Unpublished autograph texts of Keats

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Unpublished Autograph Texts of Keats

Among the manuscripts in the Harvard Keats Collection there are several autograph texts that were not available to Mr H. W. Garrod when he made his excellent edition of The Poetical Works of John Keats (Oxford, 1939). These include four minor sonnets—‘To My Brothers,’ ‘On Seeing the Elgin Marbles,’ ‘To B. R. Haydon,’ and ‘Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition’—as well as the first drafts of the ‘Ode to Apollo’ and ‘Apollo to the Graces’ and a fair copy of ‘Happy is England.’ Students of Keats will no doubt be glad to see these texts, which I attempt to reproduce exactly.

I

Harvard has two autographs (fair copies) of ‘To My Brothers,’ as well as the version, collated by Garrod, in Tom Keats’s copybook. The first, inscribed ‘1817 This was copy for the press,’ and ‘Sonnet by John Keats in his own hand-writing, Chas. Ollier his first publisher,’ goes thus:

To my Brothers

Small, busy flames, play through the fresh laid coals;
Cracklings
And their light whispers o’er our silence creep
Like Whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle Empire o’er fraternal souls.
And while I search for Rhyme around the Poles,
Your eyes are fixed, as in poetic sleep,
Upon the Lore so voluble, and deep,
Which eye at fall of night our care consoles.

Garrod, pp. 43, 477 f., 530.

* Pages 429-412, 543, 59. This is not the place to discuss the half-dozen Harvard fragments of Ode to the Great, though they have variants not noted by Garrod.

Pen slips, including omission of letters, are recorded. It is impossible at times to tell whether Keats intended a capital or a small letter, a comma or a period. Miss Mabel A. E. Steele, Custodian of the Harvard Keats Collection, has kindly verified my transcripts.
This is your birthday Tom, and I rejoice,
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly:
Many such eves of gently whispering noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are the worlds true joys — still ere the great Voice
From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly —

The foregoing text differs considerably from that given in the Poems, 1817, so that Ollier's annotation is either wrong or else Keats made lavish changes in the proofs. Differences, exclusive of capitalization, are as follows:

1. flames,] flames coals,
2. light,] faint
3. while I search for Rhyme,] while, for rhymes, I search
4. voluble,] voluble
5. Which,] That
6. birthday,] birth-day, rejoice,] rejoice
7. quietly,] quietly.
8. whispering,] whispering
9. the worlds,] this worlds
10. joys,] joys, — Voice, voice,
11. face,] face, fly — fly.

The second copy, formerly mounted in Emma Isola Moxon's album, runs:

John Keats

To my Brothers —
Small, busy flames play through the fresh-laid Coals,
And their faint Cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like Whisperings of the Household Gods, that keep
A gentle Empire o'er fraternal Souls.
And while, for Rhymes, I search around the Poles,
Your Eyes are fix'd as in poetic sleep
Upon the Lore so voluble, and deep,
That aye, at fall of Night, our care consoles.
This is your Birthday Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly;
Many such Eves of gently whispering noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are the World's true Joys — are the great Voice
From its fair face shall bid our Spirits fly

Nov. 18 —

Variants from the 1817 printed text, which Garrod followed, and from the version in Tom's copybook are, excluding capitalization, tabulated below. It will be seen that the copybook readings (marked with T) sometimes agree with the 1817 text as against Mrs Moxon's copy. In the copybook the title runs 'Sonnet Written to his Brother Tom on his Birthday,' and the note 'John Keats Nov. 18 1816' appears at the end of the verses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Original Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
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<td>Whisperings</td>
<td>whispers 1817 T</td>
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<td>voluble</td>
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<td>aye</td>
<td>aye 1817 T</td>
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<td>Birthday</td>
<td>birthday 1817</td>
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<td>quietly</td>
<td>quietly. 1817</td>
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<tr>
<td>whispering</td>
<td>whispering 1817</td>
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<tr>
<td>are the</td>
<td>are this 1817 T</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joys —</td>
<td>joys, — 1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>voice, 1817</td>
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II

