

THE PICKERING MASTERS

# The Clairmont Family Letters, 1839–1889

Edited by  
Sharon L. Joffe



ROUTLEDGE  


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## THE PICKERING MASTERS SERIES

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LETTERS, 1839–1889

*Edited by*  
*Sharon L. Joffe*

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## EDITORIAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

This collection contains all the extant English-language letters of Antonia, Pauline, Clara, Charley, and Ottilia (von Pichler) Clairmont housed in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle in the New York Public Library. It also contains all of the extant English-language letters of Wilhelm Gaulis Clairmont to his parents, to his aunt Claire, and to his brother and sisters, as well as a sample in the appendix of Wilhelm's English-language letters to his wife, Ottilia, some of which contain significant German-language sections.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, I have included all of Pauline Clairmont's correspondence to her brother, Wilhelm, and his correspondence to her, as well as the English-language correspondence of Ottilia's sister, Alma von Pichler, and two letters by Alexander Knox, Clara Knox's husband. These letters form part of the Pforzheimer Collection's holdings of Clairmont family papers and assist in telling the complete story of the Clairmont family.

All the letters in this collection are published here for the first time, apart from a very few that appeared in the footnotes to *The Clairmont Correspondence* as corroboration or elaboration, and I have re-transcribed these few. Although I have searched widely, I have been unable to locate at press time any surviving and unpublished letters by any of the correspondents represented here outside of the Pforzheimer Collection. It is possible that private collections hold such letters, although the Clairmont clan has had no living descendants since the death of Mary Claire Bally-Clairmont in 2009, and she was the donor, along with her brother Christoph Clairmont, of these letters to the Pforzheimer Collection.

Although some of the letters contain grammatical and syntactical errors and spelling errors, they are transcribed here exactly as they were written. A few contain words I could not read, and even if the context clarifies the meaning, I did not provide my guess. The letters are written in English, and all of the writers, except possibly for Antonia Clairmont, learned English in childhood. A good deal of the errors are Antonia's. Pauline and Wilhelm, who learned German from their mother and English from their father, make more occasional mistakes. Wilhelm's English-language mastery noticeably improves as he ages, no doubt as a result of his long sojourn in Australia.

I have followed the principles Betty Bennett and Marion Kingston Stocking set out in their respective editions of Mary Shelley's letters, *The Letters of Mary*

*Wollstonecraft Shelley*, and the Clairmont family's correspondence, *The Clairmont Correspondence*. My standards and practices are as follows:

- 1 I have arranged the letters chronologically, beginning with the first extant letter from 1839. I have also included in the chronological arrangement those letters that lacked either a year or a month, but from whose context I was easily able to determine the date.
- 2 Each letter has been assigned two numbers, one recorded at the top of the letter and one following each letter. I assigned the first number of each letter chronologically, from the earliest to the latest extant letters, thereby making it simple for readers to follow the linear order of the collection. The second number is the call number assigned by the Pforzheimer Collection and follows each letter. When the Pforzheimer Collection acquired the Clairmont family papers, the documents were assigned to "Clairmontana," a call number system that identified documents relating to Claire Clairmont. Every letter has been given a reference number that begins with the indicator CL'ANA. In this collection, the words "Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll.," precede each CL'ANA number. With this identifier, each letter is designated as previously unpublished and a manuscript within the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.
- 3 The Pforzheimer Collection holds over 400 items pertaining to Wilhelm Clairmont. Of these, he wrote about 250 autograph letters to his wife, Ottilia. Wilhelm's letters to Ottilia are numbered CL'ANA 0118–0156 and CL'ANA 0421 (which contains a total of 211 letters under that call number). Although Ottilia was primarily the recipient of the contents of CL'ANA 0421 through letters written to her either by Wilhelm or by her children, a few letters from Antonia, Pauline, and Wilhelm to other recipients are interspersed. I include in this collection the English-language letters catalogued in CL'ANA 0421 and written by Antonia, Pauline, and Wilhelm to addressees other than Ottilia. Additionally, I provide some examples of the CL'ANA 0421 English-language letters from Wilhelm to Ottilia in the appendix to this collection.

Most of the 211 letters in CL'ANA 0421 are German-language letters and some are dated beyond the date range of this edition. These 211 letters are identified by the general number CL'ANA 0421, with an additional Arabic numeral appended to each as a unique identifier. These 211 letters are divided between three boxes, each of which is numbered numerically. The boxes are further subdivided into a number of bundles, which have alphabetical designations. Each CL'ANA 0421 call number indicates the box, bundle, and letter numbers. Christoph Clairmont, Wilhelm and Ottilia's grandson, expressed his regard for the CL'ANA 0421 letters in a notebook he included in his gift to the Pforzheimer Collection: "Letters numbered 1–211 are inventoried with very brief contents in this booklet . . . Most letters are by Willy to Tilly – my grandfather and grandmother respectively. A few are in English. Some of my

- comments and red pencil marks refer to particularly interesting letters. C. Clairmont Feb 12, 1998”.
- 4 The names of the writer and addressee appear at the top of each letter.
  - 5 I have faithfully reproduced each letter’s date and have retained any inconsistencies in the way that the writer chose to date his/her letter, such as incomplete dates or abbreviated names of months. When a date is absent but can be determined from the letter’s content or from the postmark on the envelope or aerogramme, the presumed date appears in a square bracket at the top of the letter. Similarly, when a date has been written at the end of a letter, I have recopied the date in square brackets at the beginning of the letter. If I am not able to determine the date from the letter or from the postmark, I have indicated the possible date in square brackets with the abbreviation for circa (c.) placed next to it.
  - 6 I have not corrected any spelling and have faithfully retained the letter writers’ orthographic faults. I have provided an explanatory note if a word was written in a particularly egregious manner. I have indicated words missing in the manuscript due to tears in the paper or due to inkblots. Illegible words are represented by the word “illeg” in square brackets. Many of the letters were written on fine onion-skin paper and they proved somewhat difficult to read.<sup>2</sup>
  - 7 I have not corrected any syntactical errors and have left punctuation flaws uncorrected. When the writers omitted to capitalize letters, particularly at the beginning of a sentence, I have followed the original manuscript exactly.
  - 8 The writers frequently used dashes or multiple spaces instead of periods at the end of their sentences and I faithfully reproduce these forms. Writers of that era would often use dashes or multiple spaces as an informal way of ending a sentence. However, I have regularized the size of the dashes and spaces.
  - 9 Most letters have accompanying notes, which are numbered separately for each individual letter.
  - 10 I have indicated with a note the beginning of any cross-writing. This technique was used to save money and consisted of horizontal and vertical writing crossing together on the same page.
  - 11 Any additions to a letter by the original writer (such as a word or sentence added above the text) have been silently incorporated into the letter.
  - 12 I have retained abbreviations but have included a note to the unabbreviated word if further clarity is required.
  - 13 I have followed the paragraph breaks employed by the letter writers but have regularized the size of each paragraph’s indentation. I have standardized the alignment of all end addresses and final greetings.
  - 14 I have included translations of any foreign-language phrases or sentences in the notes. For a complete German letter or for a German paragraph included within an English letter, I provide the German text followed by an English translation. The translator’s name is noted after each complete German letter or paragraph of some length.
  - 15 All legible deletions have been included but struck through. Illegible deletions are noted by the word “illeg” in square brackets, but struck through. Additional editorial symbols follow in this text.

