "Dear Williams" of 1805 and 1809 has become "My dear Friend" in 1813, and this, at a period of considerable formality in letter-writing, means a good deal. The sentiments are those of a man of genuine literary taste, as well as of a peace-loving county magistrate and loyal Wykehamist. In his younger days, F.N.C.M. was an enthusiastic follower of the sport of coursing, which he humorously alludes to as his "profession" in the letter of Jan. 6, 1805. He was also Master of the "Markeaton Hunt," and his portrait in the Hunt uniform, painted by Wright of Derby, hangs in company with five others in the like uniform and by the same artist, in the Corporation Art Gallery at Derby, on loan by the writer of these notes, who is the great-great-grandson of F. N. C. Mundy.

The letters here printed are part of a large collection of Philip Williams' correspondence, in the possession of his great-grandson Philip Williams, esq., of Newbury,

Berks., who has kindly allowed their publication. Our thanks are due to his daughter, Mrs. E. Jervoise, for much information regarding her ancestor's relationships, as well as to Herbert Chitty, esq., F.S.A., for notes on various Wykehamists mentioned in the letters. The plate at the beginning of this article is a reproduction of the engraving by Charles Turner after the picture painted by R. Reinagle in 1809, representing F. N. C. Mundy with his grandson William, with copies of his poetical works and magistrates' manuals on the table before him.

Markeaton, January 6th, 1805.

My dear Williams,

I most sincerely wish you could have sent me a better account of your daughter. This is a most severe stroke indeed. The excellent qualities of her mind and disposition support her admirably, I have no doubt, under bodily sufferings; and your own resources are the best which such afflictions admit of. Your friends must feel much for you all; and allow me to assure you that amongst the warmest of them I shall be at all times anxious to hear of you; and happy, if it may be so, in a favourable report. I sent [a] hare a week ago; and will repeat it. At this season, and so near Derby, I have no other game.

You will be pleased to learn in answer to your friendly inquiries that I and my family are well. I have hitherto stood the winter without any complaint; but I do not much brave its inclemencies. Messrs. Frost and Snow have now no temptations out of doors for me; and they meet with so warm a reception within that they are obliged to relax and to lay aside much of their naturally ferocious character. I mortally hate them, and by no means lament their late disposition to break with me, but hope earnestly that it will permanently continue. Mrs. Mundy enjoys her customary good health. My eldest son<sup>1</sup> is well, with

<sup>1</sup> Francis Mundy, b. 1771, m. 1800 Sarah d. of John Leaper Newton, of Mickleover. His eldest son was William, b. 1801, d. 1877, for many years

his family, on his militia duty at Newcastle; my youngest<sup>1</sup> on leave of absence, amongst his friends in this country, but not with me at present. The Bowbridge pair<sup>2</sup> have been sometimes with their son-in-law Mr. Gell and his family were well when I last heard of them. Mrs. Nicholas very anxious to know whether I had received any letter from you. Thank you for communicating the particulars of our friend's monument.<sup>3</sup> *Fervidus* is an epithet admirably well appropriated to the Poet, and as you and I well remember might have been equally so to the man. I have lately read Almon's life, letters, etc. of Wilkes.<sup>4</sup> There are four or five letters from Dr. Warton. One of them gives an account in his own peculiar manner, of being mounted on a horse of Lord Malmsbury's,<sup>5</sup> indeed his Lordship's own pad, reputedly quiet, and probably perfectly so in fact. But you know our friend could never ride any horse but Pegasus; so down he came; and was much injured by his fall. I remember him here on a Welch pony, to the management of which he was by no means equal; rather it was impossible for any horse however well bitted and broken in to his business and paces however well inclined from tempers etc., to accommodate himself to the *fervidus* of such a Rider, whose

M.P. for South Derbyshire. Francis Mundy's commission as Cornet in the Derbyshire Corps of Gentlemen and Yeomanry, commanded by Lt.-Col. Henry Bathurst, is dated Aug. 25, 1794.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Godfrey b. 1774, m. 1806. Harriet, d. of C. B. Massingberd, of Ormsby Hall, co. Lincoln, d. 1838. From him are descended the Massingberd Mundys of Ormsby.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Nicholas and Mary his wife, sister of F.N.C.M. Their daughter Georgiana m. Philip Gell, esq. of Hopton.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Warton, D.D., 2nd Master at Winchester, 1755, Headmaster, 1766, resigned 1793. A familiar figure in London Society. He d. Feb. 1800 and was buried in the N. aisle of Winchester Cathedral. His epitaph composed by Dr. Parr, contains the following lines:

"Poeta fervidus, facilis, expolitus:  
Criticus eruditus, perspicax, elegans."

