

24 Dec 169

My dear Shields

I was very glad to see  
your capital move  
in respect to Brown's  
picture and Manchester.  
I sent on to Levin at  
once, & today he writes  
me word that he has  
written to the Mr. Examiner.  
I don't see your letter  
to him in such a hurry  
(being at work) that I  
only read it once and  
forget what you said as  
to your health, but in  
fact do not think you  
said much about it.  
I hope there was nothing  
bad to say.

K U  
23 D. F. 134  
MSS.

Graham's conduct  
(This part I carefully  
scored out - so much  
as the fish sheet con-  
-tained - in sending you  
letter to C.) seems  
to me most extraor-  
-dinary. Considering how  
invariably & excellently  
well he has behaved  
to myself, & the pers-  
-onal & artistic esteem  
which I have heard  
him express for you. He  
is I believe now perma-  
-nently in town again  
with his family. They came  
here about a week ago -  
He had been here several  
times when on flying visits  
to London from Scotland,

and on one occasion he  
mentioned 2 heads you  
were doing for him, and  
I then said "Did you  
write further about the  
picture?" He answered  
"No, I called when in  
Manchester, but Childs  
was out." This I imagined  
must have been in  
allusion to the time he  
called on you before our  
last conversation, but  
as he was just leaving  
in a hurry I made no  
further inquiry. He certainly  
had said at the end of  
that conversation that  
he should write at once  
for you on getting home  
that day & renew the  
commission - The matter

is more vexations,  
and you may possibly  
tell in my path imperfor-  
-ating him, as this would  
be sacrificing your dignity  
but if an opportunity  
occurs naturally of  
discussing the point  
further with him (as I  
hope it may) I shall  
be very glad to have  
the chance of telling him  
what I think.

I have been in various  
poor states of health  
~~lately~~ for some time past  
My visit to Scotland  
seemed to do me no good  
this time. I have just  
lately been calling on  
doctors & oculists again  
& the latter still say,

5<sup>th</sup> Revised  
and under 12 yrs standing - Burman  
eye level - but why these organs are affected

My sight is not really  
affected, while the former  
is much the same as  
to my health, but speak  
most warmly as to  
horns, exercise, &  
abstinence from spirits  
for which Heaven knows  
I have no taste, but had  
for a year & a half  
just fallen into the  
constant habit of  
resorting to them at night  
to secure sleep. I have  
now relinquished them  
entirely, and take only  
at night a medicine  
prescribed by my last Doctor  
(Sir W. Jenner) - <sup>not</sup> a  
opiate against which he  
warned me in all forms -

I have certainly not  
slept worse, but rather  
better, since doing so -  
I also, when weather  
is fine, take <sup>day</sup> walks in  
Rattersall Park, whereas  
my habit had long been  
to walk only at night  
except when in the  
country.

For many months I had  
done no painting or drawing,  
but have just lately  
resumed work of this kind,  
and am proceeding,  
as best I may, ~~the~~  
against the stream  
of model, who cannot  
be got or do not come,  
pitch-black days &c.  
With ~~no~~ such things  
as I want to be doing.

These are chiefly the  
large picture of Dante's  
Dream, which I had  
not yet ~~fully~~ taken  
in hand since getting  
the commission from  
Graham, & (!!!) the  
old picture of the "Found"  
(the calf & bridge subject)  
which I am actually  
taking up at last. I  
have lost lots of time  
as yet in preliminary  
studies for both works,  
but hope to get the  
man's head done in the  
"Found" next week, having  
found a splendid model  
and have also made  
considerable way towards  
the bridge background.

I am also beginning  
to make studies again  
for the picture of "Medusa"  
and hope to get them  
in hand as soon as  
the others are fairly under  
way. Had I a large fine  
studio, I should now  
get all my finest  
subjects ~~staced~~ squared  
out from the designs on  
canvases of the size  
needed, & take them  
all up one after the  
other whenever possible.  
This plan I shall pursue  
vigorously more or less  
now, as life wears  
short, & so I trust  
few single figure pictures  
except when shut out  
from other work by the

Chances of the hour.  
Studio-building I have  
rather franked hitherto  
as the state of my  
health has induced  
me to think I might  
be leasing Chelsea,  
just after I had got  
the stables into my  
own possession. I think  
it most likely however  
that I shall begin  
building shortly after  
Xmas, as the landlord  
has demanded that  
failing that, I should  
put the stables in  
repair as stables, which  
would be simply throwing  
money in the dirt.

I have been doing a good  
deal of work in poetry  
and shall publish a

230  
K  
L  
15  
34  
volume in the Spring  
I have got 230 pages  
in print & want  
perhaps to add about  
a 100 more. This is  
hardly necessary, as  
it is all very close  
& careful work, but  
as I don't say it may  
be some time before  
I print again, if  
ever, I should wish to  
do so. At any rate  
so much will be off  
my mind when the  
thing comes out, and  
it is certainly the best  
work of my life such as  
that has been.

Have you seen Morris  
New vol of the "Paradise"  
It contains glorious  
things, especially the  
"Lovers of Gudrun."  
Tennyson's new vol  
does not offend my  
sympathies, except  
a second Northern Farmer  
which is wonderful,  
and of course there is  
much high-clap work  
throughout.  
I have not seen your  
reads at the W.C. nor  
indeed do I ever go to  
any picture shows what  
new except once in the  
year to the R.A.  
I saw Craven yesterday.



I was glad to find him  
resigned & like himself  
again, though he conversed  
heavily on the dreadful  
subject. His wife is with  
him in London as you  
probably know.

Old Brown is doing a W.C.  
for him (don't know how  
on the beach by Haydee)  
which will I think be almost  
the finest of his works, &  
centuries by far the most  
full of beauty. Indeed to  
my mind all 8 figures are  
eminently beautiful in  
face & figure, & the background  
of rocks & sea is most  
fascinating.

Mr Jones is doing a crowd  
of splendid works though  
he has sent no sketches to  
the gathering this time. He  
was one of the hangers.

Affectingly yours  
D. S. Roberts