- 16 The letter writers frequently signed their names using abbreviations or shortened forms. Wilhelm typically signed his letters WGC Esq (Wilhelm Gaulis Clairmont, Esquire), but his signature was often illegible. I have therefore standardized his signature to WGC when his signature was unable to be read. Antonia and Pauline often signed their names using their initials, which I have retained.
- 17 I used Google Maps to calculate all distances between towns and cities in the notes, but the dates of access vary. I include in the bibliography one citation to cover all Google Maps information: [www.google.com/maps/](http://www.google.com/maps/). Information pertaining to the various Banat villages comes from the website “Banat: Donauschwaben Villages Helping Hands” (<http://www.dvhh.org/banat/>).
- 18 I reference Pauline Clairmont’s unpublished Australian journal, currently held by the Pforzheimer Collection. Pauline paginated her journal, which bears the number CL’ANA 0176.
- 19 After each letter, I have included the following:
  - a The address of the recipient transcribed from the envelope. If an envelope has been lost, the words “no envelope” appear after the letter. I have indicated each new line of the address with a slash mark (/). I have retained incorrect spellings and have underlined words that were underlined on the envelope.
  - b Any legible postmarks on the envelope. If a postmark (or part of a postmark) is illegible, it is noted by “[illeg.]”. I have indicated postmarks on the front of the envelope by “Front postmark” and on the back of the envelope by “Rear postmark”. I omit the words “Front postmark” or “Rear postmark” if no postmarks were recorded on either the front or the back of the envelope or if they were entirely illegible. As some envelopes had two or more postmarks, I have separated them by a semicolon. I have used a slash (/) to indicate divisions within the postmark.
  - c The CL’ANA number assigned by the Pforzheimer Collection.
- 20 I have provided a bibliography of sources consulted after the Introduction and after each of the two section headings. I have also included additional bibliographic information in the notes for sources not cited in these three bibliographies.

### Notes

- 1 The Pforzheimer’s holdings include some 250 letters from Wilhelm to Ottilia that do not appear here. Most of these letters were written in German (Kurrent, or old German script), with some English letters interspersed. As this collection centers around Claire Clairmont and the letters written primarily to her, Wilhelm and Ottilia’s story is beyond the scope of these volumes. I hope that a future edition will publish Wilhelm and Ottilia’s letters more completely. I have included a sample of Wilhelm’s English language letters to Ottilia in the appendix to this collection.
- 2 See C. Golden, *Posting It: The Victorian Revolution in Letter Writing* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009).

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND IDENTIFICATION MARKS

## Abbreviations

<i>CC</i>	<i>The Clairmont Correspondence</i>
<i>LMWS</i>	<i>The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley</i>
<i>Novels</i>	<i>The Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin</i>

## Identification

Following the precedent set by Marion Kingston Stocking in *The Clairmont Correspondence*, each letter in this collection is followed by the identifier: Unpublished. Text: M. S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA number. Each letter is thereby designated as previously unpublished, and a manuscript within the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. The CL'ANA number follows the identifying information.



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## INTRODUCTION

The correspondence of Antonia Ghi(s)lain von Hembyze Clairmont (1800–1868) and her children, Pauline (1825–1891) and Wilhelm Charles Gaulis (1831–1895), to the children’s aunt, Claire Clairmont (1798–1879), Antonia’s sister-in-law, contains the reconstructed narratives that form the basis of this collection. These prolific letter writers represent part of a larger kinship circle that includes the more recognized and celebrated authors William Godwin (1756–1836), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851). Until fairly recently, the letters contained in this volume of Antonia and four of her children, Pauline, Clara (1826–1855), Wilhelm, and Charles Gaulis (1835–1856), remained in the possession of Johann Christoph Clairmont (1924–2004) and Mary Claire Bally-Clairmont (1922–2009), Wilhelm’s grandchildren. Christoph and Mary Claire bequeathed the letters, as well as journals and photographic prints belonging to their family, to the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle at the New York Public Library. The English-language letters – an extraordinary set of documents – tell multiple narratives. On a standalone basis, each of the letters (some perhaps more eloquently written than others) represents a link in a contemporary social history of a nineteenth-century family living in Europe and Australia who confronted a host of confounding and age-specific anxieties, amongst them conflicts in Europe and in particular the Austro-Hungarian Empire, woes in the European financial markets, and the effects of Australian pioneer life on immigrants to that country. Furthermore, the letters inform our understanding of the Shelley–Godwin circle through the experiences and thoughts of their descendants. Chiefly, the letters provide researchers with additional resources for evaluating internal Clairmont family dynamics, for augmenting our understanding of the competing philosophical principles held by various Shelley-circle members, and for reclaiming the largely forgotten voices of many within that extended circle as part of a resurgence in Shelley-circle scholarship.