<sup>4</sup> John Almon, bookseller and journalist, published, in 1805, 5 vols. of "Correspondence of the late John Wilkes with his friends."

<sup>5</sup> James 1st Lord Malmesbury had been a Commoner at Winchester. He was "Harris" on "Long Rolls," 1759-1762.

motions were no doubt as oddly perpetual, desultory, and irregular in a saddle as they notoriously were in a footpath or even in an armed chair.

Having mentioned Almons publication as my evening's amusement, I am led to telling you that Mr. Hayley's late work *The Triumph of Music*<sup>1</sup> has fallen into my hands. I wish you may meet with it and that you would give me your opinion of it. I have no great confidence in my own critical powers; and I am open to correction. Nor did I ever open a book without an inclination towards the author, and a tendency to being pleased. The name of Hayley would raise some expectation, and I am favourably inclined towards him from the friendship which prevails between him and several of my particular acquaintance, especially my sister Mrs. Nicholas. But I confess *between ourselves* that this *Triumph of Music* seizes on a poor story abounding with very ridiculous incidents, and told in most feeble verse. The whole appears to me to be open to ridicule; some parts, at the beginning to serious censure. It is really a matter of surprise to me how a man conversant in poetry, whose whole time (as I believe Hayley's to be) is given up to the Muses, could contrive to put together no better stuff—Pray borrow it to read it—but do not buy it. You will smile at a certain *trip* which even the most pure friendship makes in this story, and you will be astonished at the convenient goodness of an excellent Aunt, and at the introduction of apparitions which may possibly promote their appearance but without horror amongst young female readers of this most virtuous and exemplary history. I leave to such admiration as it may create in you the dignity and sublimity of a particular verse in which the exalted heroine vows that she will not marry the man thought of for her by her father. It is quite ingenious how the hero is freed from certain family

<sup>1</sup> "The Triumph of Music" by W. Hayley, was published in 1804. He had previously published his "Life of Milton," 1794.

incumbrances in order to fit him for being the hero. Under the title of the work you may be will stare to find that Music does *not* triumph in the catastrophe for as sure as a gun the old fellow would have stabbed his daughter in spite of her singing had he not been otherwise prevented—but you will afterwards admire how matters are *brought about to the theme* by the dramatis personæ all agreeing to a song at the conclusion—Io triumphe—now pray give me your opinion, after an idle hour may have been occupied by the perusal of this work. I may be wrong; but if so I will never again trust myself so far as even to back a vagrant pup<sup>1</sup> without Counsel's opinion. You see I can't help alluding to what I call my profession. Next week comes on tax business. As a Commissioner I fear I shall be compelled to enforce the payment of such taxes as will exempt some people in future by enabling them to obtain a certificate of their being actually on the parish; this is dreadful—but will prove too true I fear. Mrs. Mundy joins in regards, etc.; with, my dear Williams ever sincerely yours.

F. N. C. Mundy.

Markeaton, January 11th, 1809.

Dear Williams,

It is long since I heard *from* you, and at our great distance there is no means of otherwise hearing *of* you. I shall be glad to know that you are well, and that you have begun the new year under favourable auspices; venturing to hope, that the better account, which you last gave me of your daughter may be still better, when you favour me with a letter—I am at present confined to the house by *gout*—a complaint by no means habitual, which seized me suddenly two days ago only, and indeed with much violence in one foot; the severe pain kept me from sleeping one night, and plagues me yet; but is so much

<sup>1</sup> F.N.C.M. was, in his younger days, very fond of coursing.

abated that I entertain fair hopes of its speedy departure; and in all other respects I am full as well in health as I have been of some time. Of public matters I have no great heart.<sup>1</sup> On the discovery (and I am led to believe it is truly so) that the enthusiasm first talked of, as prevailing very generally with the people of Spain, did not exist, my hopes of the possibility of success there against the French, slackened daily, and now I think have quite vanished. I confess I expect to hear of nothing but mortifying retreats and adandonment of a hopeless cause, or of unprofitable bloodshed, and witnessing the grief of many acquaintance on Family losses, of Sons or Brothers. Of private happiness there seems hitherto to be no great diminution generally speaking. In this neighbourhood Festivities and Christmas Balls are full as frequent and as brilliant as in any season within my remembrance, and I hear of the like everywhere as far [as] my information of events extends. Here indeed we are more than ordinarily excited to such things, by the presence of our young Marquiss of Hartington,<sup>2</sup> who is much at Kedleston, and with the great families in this part of the County. He has the misfortune to be deficient in the organs of hearing to a very considerable degree; but tho' this prevents him from taking much part in general conversation, music is by no means thrown away upon him; in its pleasures and that of dancing he particularly delights. The imperfection in his hearing, tho' nothing like amounting to deafness, is