For the Elgin Marbles-Haydon sonnets Garrod used transcripts made by Richard Woodhouse from copies printed in Hunt's Examiner, 9 March 1817. Autograph copies are preserved in the same volume from which he derived his texts of the sonnets 'On Receiving a Laurel Crown from Leigh Hunt' and 'To the Ladies Who Saw Me Crown'd'; namely, in the autographed copy of the Poems, 1817, that Keats gave to J. H. Reynolds. That book was discussed at length in the London Times, 18 May 1914, where its title-page and the two 'lost sonnets'

*Pages 527 f.
Harvard Library Bulletin

(named above) are reproduced in facsimile. The 'lost sonnets' are likewise printed; the Marbles-Haydon sonnets are mentioned but not given. In the Times Literary Supplement, 21 May 1914, the two facsimiles are again reproduced, the 'lost sonnets' are reprinted, part of the earlier article from the Times is repeated, but no reference is made to the Marbles-Haydon sonnets. Garrod refers only to the May 21 article, from the facsimiles in which he derived his text of the two 'lost sonnets.'

In 1914, the Times observed, Reynolds' book was owned by Dr. E. Horner, a private tutor resident in London, whose father had bought it in Leipzig . . . from an English gentleman (it is believed, a clergyman) in or about the year 1875. Garrod lists Horner as owner of the book in 1939, but its migrations since 1914 can be sufficiently traced through the bookplate of Frank B. Bernis, the bookseller of Arthur A. Houghton, and an enthusiastic note penciled by Dr Rosenbach:

The finest volume of the 19th Century that has ever passed through my hands, I bought it from the Marquis of Crewe.

A. S. W. R.

Keats is supposed to have seen the Marbles for the first time on 1 March or 2 March 1817, in the company of Haydon and perhaps Reynolds. The Poems was published on Monday, March 3. It may be worth noting that in the copy of the Poems Keats gave to Reynolds, probably a few days before March 3, the sonnet to Haydon precedes that on the Marbles. Miss Lowell thought that Haydon received his copy, not in advance, but at the dinner he gave, apparently on the night of March 3, to Keats, Reynolds, and Clarke. Unaware that Reynolds had reviewed the Poems in the Champion for March 9 and at the end of the review printed the sonnet to Haydon followed by that on the Marbles, she concluded that the latter 'was probably written first, although Haydon puts them the other way about in his journal. A

* Pages 241 ff.
* Nor are they mentioned in the essay (pp. 241 ff.) Ernest de Selincourt contributed on 'John Keats. Recent Additions to Our Knowledge.'
* In the first sonnet, line 4, he reads 'immortal thought.' The manuscript appears to me, as to the Times and its Supplement, to have the better phrasing, 'immortal thought;' the i being underlined. In the second sonnet, line 12, he has 'favourite,' whereas the spelling in the manuscript and in the Times and its Supplement is 'favorite.'
characteristic bit of evidence to the fact that Haydon was more interested in Haydon than in even the Marbles." 'In whatever order the sonnets were written,' she adds, 'Keats was canny enough to send them to Haydon with the one written to him as the first.'

The sonnets, written at the end of the volume on the verso of page 121, run thus:

To Haydon with a Sonnet written on
seeing the Elgin Marbles.

Forgive me Haydon that I cannot speak
Definitively on these mighty things;
Forgive me that I have not Eagle's wings—
That what I want I know not where to seek:
And think that I would not now overreach
In rolling out upfollow'd thunderings,
Even to the sleep of Heliconian springs
Were I of ample strength for such a freak.

Think too that all those Numbers should be thine;
Whose else? In this who touch thy vesture's hem?
For when Men star'd at what was most divine
With browless Idirom — oerweening Phlegm
Thou hadst beheld the Hesperian shine
Of their Star in the East and gone to worship them.

On seeing the Elgin Marbles

My Spirit is too weak — Mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined Pinnacle and steep
Of Godlike—diff—Hardship, tells me I must die
Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.

Yet 'tis a gentle Luxury to weep,
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
Fresh for the opening of the Morning's eye.
Such dim-conceived Summer glories of the brain
Bring round the Heart an undescribable Feud;
So do these Wonders a most dizzy pain
That mingles grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time — with a billowy Main —
A Sun — a Shadow of a Magnitude.