Critics have recognized the significance of Mary Shelley’s relationship with Claire Clairmont, who was her stepsister. Following the publication of Betty T. Bennett’s three-volume edition of Mary Shelley’s letters (*The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, 1980–1988) and Marion Kingston Stocking’s editions

## INTRODUCTION

of *The Journals of Claire Clairmont* (1968) and *The Clairmont Correspondence* (1995), scholars such as Daisy Hay (*Young Romantics*, 2010) and Janet Todd (*Death and the Maidens: Fanny Wollstonecraft and the Shelley Circle*, 2007) have examined the multiple connections between Claire and the Shelleys. Since Claire was herself a prolific writer, her correspondence with other participants within the Shelley circle continues to influence critical impressions of the principal members of the Shelley coterie. While *The Clairmont Correspondence* includes Claire's letters to Antonia, Pauline, and Wilhelm, the volume omits their responses, which provide useful background information regarding many of the incidents so exceptionally recounted in Claire's letters to them. This two-volume edition redresses that omission by providing readers with access to these forgotten manuscripts, providing additional insight into conflicts to which she was a party. For example, the letters in this current collection yield further insight into the rift between Claire and Mary Shelley over Clara Clairmont's marriage to Alexander Knox, making them valuable additions to the Shelley–Clairmont narrative. They also diminish and negate Shelley-circle claims that Claire's presence was an annoyance to some. For example, while Mary Shelley sometimes found Claire tiresome (she wrote to Percy Shelley on 18 October 1817, "Clare is forever wearying with her idle & childish complaints" [*LMWS* II: 57]), and Claire herself recorded in her journal entry of 4 July 1820, "Heigh-ho the Clare & the Ma/ Find something to fight about every day" (Stocking 1968: 153), Claire's generosity towards her Clairmont relatives, evidenced in this collection, rewrites the narrative. In spite of her own straitened circumstances, Claire provided financially and emotionally for her brother's children and his widow, serving as a unifying link for the Clairmonts and dispensing advice and money when they applied for it, which was often.

Moreover, if Claire's travels in Stocking's editions of her letters and journals read like a nineteenth-century European travelogue, Pauline's and Wilhelm's sojourns in places as far-flung as Australia and the Banat<sup>1</sup> offer readers a catalogue of relevant and historically significant place names and cultural experiences that are connected to historical events that occurred in the nineteenth-century British and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Sharing their father's British and their mother's Austrian national heritage, Pauline and Wilhelm moved from Austria to England and then on to Australia and back to Europe without any sense of cultural disruption, and their correspondence provides readers today with a glimpse of contemporary life in nineteenth-century Australia as well as in Vienna and in the Austrian Banat. Their epistolary record of a broad range of political, economic, and social matters in the nineteenth century provides modern readers a window onto the daily lives of people in Britain, in its Australian colony, and within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Antonia's, Pauline's and Wilhelm's life-writing offers primary evidence as to what it may have meant to be a member of a family with impressive social and artistic connections (the Shelleys were members of the Baronetcy, and Wilhelm regularly associated with the sons of the Hungarian ruling class); however, the letters also demonstrate how more mundane or earthly concerns could temper such lives, including the chronic inability to earn a substantial living wage,

## INTRODUCTION

unrequited love, and non-marital sexual experiences that contravened the social mores of the time.

Due to the efforts of Donald H. Reiman (editor of *Shelley and his Circle* from 1965 to 1992) and Christoph Clairmont, these documents became available to the public in the late 1990s. In August 1997, Christoph Clairmont, then a professor at Rutgers University in the Department of Classics, contacted Reiman, whom he had met at a conference organized by the Society for Textual Scholarship at City University of New York to offer the extant Clairmont papers in his and his sister's possession for the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, a collection housed at the New York Public Library. The Pforzheimer Collection thus received the papers in two installments between 1997 and 1998 (conversation with Elizabeth Denlinger). This two-volume collection marks the first time researchers and historians can peruse these letters outside of the library. It aims to restore these lost voices, bringing their perspicacious observations of nineteenth-century life on two continents to a broader audience.

While the letters alone provide a vivid and fascinating narrative, this introduction aims to contextualize them within the larger framework of the Godwin–Wollstonecraft–Shelley–Clairmont circle to enrich the reader's experience of them. Born outside of London on 27 April 1759, Mary Wollstonecraft would become the center of this circle. She was the first daughter and second child of Edward John Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Dickson Wollstonecraft. Her upbringing, which featured an abusive and oft-drunken father who dominated her too-compliant mother, led Wollstonecraft to equate marriage with servitude and dominance. For years she avoided the institution, seeking emotional and intellectual refuge in multiple forms of self-education, in learning, in writing, and in her female friendships, initially with Jane Arden and later with Fanny Blood. These particularly close female bonds, her expressed distaste for marriage, and her notions regarding the importance of the maternal bond remained principal subjects of her writing. For example, both *Mary* and *Maria* explore the nature of maternal and sororal bonds, while Wollstonecraft's polemic tracts – like *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – address the issues of women's education and social status. Wollstonecraft's unconventional social preferences rankled many in London society who revered the notion of domesticity that had anointed the home as “a refuge from a hostile and competitive social world” (Kelly 1992: 12). Wollstonecraft's rejection of this ideal placed her outside of the social norms of her age; indeed, when Gary Kelly claimed that both “revolutionary threat” and “feminist protest” during the 1790s threatened the “domestic affections” of England, he could have been speaking of her, and he accurately described the marginalization of women such as Wollstonecraft because of their opinions (Kelly 1992: 12).

Wollstonecraft's espousal of the doctrines of the French Revolution, her subsequent move to France to live according to the Republican ideals of the Revolution, and her affair with the American adventurer Gilbert Imlay (possibly 1754–1828) marked her as a pariah. Although the relationship with Gilbert Imlay culminated in the birth of their daughter, Frances (Fanny), in May 1794 – and thereby provided

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Wollstonecraft with “the combination of domesticity, professionalism and egalitarian erotic love” she had so actively sought (Kelly 1992: 149) – Imlay’s subsequent infidelity and Wollstonecraft’s corresponding bouts of depression heavily clouded the relationship. In 1795, Gilbert Imlay sent Wollstonecraft, Fanny, and Fanny’s nurse Marguerite to Scandinavia, where Wollstonecraft’s secret mission, undertaken on Gilbert Imlay’s behalf, was to track down his missing treasure ship. Her poignant letters to Gilbert Imlay remain preserved in her book, *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796), and in them her deep love both for him and their daughter appears on every page. Their relationship dissolved in 1795, however.