<sup>1</sup> The tone of Mr. Mundy's comment on public affairs and his pessimistic outlook regarding the war in the Peninsula, might accord with January, 1809, but corresponds even more closely with the state of public opinion, a year later. The death of Sir John Moore at Corunna, and the subsequent successes of the French, had not taken place as early as Jan. 11th, 1809, whereas the accession to office of the Percival administration in Oct., 1809, was at a time of deep national depression "In the nation at large," says J. R. Green "the fit of enthusiasm had been followed by a fit of despair, and the city of London even petitioned for a withdrawal of the English forces from the Peninsula. Napoleon seemed irresistible . . ." Short History of the English People, 1894 Ed., p. 1812.

<sup>2</sup> William Spencer Cavendish, b. 1790 succ. his father as 6th Duke of Devonshire July, 1811; d. unm. 1858.

unfortunately disadvantageous to a youth of his rank, desirous by good humour and attention to recommend himself to the neighbourhood. You will excuse such particular mention of a young man so great in this County. I have read Symond's life of Milton,<sup>1</sup> which was interesting, as to any objections to what Tom Warton<sup>2</sup> has said of the Author, in his volume of Milton's smaller poems, he may differ with him on good authorities perhaps; but I feel hurt when he goes afterwards so far as to express considerable surprise that Mr. T. Warton should have acquired any sort of reputation from his writings, and to prognosticate that his celebrity will be of very short continuance. In short he treats him with contempt. He may be right in giving the preference to our friend the Doctor, his brother, but must we believe that Tom has no claim to merit? I think Symonds does allow that something is due to him as a useful *labourer* in his Hist: of Poetry, and works of that sort. There is so much of party and politics in most writers that their bias will, and generally does prevail. I believe however that Symond's life of Milton is on the whole thought better of than Hayley's. Have you read either or both? I meet with no judges of such things hereabouts.

Having mentioned Hayley, I must tell you that Mrs. Nicholas, who is intimate with him, furnished him with an opportunity of seeing my Fall of Needwood,<sup>3</sup> and he sent me some complimentary verses, which you will see when I have an opportunity of sending you a copy of my production, which I have printed to present to particular friends. Shall you be in Town next month? If so I

<sup>1</sup> Charles Symmons, 1749-1826 published in 1806, a Life of Milton, prefixed to an edition of his Prose Works; the second edition with fresh information was published separately in 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Warton, B.D., brother of Joseph Warton, Headmaster of Winchester. Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1757-67. Poet Laureate, 1785, died 1790. He published the History of English Poetry in 1774, and edited Milton's Early Poems in 1785.

<sup>3</sup> Printed in 1808.

could send it you at that time; if not pray direct me how best to forward it. I shall not forget to send a copy to your Sister at Lincoln,<sup>1</sup> who paid me the compliment of accepting one of the first poem, when I had the pleasure of her company here with you. I have a desire to present one to our friend the Bishop of Norwich, who formerly seemed pleased with its predecessor; but perhaps a merely local poem of this sort, though possibly interesting to my friends hereabouts, and the neighbours of the favourite Forest, would not be worth his attention, though I have experienced sufficiently his friendship to expect something of the same partiality, which on the same ground, you kindly manifested when you read it. There are some few additions and alterations made since that time.

Mrs. Nicholas has lately been with me; and knowing that I intended writing to you, charged me with her very best remembrances. My son and his wife are amidst the joyous doings at Lord Vernons:<sup>2</sup> also Charles and his wife, who lately with great difficulty surmounted the snow-drifts of Lincolnshire to reach this County. I am not famous, as you will recollect, for writing *fair* letters, but my present necessary posture, under my troublesome complaint, will apologise for some errors and slovenliness in this letter. It will be great satisfaction to me to receive

<sup>1</sup> After the death of P.W's. father in 1749 his widow was re-married in 1762 to the Rev. John Gordon, D.D. Prebendary of Lincoln, and successively Archdeacon of Buckingham and of Lincoln. On removing to Lincoln, she took with her, her two young daughters Frances and Anne, and it is one of these who is here alluded to. By her second husband Mrs. Gordon had two sons George and Charles, of whom the first was Dean of Lincoln 1810-1845. (*See* note 2, p. 15). Mrs. Gordon died in 1781.