The variants, exclusive of capitalization, in the Haydon sonnet from Garrod's printed text are:

1. Forgive me Haydon] Haydon! forgive me
2. Definitively] Definitely
3. overmock] over meck
4. sleep] steep, springs] springs
5. freak] freak—
6. too] too,
7. o'erweening] o'erwise Phlegm] phlegm—

The reading 'sleep' (line 7) also occurs in the Champion and in the text Haydon himself arranged to have printed in Amals of the Fine Arts, April, 1818.\textsuperscript{11} Variants, again exclusive of capitalization, in the Elgin Marbles sonnet from Garrod's text are as follows:

3. imagined] imagin'd
4. Hardship] hardship

Garrod mentions three transcripts of 'Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition': one in an unidentified hand made for R. M. Milnes before 1848, another in Tom Keats's copybook, and a third in the manuscript collection of Keats's poems transcribed in 1828 by 'Henry' Stephens. Of these he was able to see only the first, but all three are now accessible in the Harvard Keats Collection. There, too, is the first draft of

\textsuperscript{11} III, 171 f.
the sonnet, written on the back of a one-page letter that George Keats, apparently in August, 1816, sent to John and Tom. The draft has no title, and the signature and the words following it are in Tom’s hand.

The Church Bells give toll a melancholy sound:
Calling the People to some other Prayers
Some other Gloominess, more dreadful
To fill their breasts with fear, and gloomy Cares
More hark’ning to the Sermon’s horrid sound.
Surely the Mind’s of Man is closely bound
seeing that
In some black spell — that new — each one tares
Himself from fireside Joys and Lydian airs32
And converse high of those with glory crowned —
Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp
A Chill of —— Tomb
A Chill as from a sepulchre did I not know
That they are like but going like an outburnt Lamp
That they are sighing, wailing in their woes
Into Oblivion — that fresh flowers will grow
And many glories of immortal stamp

J Keats
Written in 15 Minutes

This first draft was evidently the text ‘Henry’ Stephens followed. His transcript is untitled, has at its end the legend ‘written by I K. in 15 minutes,’ keeps the readings ‘tare’ and ‘going’ in lines 6 and 11, and has various modernizations, mainly of punctuation and capitalization.

The church bells toll a melancholy round
Calling the people to some other prayers
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares
More hark’ning to the sermons horrid sound.

32 Apparently so written, though presumably intended for ‘breasts.’ In line 7 ‘sins’ appears for ‘airs’ and in line 8 ‘converse’ for ‘converse.’
Surely the Mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell, seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys and Lydian airs
And converse high of those with glory crown'd —
Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are going like an out burnt lamp
That 'tis their sighing wailing e'er they go
Into oblivion — that fresh flowers will grow
And many glories of immortal stamp.

written by IK in 15 minutes

Tom Keats's copybook furnishes the following text, the only important change in which, 'dying' for 'going' in line 11, was perhaps made by the poet himself.

Sonnet

Written in disgust of vulgar superstition —
The church bells toll a melancholy round,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
More heark'ning to the sermons horrid sound —
Surely the mind of Man is closely bound
In some black spell, seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,
And converse high of those with glory crown'd.
Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp, —
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
That 'tis their sighing, wailing e'er they go
Into oblivion; — that fresh flowers will grow,
And many glories of immortal stamp.

John Keats Sunday Evening
Dec' 24 1816
Unpublished Autograph Texts of Keats

The transcript made for Milnes and used by Garrod is entitled 'Written on a Sunday Evening,' and is dated '23rd Dec. 1816.' The transcriber followed Tom's copybook, introducing a number of minor variations, as follows (exclusive of capitalization):

1. Church-Bells
2. dreadful
3. sermon's
4. sound.
5. crowned,
6. damp—
7. wailing, as

As to the dates given the sonnet, Miss Lowell pointed out that neither 23 nor 24 December 1816 was a Sunday, and that the correct date is December 22.25

The 'Henry' Stephens volume deserves a brief comment. It was described at some length by W. R. Nicoll and T. J. Wise when it was in the possession of H. Buxton Forman.24 It is a manuscript copy of Keats's Poems, 1817, at the end of which (on a separate page following 'Sleep and Poetry') a subtitle runs: 'The Poems here following have never been published, or have merely appeared in periodical works. And have not before been collected.' In this section there are eight poems, two of them in the hand, not of the rest of the volume, but, say Nicoll and Wise, 'seemingly' (they should have said 'certainly') of Isabella Jane Towers, the sister of Charles Cowden Clarke. In the front of the book is written, apparently by the chief hand appearing in the volume, 'T I Towers / a little Birthday gift from / her Brother / 5 October / 1828.' Nicoll and Wise not only asserted that the manuscript is 'in the hand-writing of the poet's friend and fellow student Henry Stephens,' but they transcribed its title-page thus: 'Poems / by / John Keats / with several never / yet published / . . . / London / written by H. Stephens / for / L. J. Towers. / 1828.'