While the philosopher William Godwin had despised Mary Wollstonecraft on their first meeting at the home of publisher Joseph Johnson in 1791, he thought differently of her after he read her *Letters from Norway* and when she attended a party he held in his “little deserted mansion” on 22 April 1796 for twelve people (*Novels* I: 51). The guests also included Elizabeth Inchbald, Samuel Parr, Thomas Holcroft, and James Mackintosh.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps Wollstonecraft was seeking a more satisfactory form of companionship than Imlay had provided. Godwin quickly recognized the affair they began thereafter as “friendship melting into love” (*Novels* I: 129). Godwin and Wollstonecraft’s subsequent epistolary writings attest to the intense physical and emotional relationship that ensued as a result of their April rapprochement. Writing to Wollstonecraft on 13 July, Godwin passionately recorded his feelings:

Shall I write a love letter? . . . No, when I make love, it shall be with the eloquent tones of my voice, with dying accents, with speaking glances . . . with all the witching of that irresistible, universal passion . . . Shall I send you an eulogium of your beauty, your talents & your virtues? Ah! That is an old subject; beside, if I were to begin, instead of a sheet of paper, I should want a ream.

(Clemit 2011: 171)

In short order, they married in March 1797 but maintained separate residences while Wollstonecraft attended to her novel *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman* as well as Fanny, who was three. On 30 August 1797, Wollstonecraft gave birth to their daughter, Mary, but she died of puerperal fever on 10 September. Her death thus ended Godwin’s short period of domestic bliss and left the bereft widower with two small children to raise.

Wollstonecraft’s reputation suffered a colossal blow in the years following her death, in part due to Godwin’s own candid depiction of her life in his *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798), a work that refused to whitewash the incidents that had led to her notoriety. Published a mere four months after her death, the memoir eventually provided conflicting perspectives for her daughters, who would come to know both the maternal and the notorious aspects of their mother’s personality through this work. Depicted by Godwin as

a “worshipper of domestic life” whose light was prematurely “extinguished for ever” in death (*Novels* I: 132, 141), Wollstonecraft had provoked intense emotions within a husband who believed he had “never loved till now; or, at least, had never nourished a passion to the same growth, or met with an object so consummately worthy” (*Novels* I: 129). Yet at the same time, the *Memoirs* also furnished Fanny and Mary with unvarnished accounts of Wollstonecraft’s failed relationships and her thwarted suicide attempts (she attempted suicide twice) that would eventually provoke antithetical responses in her children. Mary Shelley idealized her mother and revered her for the qualities Godwin had lauded, but Fanny Imlay would, tragically, follow in her footsteps, committing suicide in 1816.

Godwin’s choice of Mary Jane Vial (1768–1841) as their stepmother would eventually factor into both Mary and Fanny’s impressions of their mother. The mother of two small children of her own, namely Charles Gaulis Clairmont (1795–1850) and Clara Mary Jane (later Claire) Clairmont, the “widowed” Mary Jane married Godwin in 1801. This introduction will refer to Clara Mary Jane as Claire throughout, as she was Claire during the period this collection of letters covers. Scholars have questioned the legitimacy of Mrs. Clairmont’s widowhood. It had long been supposed that there never had been, in fact, a Mr. Clairmont, and that Charles and Claire had different fathers, neither of whom their mother had ever married. As William St. Clair notes, if this were indeed the case Mrs. Clairmont would have had every reason to construct the fiction: “To be the unmarried mother of one could be passed off in the mid-1790’s as a proper gesture of social defiance. To be the unmarried mother of two by different fathers was harder” (St. Clair 1989: 250). Indeed, St. Clair records that in 1830 their mother told Claire and Charles that Karl Gaulis of Switzerland, a man who had anglicized his name to Clairmont before dying of cholera while visiting Hamburg in 1798, had fathered them (1989: 249). Though St. Clair assumes Charles was “almost certainly” the son of Gaulis (1989: 250), he asserts that Claire’s father was in all likelihood “a man – about whom nothing is yet known – with whom Mary Jane took up after Gaulis had gone abroad” (1989: 250). The matter stood there until 2010, when Vicki Parslow Stafford discovered the truth of Claire’s paternity. Searching through documents deposited by Dodson and Pulman, Solicitors, in the Somerset Archive and Record Service Office (in Somerset, United Kingdom), researching her own family history, Stafford came upon a cache of letters that confirmed Claire’s paternity. Roughly sixty extant documents from 1798 to 1814 reveal that John Lethbridge of Sandhill Park, an estate in Bishops Lydeard, Somerset, grudgingly accepted that Claire was his daughter and provided Mary Jane Vial (her birth name) with funds for the girl’s support.<sup>3</sup>

While Godwin’s wives may have had unconventional sexual histories, he had transformed himself from committed bachelorhood to a devoted family man in just a few years. Indeed, when Wollstonecraft’s sisters offered to raise Fanny after Wollstonecraft’s death, Godwin refused. He and his second wife produced William Godwin (Junior) in 1803. While the household suffered from a chronic absence of money, the children had intellectual stimulation, as they often had exposure

to distinguished guests like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and Aaron Burr. Moreover, Godwin and his wife took the children on educational trips as well as on outings to the seaside at Margate and Ramsgate. However, the second Mrs. Godwin was an unpleasant stepmother, and her pride in her own children and frequent disregard of her stepdaughters created difficulties for both Fanny and Mary. The former responded to Mrs. Godwin's acrimony by seeking approval and complying with her parents' rules. Mary Shelley, on the other hand, tended to oppose her stepmother.