<sup>2</sup> The natural inference to draw, from the mention of "the joyous doings at Lord Vernon's" would be that the words refer to a christening, coming-of-age, or a marriage in the family; but I have been unable to trace any such either in January, 1809, or January, 1810. The nearest approach is the marriage in Sept., 1809, of Georgiana, daughter of the second Lord Vernon to Edward, Lord Suffield, but the "joyous doings" on this occasion would hardly be prolonged until the January following.

a favourable account of yourself and of all belonging to you.

I am my dear Williams,  
Ever truly yours  
F. N. C. Mundy.

Markeaton, April 21st [1809]

My dear Williams,

I was not at all surprised to learn from your sister, who favoured me with a letter, on receiving a copy of my late poetical production,<sup>1</sup> that the melancholy event of Mrs. Cornwall's death,<sup>2</sup> though you seemed prepared for it, had affected you severely, and that you had suffered consequently from nervous complaints. She added that you had since assured her of your amendment, and it will give me great pleasure to hear from yourself, that home and quiet, and still more the better state of your daughter's health, which she mentions have restored you completely; and that in your own peculiarly happy soundness of both body and mind, you are enjoying domestic comfort in your enviable situation near Winchester. How far such retirement may be disturbed, and your neighbourhood be agitated by the exertions of Mr. Cobbett<sup>3</sup> I cannot tell; but I am inclined to suppose that you will be as little concerned as possible in the expected bustle. In some places, Berkshire for instance, the avowed purpose of the County meeting seems to have been departed from to

<sup>1</sup> The Fall of Needwood.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Cornwall wife of the Speaker, C. W. Cornwall, died Mar. 8, 1809.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to Cobbett's support of Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle's motion for enquiry into the misdoings of Mrs. Clarke and the Duke of York, as mentioned in the introduction to this article. The *Derby Mercury* of Apr. 13, 1809 records a meeting of the Mayor and Corporation, who pass a resolution of thanks to Col. Wardle for his conduct in this respect, and the issue of April 20 gives an account of the public meeting which F.N.C.M. alludes to. At this the Mayor, Dr. Forester and Mr. Strutt spoke in favour of a vote of thanks to Col. Wardle. The High Sheriff [Charles Upton, of Derby, esq.] supported, by the Rev. Charles Stead Hope (and as the letter states, by Daniel Parker Coke) moved the adjournment of the debate, but the motion was overwhelmingly defeated.

great lengths indeed. The late meeting in Derby *stuck more closely to the text*. Though a nephew of mine, Dr. Forester<sup>1</sup> was a leader of the meeting, I heard nothing of it before the requisition to the Mayor appeared. I was glad to hear that he was temperate and did not give offence in his conduct in the part he took. Our old friend P. Coke<sup>2</sup> opposed the resolution of thanks to Mr. Wardle and though left with not more than four or five in the minority of a most numerous assembly, I hope he has not made many enemies. You will probably see these proceedings in print somewhere. I have nothing to do with the Town, and I am not at present apprehensive that a County Meeting will be set on foot to plague and divide us. Coke received the thanks of the Corporation of Nottingham for his conduct on the Inquiry but he was censured at a subsequent Town's meeting as not having acted in a manly and consistent manner. He had voted for Mr. Banks' motion in preference to Mr. Wardle's. Dissensions are always bad things; horrible at my time of life. I have a most wretched cold; a general complaint hereabouts; I am almost blind with it, and so dull as to despair of amusing you. My chief purpose is to enquire after you. Ever my dear friend sincerely yours

F. N. C. Mundy.

[on inside sheet]

P.S. I find I have proved my assertion of dulness by using my paper so irregularly. I wish to add that a

<sup>1</sup> Millicent daughter of Wrightson Mundy, and so sister to F.N.C.M. married Richard French, of Abbots Hill, Derby (who died May, 1801). Their eldest son Richard Forester French, became Richard Forester Forester, presumably on inheriting Bradfield (or Broadfield) co. Herts. from his great-aunt, Ann, sister of Wrightson Mundy, and widow of William Forester, in 1779. This is the "Dr. Forester" mentioned in this letter and in that of Oct. 7, 1813. He was M.D. and died in 1843, aged 72.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Parker Coke, son of Thos. Coke, of a younger branch of the Cokes of Trusley, b. 1745. M.P. for Derby, 1775-80, for Nottingham, 1780-1812, d. 6 Dec., 1825, bur. All Saints, Derby. He appears in one of Wright's finest "Conversation Pieces," in company with the Rev. D'Ewes and Mrs. Coke of Brookhill.