Subsequent students of Keats have had no reason to doubt the accuracy of the foregoing description; so that time after time they have credited Henry Stephens with the work, and have often adopted the Nicoll-Wise explanation, implausible in itself, that by 1828 the Poems, 1817, was so scarce that he could not buy a copy. Miss Lowell, for example, like Nicoll and Wise, cites the manuscript as proof that Keats 'had made some warm . . . friends' during his study at the hospital; 'Henry Stephens cared enough about him to copy the whole of his

"John Keats, I, 233 f.
"Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century (London, 1895–96), II, 275–278.
Poems, 1817 into a blank book.\textsuperscript{25} Actually the manuscript title-page reads: "Poems / by / John Keats / with several, never / yet published / ... / London / written by J C Stephens / for / I J Towers. / 1828". I know nothing about J. C. Stephens, but his (or her) beautiful, uniform handwriting suggests that he (or she) was a professional copyist hired by Clarke. At any rate, Henry Stephens had nothing to do with the manuscript.\textsuperscript{26}

IV

The text of the ‘Ode to Apollo’ Garrod printed from the revised autograph copy in the Morgan Library, New York. The first draft, which Keats sent to his brother George in Louisville, runs thus:

God of the golden Bow
And of the golden Lyre
And of the golden hair
And of the golden fire
Charioteer
Of the patient year
Where where slept thine ire

When like a blank idiot I put on thy Laurel\textsuperscript{27}, thy glory

The light of thy story
Or was I a worm — to low crawling for death?
O delphic Apollo!

The Thunderer grasp’d and grap’d
The Thunderor frowned and frowned
The Eagle’s his-feathery Mane

For wrath became stiften’d — the sound
Of breeding thunder
Went drowsily under

\textsuperscript{25}John Keats, I, 187.
\textsuperscript{26}On this matter see also H. E. Rollins, The Keats Circle (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), II, 206, n.
\textsuperscript{27}Comma doubtful.
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Muttering to be unbound — for a worm
O why dis thou d pity, and beg of thy father.
Why touch thy soft Lute
Till the thunder was mure,
Why was I not r[ush — such a pitiful germ
O delphic Ap[o]llol

The Ploecides were up
Watching the silent air
The seeds and roots in the Earth
Were swelling for summer fare
The Ocean its neighbour
Was at his old Labor.
When — Who who did dare?
To tie like a Madman thy Plant round his bro[w]n
And grin and look [r]oudly
And blaspheme so loudly
And live for that honor to stoop to the now
O delphic apollo!

original manuscript of John Keats presented to Ia Clarke by
G. Keats

George Keats gave the manuscript to James Freeman Clarke, who, unlike most later critics, thought the poem ‘beautiful,’ and, accordingly, printed it for the first time in his Louisville magazine, the Western Messenger, June, 1836. He supplied punctuation, modernized certain spellings, and corrected obvious errors in lines 20 and 23, and made other small changes. In his textual notes Garrod credits the Western Messenger with reading ‘and beg for a worm’ (line 20), whereas

1 In lines 23 and 24 the brackets mark a small tear. In line 25 ‘summer’ is written for ‘summer.’
2 A fold of the page is pasted closely here.
3 In George Keats's hand.
4 1, 765.
Clarke followed the manuscript by omitting 'beg' and the question mark. As for his calling the poem 'Ode to Apollo,' it may be worth noting that for consistency Clarke headed his page 'Art. 8. — Ode to Apollo. By John Keats.' Then he printed a bracketed editorial note and next the poem without a title. He printed the poem again in the Harbinger, New York and Boston, 21 March 1846, with slight variations from his 1836 text, this time calling it 'To Apollo,' and saying that 'it expresses one of the moods into which a mind like that of Keats will often fall, in which the confidence of genius is eclipsed.'