The competing loyalties and affections that originated in the Godwin home may have prompted the anxieties about Mary Shelley and her son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley (1819–1889), evident in this collection. Betty Bennett and Charles Robinson observe that for Mary Shelley the shared family space provided “immediate lessons in complex politics: a half-sister, step-brother and step-sister, baby brother; a step-mother, with whom she did not get on; a beloved learned father committed to maintaining ideals and his family life; and above the mantle, the ever present portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft reminding her of her own special heritage” (1990: 6). John Williams records that Mrs. Godwin provided a “busy, but not an overly loving home” environment (2000: 20). Todd explains: “Fanny and Mary were not close but both suffered from their relationship with their stepmother: where Mary turned her desolation outwards, openly hating Mary Jane as ‘odious’ and ‘filthy’, Fanny turned her inwards, feeling the need, in her insecurity and reverence for Godwin, to mitigate the faults of the woman who was his wife” (Todd 2007: 65). Williams postulates that Mary Shelley “grew to loathe her stepmother” (2000: 21), but offers some sympathy for the critically much-maligned Mrs. Godwin by stating that Aaron Burr was probably the only person who spoke of her positively (2000: 24).<sup>4</sup> In her defense, parenting five children under the specter of Wollstonecraft, a figure against whom (as Williams notes) “she knew only too well . . . she would always be compared” (2000: 25) could not have been easy. Her husband had called her predecessor “the greatest ornament her sex ever had to boast” (*Novels* I: 131). Moreover, Mrs. Godwin encountered strong opposition from Godwin's friends, “none of whom were willing to read on after the exquisite chapter of Godwin and Wollstonecraft had been brought to its dramatic conclusion” (Williams 2000: 26).

Mary would find love instead with Percy Shelley, whom she met in 1812. Percy was already the father of two children, Eliza Ianthe (later Esdaile, 1813–1876) and Charles Bysshe (1814–1826), though he was estranged from their mother, the former Harriet Westbrook (1796–1816). An admirer of both her parents, Percy saw in Mary a combination of their most admirable qualities. Attractive, interesting, and appreciably alluring, Mary probably excited Percy in a variety of ways. On 28 July 1814, Percy and Mary, by then lovers, departed with Claire for the Continent. Percy and Mary's relationship would be both fruitful and tragic. Their elopement led to a joint literary production, a collection of letters and poetry titled *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817). Emulating Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Norway*, a book of travel literature which the couple read on their

journey through Europe, the volume included Percy Shelley's "Mont Blanc" and Mary Shelley's travel responses to European cities, mores, and people. Between 1815 and 1819, the Shelleys had four children – a daughter never named, William, Clara, and Percy Florence. They buried all but the last. In 1816 both Fanny Imlay and Harriet Westbrook committed suicide, Mary and Percy married in 1816, and Claire's daughter with Lord Byron, Clara Allegra (born 1817), died in 1822; she was Claire's sole offspring. Scandal, rumor, and allegations of incest marred these years as well. This series of losses reached its apogée when Percy Shelley and his friend Edward Williams drowned in Italy in 1822. Thereafter, Mary Shelley returned to England, where she lived until her death in 1851.

Claire regularly lived with the Shelleys over the years, an arrangement which frequently caused Mary Shelley some consternation. Claire entered into a relationship with Lord Byron in 1816, and gave birth to their child in 1817. Yet Byron soon grew disgruntled with Claire, and he permanently severed their relationship. He permitted Claire custody of Allegra for a single year, then sent for the child to live with him in 1818 despite the dissolute environment in which he lived.<sup>5</sup> According to St. Clair, for instance, Allegra was not only raised "among the stinking hounds, the gibbering monkeys, the polluting peacocks, and the scented whores who frequented Byron's palace at Venice," but Byron generally treated his daughter "like a toy" (1989: 463). He sent Allegra to live with Maria Gisborne, Mary Shelley's close friend, for a time, then placed her in a convent school at Bagnacavallo, in Ravenna. Claire pleaded with Byron to allow her access to Allegra, but he did not, and the girl succumbed to typhoid fever in 1822. Claire was perhaps seeking succor for her grief when she became a governess after Allegra's death, and took a motherly interest in her young female charges in particular. Later, when she took her niece Pauline and grandniece Georgina Hanghegyi (1864–1885) into her home in Florence in the 1870s, vowing to educate and support Georgina financially, she may have been acting on the same instinct. Charles Clairmont would provide Claire with seven nephews and nieces on which to shower her devotion, which Mary's son Percy Florence also received. Claire's half-brother married Antonia Ghi(s)lain von Hembyze, the daughter of Georg von Hembyze and Anna Schönbichler, in Austria in 1824. Together, Charles and Antonia raised seven children: Pauline, Clara, Wilhelm, Hermine (1832–1847, known as Mina), Emily (1833–1856), Charles Gaulis (Charley) and Sidonia (1836–1856, Sidi).

Charles was an exceptional English teacher who lived his adult life in Austria but retained British citizenship. Of Charles's significant linguistic accomplishments, Ernst Joseph Görlich notes that Charles was one of the first to provide English-language instruction in Vienna: "Einer der ersten, der in Österreich englische Sprache und englisches Wesen vertrat, war Charles Gaulis Clairmont, der dem Kreis um den großen englischen Lyriker Shelley angehörte" ("Charles Gaulis Clairmont, who belonged to the circle of the great English poet Shelley, was one of the first to represent the English language and English character in Austria" [Görlich 1970: 124, translation provided by Anja Reiner]). In fact,

Charles was a teacher of the Viennese nobility and counted the brothers of Kaiser Franz Joseph I (namely, Archdukes Ferdinand Max and Karl Ludwig) among his students. In 1838, Charles secured a prestigious position as an English teacher at the Theresianum Ritterakademie, a private institution for the children of the aristocracy (see CL'ANA 0319). He also gave private English lessons to members of the Austrian nobility, as the letters in this volume describe, and from 1839 onwards he served as a professor of English at the Universität Wien (University of Vienna). In addition to teaching, Charles also wrote books for English-language learning. His *Reine Grundlehre der englischen Sprache* ("Basics of English Language," first published in 1831) continued on through six editions, while his *Vollständige englische Sprachlehre* ("Complete English Grammar") was republished on twelve separate occasions. In 1845, he published his *First Poetical-Reading Book in the English Language*, which was dedicated to Mary Caroline, Archduchess of Austria, by her "humble servant and teacher". Signing himself "Your Imperial Highness' very devoted and attached Servant," Charles lauded the Archduchess and her "exquisite taste . . . evinced in our national poetry". The title page of this book identified Charles as "Professor Extraordinary of the English Language and Literature at the Impl. and Rl. University of Vienna and at the Impl. and R. Ter. Academy of Nobles".<sup>6</sup> Consequently, he represented an important Austrian cultural figure who was well respected by his students and their parents, as Herbert Huscher confirms. Antonia also gave English lessons and published a reading primer, *Erste Schritte zur Erlernung der englischen Sprache, für Kinder von sechs bis zehn Jahren* (1845, "First Steps to Learning the English Language, for Children Ages Six to Ten"). Unlike Mary Shelley and Charles, Claire herself wrote for publication only once, a short story entitled "The Pole," which appeared anonymously.<sup>7</sup> A remark to Jane Williams suggests she felt the burden of her literary family: "in our family if you cannot write an epic poem or novel that by its originality knocks all other novels on the head, you are a despicable creature not worth acknowledging" (CC I: 295). Yet she was a prolific correspondent and Mary Shelley and other family members admired her letters for their perspicacity and their poetic qualities.

