

16 Cheyne Walk

12 Jan. 1871

My dear Shields

Your letter was, as you
knew beforehand, a real
relief to me. It drives
away the uneasy
feeling inevitable lately
whenever you kindly
images occurred to my
mind, & substitutes a
satisfactory one. I can
scarcely imagine with
what joy you will
attack your favorite
subject after so long being
kept at bay of it, & have
no doubt of good results.
As to the W.C. Gallery,

K U
MSS.

You work wd draw
 one there if anything
 would, but I must
 say frankly that I
 do not expect to see
 them. I have got into
 such an absolute &
 undeviating habit of
 working all day long
 somehow - whether or
 just the work I want to
 do or not - that I
 literally never go any-
 where except once in
 the year to the R.A. wooden
 Exⁿ & once nowadays
 to the Old, which I have
 not yet accomplished
 this year. I lately saw

at Graham's your two
 chalk drawings of Night
 & Morning, & thought them
 full of fine quality & more
 decided in sense of facial
 beauty than any previous
 work I had seen of yours.
 I find now that it was
 quite a mistake to draw
 on that dark blue-grey
 paper. It necessitated
 endless work to keep the
 ground down, & even
 to the last it always
 came through. The greenish
 paper (from Winsor &
 Newton - specimen
 enclosed,) is much the
 best for the purpose
 which the English makes
 afford - I have tried several

Unfortunatly the rule is
that as in France they never
make a bad tint almost
whether cheap or dear
in England they never make
a good one. This however
has no decided objection
when covered, except
that I very much regret
to say it has a tendency
to fade ~~and turn~~
& turn yellowish in parts.
I don't know whether
this is likely to cause
any decided injury to
the drawing, or whether
it would go further
underneath the
chalk. Sometimes
the paper seems to hold

But for good, & something
 to go in this way in
 spots almost at once.
 I have complained
 to W. & N. & they said
 they had heard of it
 before & referred to the
 makers who say it
 cannot be guarded
 against with this
 tint. However there
 is really no other
 tint fit to use, so
 I go on with it.

I'm glad Mitchell has
 expressed to you some
 sense of his being in the
 wrong. I expressed to
 him very decidedly
 by letter the otherward

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MSS.

position in which he
had placed me toward
you after all the
trouble you so kindly
took. I should really
hesitate to mix you
up with the matter again,
even if you were
kindly willing. Perhaps
the best thing wd be to
see if he will lend the
picture to show with
the large one when finished
& a few - they recently
completed, when I
shall be asking friends
to come & see. It could
then be photo'd at
same time. I don't

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suppose I shall get up
any kind of public
show this year, but
most likely next - one
of a few works - and
I shall then have one
other large one at least
ready - I hope the
Mazdalene - The big
Dante is approaching
completion but won't
I suppose be done quite
so soon as I thought, as
I knocked off lately to
finish several other
things long on hand -
viz: Beatrice, Sibylla
Palmifera, & Mariana

with by singing (Measure
for Measure) all of
which you may remem-
ber begun as life-sized
things. These 3 are
finished & I am now
finishing Pandora.
I think all show
great advance in
colour & execution,
& that the big
picture will be much
the best thing I have
done, in spite of the
discouragement &
dissatisfaction accompanying
without fail the
close of a work &

now beginning to set in
with me. Perfect it
won't be, but better
it will be.

I heard from Mr
Mr. Connel about
his water colour,
asking if it was
~~first~~ sold again.

I mislaid his letter
with address & have
not answered, but
it is no use my
writing letters about
it till sold, which
it is not as yet.

Hardly any one comes
to my place now, as
I have so long been
engaged on work which
I decline to show &

people have got sick
of my sulks.

I've not seen dear
old Smetham for
centuries, but must
try & do so - I'm glad
his stand by you as
I knew he would not
fail to do if possible.
I feel as if I chiefly
among your friends
had ~~never~~ not succeeded
in being of any service
at all to you in your
time of trial, & all
the good turns you have
done me. But, unpleasant
as it is to say, I must
say to you that I have

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K U
MISS.
not failed to try with every
one I think of the few buyers
I have; but they are
special men who buy
special things & almost
never expect a divergence
from their limited love.
Moreover several begin
to show symptoms of
dropping altogether in these
troublesome times.

Scott showed me a letter
of yours in a Manchester
paper sent to him,
where his name occurred
in a manner so well
deserved & I am sure
gratifying to him. What
a horrid set they seem
to be there! Scott is my
near neighbour now,

bought
having ~~taken~~ Bellevue
House, a very fine old
manor house twice as big
as this & just opposite
Battersea Bridge. He
is a great acquisition.
And by the bye, I may
as well just mention
in case you had any thought
of returning to London,
that Scott has a separate
building up the back
of his house ^(very noisy I should think) admirably
fitted for a studio but
which he does not
use at all - having a
good one in the house.
I should think (though
I don't know at all)

That he might possibly
be willing to let it be
a quiet congenial
inmate like yourself.
Boyer, as I have said
you know, has built
himself a house
(by Webb) at the
end of Cheyne Row;
so Chelsea is gradually
filling.

With all best wishes
for the New Year
believe me, Dear Shields
Yours affectionately

D. J. Rolfe

K U
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MSS.