Somewhat earlier, writing to Milnes on 31 October 1845, Clarke mentioned his autograph copy of 'lines to Apollo,' which on a separate sheet he transcribed 'just as they stand, with the erasures [that is, deletions] & corrections.' From this transcription the poem made its way into Milnes's Life, Letters, and Literary Remains, of John Keats (London, 1848). In letters, in periodicals, and in Boston newspapers Clarke several times proudly told of his 'Apollo' holograph and of how he acquired it from George Keats. The fault was not his if the issues of the Western Messenger in which he printed the poem and certain notes and letters by John Keats had to wait till 1924 to be 'discovered.'

V

'Apollo to the Graces' has hitherto been known only because Richard Woodhouse included it in one of his books of transcripts, called by Garrod W, now at Harvard. It was printed first by Sir Sidney Colvin in the Times Literary Supplement, 16 April 1914, and then by Garrod. Neither gave an exact reproduction of the text, which goes as follows:

Apollo to the Graces,
written to the Tune of the air in Don Giovanni. —

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20 II, 234.
21 II, 255 f.
22 See R. L. Rush, 'Keats in the Wordsworth Country,' North American Review, CCXIX (1914), 362–397. This Keats material in the Western Messenger is referred to and praised by F. G. Peabody in A New England Romance (Boston, 1910), pp. 33 f. n. Peabody suggests that the spelling 'idea' should be retained in the Apollo ode, line 8 (Clarke modernized it in 1846), and cites various instances of that good old spelling, including two from Shelley.
23 Page 187.
24 Evidently Woodhouse hoped to learn and insert here the name of the air.
Apollo. — Which of the fairest three
To day will ride with me?
My steeds are all pawing at the thresholds of Morn:
Which of the fairest three
To day will ride with me
Across the gold Autumn's whole Kingdoms of corn?
The Graces all answer,
I will, I — I — I —
O young Apollo let me fly with thee
I will — I, I, I,
The many many wonders see
I — I — I — I —
And thy lyre shall never have a slackened string
I, I, I, I,
Thro' the golden day will day-sing.

From the original Miss Reynolds's Possession.

Except for the subtitle — Miss Jane (?) Reynolds may have supplied its information to him — Woodhouse was apparently copying from the holograph version that follows:

Apollo to the Graces

Apollo! Which of the fairest three
To day will ride with me
My Steeds are all pawing on the thresholds of Morn
Which of the fairest three
To day will ride with me
Across the gold autumn's whole Kingdoms of Corn
(The Graces all answer)
I will I — I, & I
O young Apollo let me fly along with the

"Changed from 'at.'"
Harvard Library Bulletin

I will I, I, I
The many many wonders see
I I I I
If And thy Lyre shall never have a slackend string
I I I I
Though the whole golden day will sing —

Garrod has rearranged, repunctuated, and emended Woodhouse's transcript; and his readings 'at the threshold of the morn' (line 3) and 'Kingdom' (line 6), as well as his division of line 8 in two lines, should be set aside on the authority of both Keats and Woodhouse. Plainly, too, Keats (but not Woodhouse) began line 14 with 'Though' not 'Thro'.

VI

Garrod reprints his text of 'Happy Is England' from the Poems of 1817, and says that no manuscript copy is known. The fair copy written by Keats runs thus:

Happy is England! I could be content
To see no other Verdure than its own;
To feel no other Breezes than are blown
Through its tall Woods with high Romances blent:
Yet do I sometimes feel a Languishment
For Skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a Throne
And half forget what World or Worldling meant —
Happy is England: sweet her artless daughters:
Enough their simple Loveliness for me;
Enough their whitest Arms in silence clinging
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, — and hear their singing,
And float with them about the Summer waters —

* Written in an unidentified hand.
Unpublished Autograph Texts of Keats

There are no verbal differences between the printed and autograph texts, but the latter has twelve words with initial capitals ignored in the former, as well as the following eight slight differences in punctuation:

7 throne, 10 me,
8 meant. 11 clinging:
9 England, 12 glance,
daughters; 14 waters.

Hyder E. Rollins
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