Claire's devotion to her brother's children would disrupt her relationship with Mary Shelley, her principal correspondent, just two years before Mary's death. Claire's niece, Clara Clairmont, joined Claire in England in 1849. Claire did not join a visit Clara paid to Mary, Sir Percy Florence, and his wife Lady Jane Shelley soon after her arrival. Clara met Alexander Knox (1818–1891), a friend of Percy Florence's, at this time, and a whirlwind courtship ensued. The pair married some weeks later without Charles and Antonia's permission – and completely against Claire's wishes. She began an epistolary and social battle against the Knoxes that lasted for six years, until Clara died in 1855. Claire had been close to her stepsister's son, and his support of Knox was devastating to Claire. Charles and Antonia sought to repair the rift between Clara and Claire, but it, as well as the rift with the Shelleys, never healed, even though Knox financially supported his wife's surviving relatives. The letters in this collection provide insight into these ruptures,

perhaps rendering Claire's behavior more explicable if not excusable. No such rift marred Claire's close relationship with Charles, his wife Antonia, or the rest of their children. And it is to members of this family that she wrote many of her letters and whose correspondence to her forms the basis of this collection. While six of Charles's seven children survived him – Mina died in 1847 of consumption<sup>8</sup> – Antonia and Claire buried four more, all of them the victims of illnesses, within six years of his death. Only Pauline and Wilhelm outlived Antonia.

Charles and his family lived through the revolution of 1848–9, and some of Antonia's letters in this collection reference her concerns for her family, the activities of the military, and her family's reaction to the political events. Claire evidently was worried for her family's safety, and Charles wrote to her on 10–11 November 1848 to placate her and to “put [her] out of all suspense about us” (CC II: 487). Mary Shelley was similarly concerned. Writing to Claire on 19 October 1848, she noted: “No further news in this Mornings Times from Vienna – I am very anxious for Charles” (*LMWS* III: 348). Although Charles sympathized with the revolutionaries, he stayed loyal to the imperial family. As Stocking asserts, many revolutionaries “remained attached” to the royal family, “hoping for a constitutional monarchy free from the repressions and censorship of the police state. Charles Clairmont was therefore not inconsistent in uniting his liberalism with a loyalty to the Habsburgs, on whom he was dependent” (CC II: 493). Görlich also shows Charles's advocacy for a unified Austria and Germany under Austrian leadership: “In bezug auf Deutschland wünscht er in einem Brief vom 7. Juni 1848 [wünscht er sich] ein stärkeres Eingreifen Österreichs in die deutschen Verhältnisse und selbstverständlich den österreichischen Kaiser als Oberhaupt eines erneuerten Deutschen Bundes” (“With regards to Germany, he advocated in a letter dated 7 June 1848 a stronger intervention by Austria in the German situation and, of course, the Austrian Emperor as head of a renewed German federation” [Görlich 1970: 124, translation provided by Anja Reiner]). Furthermore, Görlich confirms that Charles stayed loyal to Austria: “So bleibt er selbst in den größten Stürmen der Revolution ‘habsburgisch’ gesinnt, was wohl mit dem Kreis zusammenhängt, in dem er verkehrte” (“Thus, even in the greatest storms of revolution, he stays Habsburg-minded, which probably correlated with the set he socialized with” [Görlich 1970: 124, translation provided by Anja Reiner]). Unfortunately, Charles collapsed in 1850 while dining at the Archduke's residence and could not be revived (see CL'ANA 0042 and CL'ANA 0295). This produced a set of unexpected financial hardships only partially relieved through Claire's generosity. His widow not only buried four of her children in six years, but also discovered his adulterous relationship with Mrs. Kollonitz. Antonia's letters describe her devastation, as she became Claire's willing correspondent.

The portion of Claire's life her correspondence with Antonia covers, from 1850 until Antonia's death in 1868, has been heretofore largely known to scholars through Claire's correspondence in Stocking's collection. This collection of Antonia's letters therefore explains more fully Claire's life and her generosity towards

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her brother's family. Furthermore, these letters describe Claire's kindness to Pauline and her illegitimate daughter, Georgina Hanghegyi, after Georgina came to live in Florence with Claire in the 1870s. Reading these letters in conjunction with Claire's correspondence in Stocking's collection provides evidence of Claire's continued support of her brother's extended family. One measure Claire took to provide financially for Georgina was to attempt to sell a set of cherished Shelley papers that she yet possessed. She told Edward Trelawny, one of the participants in the Pisan Circle of 1821, that "the only thing that would tempt me to sell them would be if I could get a considerable sum for them. In that case I would sacrifice my feelings for the sake of making a small provision for a little Orphan girl that lives with me, and whom my niece kindly gives lessons to, to enable her by and by to earn her own livelihood" (CC II: 620). In a later letter to her executor Bartolomeo Cini, Claire further elaborated on her motive:

I hope he will sell the letters, for I want if I can get it an addition to my Income; it is enough for me as it is – but I want so much to give a tolerable education to dear Georgina – and that I cannot do on my present resources. And you know that now it is absolutely necessary for a young girl who probably will have to do something towards earning her livelihood to be well educated. For my self I would not sell my letters – but to benefit Georgie I will.