person of this neighbourhood lately met near Coventry a Clergyman who entered into conversation with him, and discovering that he was a Derbyshire man, enquired if he knew me. This person was well able to give him an account of me, being one with whom I have had acquaintance and concerns full 30 years. The gentleman said his name was *James Hayward*, and seemed much pleased to hear of me. Surely our old friends name was *Charles*. But it could be no other. If I knew where to find him, I would write to him. Business or engagements of some kind may again bring him this way; and I should be truly happy to see him. 'Tis but a step hither from Coventry, half a day's ride. Pray do you know where he is settled? Nothing is to be learned here of old Oxford and Winchester friends.

Markeaton, June 28th [1813].

My dear Friend,

It is my fault that nothing has passed between us since you wrote to me from your Chapter house in February, but I have had the pleasure of seeing your son very lately, who assures me of the continuance of your good health, not having it, however, in his power to tell me that you think of an excursion into Lincolnshire in the course of the summer. I wish I could jog you a little towards a determination in favour of it as I flatter myself you would not object to swerving a little out of your direct course, and making me again happy, as you certainly would do, by your company here. Four months to be sure is a wide gap in the correspondence of friends; yet I am not aware that any pleasant subjects have in that time occurred, excepting that there was room for me to have congratulated you on the credit your eldest son<sup>1</sup> has obtained

<sup>1</sup> Philip Williams, elected Scholar of Winchester, 1792. Fellow of New College, 1798. Called to the Bar, 1806; Vinerian Professor of Law at Oxford, Recorder of Winchester, died 1843.

for himself, and honour for you, in the discharge of his professional duties, distinguishing himself in the manner he has done in the Superior Court—and it would, I am sure, have given you great pleasure to know that my grandson<sup>1</sup> was so perfectly recovered from his afflicting illness, that he returned to Stretham after the Easter Holidays, and has continued without any return of his complaint. Your son Charles came to Derby to meet the Dean of Lincoln<sup>2</sup> on his way to Bradby, and was good enough to come time enough in the day to give me his company for an hour, bringing me a very obliging and pressing invitation from Lord Chesterfield, which I would have accepted almost immediately, had my health allowed me. But for the last month I have been considerably unwell—an Invalid, but not laid up by decided illness. I am getting better, but am not yet myself again by any means. My spirits however have not failed me, as to myself, tho' I have undergone much concern for the loss of several particular friends and some near Relations—nor did I hear of the death of your friend and my school-fellow also, Mr. Withers,<sup>3</sup> with indifference. I heard of his death from a pertish Hampshire attorney, who had business at our Sessions. But as this gentleman, to whom I took the liberty of making inquiries (vexed, I suppose, because he had failed in a bad case, which he brought before the Bench) was short in his answers. I learned no particulars. I was however sensible of his loss to you in particular, as your situation was favourable to the valuable intercourse kept up between you and your families. Lady Chesterfield<sup>4</sup> is deservedly lamented in the neighbourhood of Bradby, and I believe everywhere. The

<sup>1</sup> William Mundy, b. 1801, succ. to Markeaton, 1837, M.P. for S. Derbyshire, d. 1877.

<sup>2</sup> George Gordon, D.D., Dean of Lincoln, 1810-45. See note 1, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Lovelace Bigg, Scholar of Winchester, 1755, took the additional surname of Wither on succeeding to the Wither estates in 1789. He died Feb., 1813.

<sup>4</sup> The second Lady Chesterfield died 31 May, 1813.

melancholy circumstance of her long illness was unfortunate for Charles, though affording him an opportunity of shewing such attentions to Lord Chesterfield as would increase his attachment to him, which I hear from all, is, as it deserves to be, cordially warm.

My sister Mrs. Nicholas is now with me. She has partaken deeply of the affliction of her daughter Mrs. Gell, and that whole family, occasioned lately by the death of the youngest daughter, ten years old. She was a remarkably fine girl, possessed of really uncommon talents. Her death was occasioned by that horrible complaint, water in the head, under which she lingered some weeks in an incurable state, this event has shattered my sister extremely, and has left her daughter and Mr. Gell also in a state of sorrow from which they recover very slowly indeed.

You inquire after our old friend Parker Coke.<sup>1</sup> He left us for London about a month ago. He was better then than of some late years, and Coldecott writes word to a common friend here, that Coke in his advanced age, has the bloom of youth on his cheeks, which is more than his greatest admirers could say of him in his season due. His successor at Nottingham, Lord Rancliffe, is, I hear, sick of his connection with that abominable place, and the partiality of his friends there is so much on the decline that his defeat at another election is confidently talked of.

Certainly I have not been in the habit of addicting myself to reading sermons. But I had read some of them many years ago to my father, who was particularly fond of them. And on your commendation of them now, I have turned to them, and have been gratified by the perusal of a few of them intending to go through the whole of them; but I fear I shall not make myself so familiar with [them] as you have done—I must enquire for Bowyer's Literary

<sup>1</sup> Parker Coke resigned his seat for Nottingham in 1812.

Anecdotes,<sup>1</sup> which I have hitherto neglected to do. I have seen in our Society—Green's Extracts<sup>1</sup> from the Diary of a Lover of Literature;<sup>2</sup> I think it very amusing; but I am not pleased with its agreeing with Johnson's criticisms on Gray. It is an excellent lounging book. I love such idle books after my dinner and the newspapers, as require little attention. There I have no objection to a tolerably good Novel, such as *Pride and Prejudice*. Miss Edgworth I much like. You must remember Edgworth—a man eccentric, talkative to a tiresome degree; but possessing considerable talent. He and his family were passing through this Country, and breakfasted with me lately.<sup>3</sup> His daughter, the Authoress, plain, not young, not putting herself at all forward, can seldom get in for conversation when her father is present, so great an engrosser is he, but a few sentences from her indicate cleverness, tho' always unaffectedly delivered. She draws characters admirably in her Tales. She has something in the Press now. Her *Irish Bulls*, tho' well enough, please me less than most of her other writings. Edgworth after burying her Mother, a Lichfield lady, married that mother's full sister, buried her, and *I believe another wife*, before he took that which accompanied him hither lately. She is a pretty young Woman; I was going to pay my attention to his daughter as Miss Edgworth, when he presented his young wife to me.<sup>4</sup>

Pray when you write, or be prepared when I see you, as I hope to do ere long, to explain to me the merits of the *Arabian Nights*. I think I have read or heard that

<sup>1</sup> William Bowyer (1699-1777), the "Learned Printer," published in partnership with John Nichols, "Literary Anecdotes extending from 1722 to 1777."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Green (1769-1825), pub. 1810.

<sup>3</sup> See "Varieties of Many Years," by Emily Mundy, p. 16. F.N.C.M., though right as to the number of Edgworth's wives, has got the order wrong. He married (1) Anna Maria Elers, 1763; (2) Honora Sneyd of Lichfield in 1773; (3) Elizabeth her sister, 1700; (4) Miss Beaufort in 1798; His daughter Maria "the Authoress," was a child of the first marriage (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*).

<sup>4</sup> Does this mean that F.N.C.M. was going to pay her his attention as Miss Edgworth, when her husband presented her as Mrs. E.?

eminent men have professed to take very great delight in them, and made it a rule to read them once a year at least. I have lately turned to them; I cannot relish them, but I dare say the fault is in myself. The story of Alnaschar introduced in many publications, I think the Spectator for one, is very good indeed. There is something likeable in the spendthrift beggar who would not receive alms without a slap in the face also, but as to the Wonderful Lamp and the Forty Thieves, I would break the first, and hang the last in less time than the hero's female slave choked them. I obtained this Frank some days ago and did not till just now discover that its powers were expiring, this has driven me to shameful scribbling. With my family's best regards to you and yours, Truly yours

F. N. C. Mundy.

Markeaton, July 26th, 1813.

My dear Friend,

I hope your Rheumatism is gone, and that you are thinking of an excursion this way; and you have many calls towards us. Should your complaint continue you should, by all means, spend three weeks at Buxton. It is really wonderful what those baths have done. Instances perpetually occur hereabouts of poor people returning in a sound state to their labours, who had been sent thither by their parishes as Rheumatic cripples. If your disease continues to be obstinate I would strongly advise the use of these baths. Several friends of mine have been relieved by them from great sufferings and have been preserved from a return of them for a long time afterwards. Now is the high season; there is a great assemblage of good company, the accommodations are good, four or five hours would take you thither from this place, and there are daily means of conveyance.