(CC II: 634)

The letters in this collection provide additional information about these papers and about the social history that formed the background to Henry James's story *The Aspern Papers*. In his novella, James based his characters and their attempts to sell the valuable Shelley papers on Claire's and Pauline's stories. Claire died in Florence on 19 March 1879 and was buried in the Camposanto della Misericordia di Santa Maria all'Antella. She composed her own epitaph, which was etched on her tombstone: "She passed her life in sufferings, expiating not only her faults but also her virtues" (CC II: 664). Unfortunately, the church underwent renovations in the early twentieth century, and Claire's bones were reinterred under the pavement. Today, a stone marker on the ground marks her final resting place. Her life history, expunged from the pages of Lady Jane Shelley's 1859 *Shelley Memorials*, remained relegated to the margins of the Shelley-circle story. This collection, like that of Stocking's, thus seeks to redress the wrong by providing a correction to the omission.

Pauline and Wilhelm's long lives and strong epistolary connections give them prominence in this collection. Indeed, their international travels are well documented in this set. Wilhelm lived with his aunt in England for a time after his graduation from the Gymnasium<sup>9</sup> in Austria, studying farming techniques at Queenwood College in Hampshire. He subsequently moved on to Hohenheim (Germany) and then Altenburg (Hungary), where he studied additional agricultural practices. Wilhelm's chosen vocation as a farmer took him to venues located

across Europe and as far away as Australia. Pauline went with him in 1853, seeking their fortunes, both for their own support and that of their mother. Wilhelm worked on a variety of farms in Australia while Pauline served as a governess to the Suttor family before they returned to Europe. Wilhelm then relocated to the Banat region. The letters in this collection document their experiences in great detail and section introductions provide more information about the siblings' various activities on both continents.

Pauline's social behaviors frequently mirrored those of her aunt, Claire, and, although she would probably have been somewhat loath to admit it, Pauline's enjoyment of her sexual relationships and her many flirtations became echoes of Claire's former past. Like Claire, she was content to indulge in a host of sexual affairs, none of which culminated in marriage. Pauline's letters never mentioned her relationship with William Henry Suttor, Junior (1834–1905), but it dominated many of the unpublished journal entries she wrote between 1855 and 1857. He was a pastoralist, future politician, and the eldest brother of the children to whom she was governess in Australia. At the time of their affair, she was thirty and he was twenty-two, and he was the only man Pauline claimed to have loved. While the journal occasionally referenced other men who admired her, Pauline set down the full history of her love affair with Willie in a combination of French, German, and (primarily) English entries. While she masked his identity by referring to him variously as W., Guillaume, and Willy, it is unmistakable. Unfortunately for Pauline, Willie eventually redirected his passions towards one of Pauline's pupils, Adelaide Agnes Henrietta Bowler. Pauline, however, continued to voice in her private writings both an unabated interest in Willie and her stunned disappointment over what she considered to be his betrayal of her, not only because he forsook her, but also because of the wife he chose. In Pauline's opinion, Adelaide had little to offer Willie. As she observed, Adelaide was "a girl who [could] barely read & write who would never from year's end to year's end open a book who does not understand the poetry in our nature & whose conversation is utter commonplace" (CL'ANA 0176: 13–14).

Willie was himself a prolific writer in his later adulthood, and his 1877 collection of short stories entitled *Australian Stories Retold; and, Sketches of Country Life* appears to contain a number of veiled references to Pauline. He professed that the stories contained in the section "Sketches of Country Life" had been "derived almost wholly from my own experiences. The descriptions of men and scenery are exactly set down as they appeared to me" (Suttor 1887).<sup>10</sup> Certainly, many of the tales seem to be situated in Bathurst, where he lived, while the descriptions of the homestead they foregrounded clearly evoked his father's estate, Brucevale, given its many varieties of flowers plus the picturesque cottage, veranda, and vineyard frequented by "a sixteen year old called William" (Suttor 1887: 62–63, see also Norton and Norton 1993: 116, 176). Willie's story "A Cattle Muster on the Plains" features an unnamed female character whose personality traits appear to be drawn from Pauline: "[A] late arrival from England, but has lived much on the Continent, and being somewhat self-willed, would defy conventionalities and

make one of the party” (Suttor 1887: 82). The story “The Van Dieman’s Land Ghouls” records that “Tennyson must surely have seen Tasmania in a dream when he wrote the ‘Lotus Eaters’” (Suttor 1887: 53), a comment suggesting Pauline’s influence on the work, given that she probably shared her fascination with Tennyson’s poetry with him during their romance.<sup>11</sup>

Wilhelm would stay in Australia until 1861, but Pauline would leave in 1857. Her letters to Wilhelm and to Claire recount an adventure-filled life. As a brilliant pianist (see CL’ANA 0405), an adventurous woman, and a trusted governess, Pauline seemed to ignore the mores of her time. According to this collection’s letters, Pauline smoked, flirted with men, sought out and engaged in numerous relationships, and traveled by herself – behaviors nineteenth-century society considered shocking for a woman. Yet her independence was not unfettered. Not only do her letters and her journal testify to the difficult life she endured as a woman in the Australian bush and to the constraints of her lack of financial independence, but the arrival of her daughter, Johanna Maria Georgina Hanghegyi (b. 21 January 1864), was a life-altering event. Pauline concealed her maternal relationship in order to avoid being ostracized by an austere Austrian public, and she never divulged Georgina’s father’s name. “Hanghegyi” was her own coinage. Herbert Huscher has suggested that Hanghegyi represents an “attempt at a translation of the name Clairmont into Hungarian, *hang* being sound, especially clear or shrill sound (compare ‘clarion’), and *hegy*, mountain” (1955: 47). Pauline sent the girl to live with Countess Károly, for whom she had formerly served as a governess, in Hungary, where she would visit her daughter a few times each year. Pauline lived with Antonia in Baden until her mother’s death from cancer in 1868, and then, in the 1870s, Pauline resided in Florence with Claire. In 1871, she brought Georgina to live with her and Claire in Italy. Despite her bright and treasured sense of independence, however, sorrows would continue to haunt Pauline, who remained with Claire until the latter’s death in 1879. Georgina died as a young adult in 1885, six years prior to Pauline’s accidental death in 1891, when she fell to her death while walking in Öblarn, Steiermark (Styria), while on an excursion with her nephew, Paul Clairmont.<sup>12</sup> Her death was recorded in *Das Vaterland* of 15 July 1891, where she was listed as the sister of W.G. Clairmont of Reisnerstrasse 40, Vienna. She was buried in Öblarn.<sup>13</sup> Like Claire, Pauline was dedicated to her family. Walter Clairmont told Stocking in a letter dated 16 June 1949 that he was “a witness of her inalienable devotion to her brother and his offsprings” (Stocking 1978: 374).