The Races at Derby are fixed for the 24th of August. I shall have nothing to do with them. Perhaps I may

lodge my youngest son and his small party. My eldest, you know, does not reside under my roof, and he is just now gone with his wife and seven children to London, Streatham, to accompany them to Ramsgate where they mean to spend his holidays. He is quite well now, but after the severe illness he experienced last Autumn Sea Bathing and air are now recommended by way of prevention, against next Winter. He is indebted to you for the obliging kindness Mr. Hill has shown him.

I had begun this letter, when your son Charles arrived from Bradby to breakfast with me. He seems remarkably well, and if he is not very happy his looks are very treacherous. Though better in health than when I last wrote, I have not found myself unable to pay my intended visit to Lord Chesterfield. Indeed I am still in a course of medicines which require strict regularity and habits which can no where be properly observed but at home; and most of my sleep, for a considerable time, has been obtained by lying down an hour after my dinner. However, I think I daily gain ground, and it would do me good to see you whenever you please. The Assizes here begin on Saturday the 7th of next Month. My attendance at which will be very short. The business of the G. Jury cannot last two hours, as we have not more than two or three prisoners. I have for some years *cut* the Sheriff, But I make a point of dining with the Judges, and shall do so now, as my old and much respected friend Baron Thomson is one of them.

I most certainly well remember our old schoolfellow, now Sir Robt. Hughes.<sup>1</sup> I have ever strongly retained that partiality and regard for him which his most friendly acquaintance claimed from me, while we were at Oxford together. You perhaps forget that you and I have never met, without my asking you particularly after him; and

<sup>1</sup> Elected to Winchester, 1751, afterwards Magd. Coll., Oxford. Rector of Frimley St. Mary and Weston, Suffolk, 1769, until his death in 1814. His father had been created a Baronet, and he succeeded to the Baronetcy.

I now particularly envy you in your opportunities of seeing him.

Thank you for your consolatory effusions in verse over your worthy and lamented neighbour. I cannot answer your questions why the most opposite passions, joy of grief, should have recourse to poetry to pour out their fellings, but so it is; and so they best express themselves as is exemplified not only by Dryden and Collins in their celebrated odes, but by most of the best Poets I believe in all languages.

You must say more to me to make me understand why the Arabian Nights have obtained the high praise bestowed on them by many writers of allowed literary taste; and your son tells me that he believes Dr. Warton has somewhere spoken of them with the warmest enthusiasm. He is a warm man, and the occasion of these tales was of a warm nature. I scarcely think you read these tales to your children without considerable garbling. But I conclude they are admirable though I have not yet taken them rightly. I will seek out the books you recommend. At present I am engaged and much gratified in reading Eustace's Classical Tour through Italy.<sup>1</sup> You are competent to taste it in a higher degree than I am, and I venture to recommend it to you. His reflections, etc., etc., on leaving Rome after a long residence there strike me much, as interesting and just.

Mrs. Nicholas is now with me—she has suffered greatly by the loss of a favourite grandchild, the youngest daughter of Mrs. Gell and the parents are still far from being consoled. It was a most afflicting case, and the sorrow and sufferings of all parties unhappily complicated. She desires her best regards and is pleased with the hopes of seeing you.

I am my dear old friend ever truly yours

F. N. C. Mundy.

<sup>1</sup> "A Classical Tour through Italy . . ." by John Chetwode Eustace, 1813, and frequently reprinted.

Whether Mr. Williams adopted the suggestion of a visit to Buxton or not, we do not know; but he evidently paid a visit to Markeaton among other places, before the following letter, which is the last of the series, was written.

Markeaton, Oct. 7th, 1813.

My dear Friend,

I was glad to hear from your son, of your safe return to your Family, after an excursion which, I hope, was as pleasant to yourself, as it was to your friends, on this side the Kingdom. I can strongly vouch for its being so to all here, and think I can answer for elsewhere. Lord Chesterfield and Charles came to me on Sunday, preparatory to their attendance and performance of the duties they had undertaken for the next day on the Infirmary Anniversary, of which I know you were apprized. I had a few friends to meet them at dinner here; his Lordship was in good spirits, very obliging, and very entertaining. Parker Coke's old breeches and dirty shoes and stockings furnished the means of considerable humour afterwards. You know our old friend Coke is no changeling. You had informed Ld. Chesterfield of my customary *siesto*, and your kindness was not lost. He soon gave me to understand that the terms on which he would ever again enter this house, were that I should retire to my couch after dinner. I honoured his visit too much to risk the loss of another.

The day of the Anniversary was a wet one unfortunately, which kept many from the Church, where, however, the attendance, though thin, was very respectable and the collection at the door afterwards amounted to full as much as was expected. Indeed Ld. Chesterfield's donation of £50 forcibly pulled down the scale. I need not tell you that your son's sermon was impressively appropriate in the matter of it, or that<sup>1</sup> it was well delivered.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Williams, Scholar of Winchester, 1797, afterwards Fellow of New College. Elected 1819 to the Winchester Fellowship, vacated by his father. Vicar of Cubley, Derbyshire and afterwards Rector of Gedling, Notts. from 1832 till his death in 1866.

You will be pleased however to hear that it was much admired and approved. The best judges said most, commending it as a sensible, well adapted composition and address. I sat next to Lord Chesterfield, who had the Mayor's situation in the Corporation Pew. I cannot describe the agitation he was in during the sermon, on account of the interest he took for Charles, he was affected even to sobbing by several parts of his discourse. He snatched my hand at the conclusion, exclaiming "Tell your friend, old Williams, that his son is nearer my heart than I can express." Though you have so lately witnessed his attachment to him, I cannot omit what I have such real satisfaction in mentioning. It is evident, too, that *you* have laid fast hold of him, and he assures me that young Phil: is uncommon pleasant, and wishes I were acquainted with him: no doubt I wish so too. But when will that good fortune befall me?

I have had some new and unpleasant complaints since you left me. Several attacks of sudden giddiness which seemed to me alarming, though I meet with people who say they are subject to them, and that they are of no great consequence. One day I was seized when riding within 200 yards of my own door. I had power to dismount and to reach a tree with the assistance of my servant. Others saw me, and with good support and guidance I reached home without being actually carried, tho' I could not have kept my legs alone, nor have taken the right direction; tho' my senses remained perfect. This, with the habitual complaints of which you have heard me complain, are said to proceed from the stomach—from a proper treatment of which I receive benefit and occasional respite from attack. I have been full as well as you saw me, during the last few days; and have closely attended the Quarter Sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday without suffering.

I believe you might hear while at Bradby that a

committee formed from the acting Governors of the County Infirmary had entered into a treaty with an Aeronaut<sup>1</sup> to ascend at a certain price; the surplus of the money collected was to be applied to the uses of the Infirmary. Perhaps it was an ill-considered matter, and hastily adopted by a certain set of our most scientific men. Their intentions were certainly good, but I am afraid the person they dealt with was ignorant. In short an immense concourse of people attended on the appointed day, which was the finest imaginable, a large sum of money was collected, but the balloon was sulky and failed. The poor undertaker got off the ground just in time (but I mean on his legs) a riot ensued, soldiers were sent for to protect the apparatus and materials, which altogether were valuable; the populace took advantage of walls and narrow passes and stoned the soldiers most unmercifully as they conducted the property to a place of safety in the Town. The Major of the Regiment is not well yet, from the severe pelting. The Committee desirous of healing the discontents of the disappointed people, wrote to *Sadler* (as they say, merely to ask his terms) he came immediately with two balloons, as I hear had several conferences with the Committee, but they could not agree, He, insisting that he was *sent for*, thinks he is ill used. Dr. Forester, it seems wrote the letter to him, which he says he shall publish to prove that he was sent for. He has left an advertisement behind him, unpleasant to the Committee, and speaking of Forester particularly as his correspondent. The latter has been so much engaged in the business that he did not attend the sessions, nor have

<sup>1</sup> See the account of the Balloon *fiasco* in the *Derby Mercury*, 12 Aug.-28 Oct, 1813. The name of the Aeronaut was Wilkes, and the ascent was fixed to take place at the Siddals, but owing to the defective state of the envelope, which was made of linen, not silk, as it should have been, and was full of rents imperfectly mended, the hydrogen gas escaped, as fast as it was generated, and no ascent was possible. The columns of the *Mercury* for the next five or six weeks contain letters, mostly pseudonyms, attacking or defending the Infirmary Committee for what they had done.

I seen him since he dined here with Ld. Chesterfield and your son, when nothing had been brought to issue I wish it is not troublesome as well as unpleasant. The walls in Derby are covered with abuse of the Committee, The credit of the Derby philosophers is sunk, and Sadler threatens them with an action. I dare say you have seen much of the abuse in the public papers, but I could add something, and I have nothing better with which I could fill my paper. Ld. Chesterfield has already obligingly invited me to spend some time with you at Bradby next year. I hope we shall then meet again as lately. I am now at home alone, but in expectation of soon seeing my eldest son, and his family from Ramsgate. I beg my best regards to the whole of yours, and am my dear Friend, ever truly yours,

F. N. C. Mundy.