Wilhelm would outlive his sister by four years. His surviving letters to Pauline and to Claire documenting his post-Australian years all appear in this collection. Wilhelm left Australia on 22 January 1861, sailing on the *Behar*, bound for Alexandria, Egypt. His unpublished “Sands and Kenny’s Diary 1861” (CL’ANA 0177, unpublished manuscript, Pforzheimer Collection) records his departure from Sydney, from where his journey took him to Suez, then through Cairo and to Alexandria. From Alexandria, he continued towards Florence via Nubia, Malta, and Messina. Finally reaching his destination on 28 March, he surprised his aunt

Claire (see CL'ANA 0245) in a reunion he recounted in his diary: "Saw A Claire at Hotel Schneider She has become much older looking She has lost some teeth and lips in consequence She was affectionate & vivacious She offered to lend me £500 for stocking a farm or £1500 for purchasing land in a warm climate". The following day, his diary confirms, he saw Claire yet again: "Dined with A Claire – rain all day took leave from her at 9 ½ pm".<sup>14</sup> Finally, Wilhelm returned home to Baden, Austria, on 4 April, and in his journal he documented his reunion with Antonia and Pauline. The reunion was joyous in spite of the failure of the Australian experiment. While the siblings' Australian sojourn was not a financial success, ironically it may have saved their lives; four of their siblings died of the various diseases that particularly plagued Europe in the mid-nineteenth century in their absence.

On his return from Australia in 1861, Wilhelm began farming as a tenant farmer in the Banat, in part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which is Romania today. The journal Wilhelm kept between March and June 1861 of his travels across the Austro-Hungarian Empire searching for a suitable property resembles a nineteenth-century geographical primer/compendium of place names and locations throughout present-day Croatia, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic. His early association with the sons of the Hungarian magnate class at Altenburg provided him with connections he desperately needed to succeed in his uncertain search. While a substantial British expatriate community existed in various continental locations, Eastern Europe remained far less commonly traveled. Yet as a young Austrian of British descent, Wilhelm occupied the quite unusual position of being able to describe, in English, his subsequent experiences in the Banat. His letters to Claire illuminate for readers of English a part of a nineteenth-century continental and Eastern Europe which was embroiled in a set of social and political difficulties and anxieties whose lead combatants continue to populate history books today. Wilhelm's letters to Claire document and identify these issues and conflicts, as well as describing some of the magnates associated with nineteenth-century Austro-Hungarian politics such as Count Esterházy and Prince Schwarzenberg.

As in Australia, Wilhelm proved unsuccessful as a farmer in the Banat, almost certainly because he underestimated the difficulty of the terrain and the harshness of the weather. He worked as a tenant farmer on the estate of the brother of one of Wilhelm's Altenburg friends, Rudolf von Hauer, in Bobda, a village located today in Western Romania near to Timișoara. Conditions made it extremely difficult to eke out a decent living. Pauline joined him in 1863, and spent two years with him working on the farm, attending to his health, and keeping house for him. She left in 1865 and later returned to Baden to assist Antonia, who had been diagnosed with cancer. In 1866, Wilhelm married the daughter of a Viennese privy councilor, Ottilia von Pichler (1843–1913), whose correspondence to Claire features in this collection. Ottilia's sister, Emily, had previously married Rudolf von Hauer, and the two families lived in close proximity to one another for a while. While the marriage was happy, famine and drought afflicted the area and posed great difficulties. By 1870, he was forced to make a change. First he

became a tenant farmer on a homestead he called Belec, and then he and Claire purchased Nikolaihof, a farm property in today's Slovenia, some 650 kilometers west of Timișoara. Neither plan succeeded, and by 1874 the family finally returned to Vienna, where Wilhelm became a surveyor of Crown properties after proving incapable of sustaining his growing family through any of his several farming enterprises.

Wilhelm and Ottilia raised three children: Walter Claire (1868–1958), Alma Pauline (1869–1946), and Johann Paul (1877–1942). If the couple struggled together financially, their thirty-year marriage appears to have been a very happy one. Wilhelm's death notice recorded that he died on 26 December 1895 at 10:15 p.m. at the age of 65 years. He was buried in the family crypt in Matzleinsdorf on 27 December. The certificate listed his children and spouse as survivors.<sup>15</sup> Ottilia died in 1913. Of the three children, only Paul produced grandchildren. Paul's son, Christoph, was an archaeologist who, together with his wife, Victorine Clairmont-von Gonzenbach, published many volumes documenting his archaeological digs in Israel, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. Christoph's sister, Mary Claire Bally-Clairmont, lived with her husband, Hans Jörg Bally, in Switzerland, where she died in 2009. Since neither Mary Claire nor Christoph had children of their own, with their deaths the Clairmont side of the Shelley circle ended.

This collection restores the voices of those extended Clairmont family members who were closest to Claire and, by extension, to Mary and Percy Florence Shelley. Both Pauline and Wilhelm came to know the Shelleys rather intimately during their respective stays in England, and Antonia met Mary Shelley during her sojourn in England with Charles in 1828. The Clairmont family's association with the major participants in the Shelley circle, together with their lifelong friendship with Claire, makes these forgotten voices particularly relevant to Shelley-circle studies. The collection serves too as a way to close the Shelley circle by bringing into its fold the marginalized voices of those in the Clairmont family.

## Notes

- 1 This collection contains additional information about these locations in the introductions to the sections containing the letters written from them.
- 2 Among Godwin's intellectual circle, Inchbald was a celebrated actress and novelist, Parr was a scholar, Mackintosh was the author of *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791), and Holcroft was a playwright, philosopher, and scholar.
- 3 See <https://sites.google.com/site/maryjanesdaughter/home>
- 4 Burr visited the Godwin home and apparently enjoyed Mrs. Godwin's company.
- 5 British law gave fathers full custody of their children (St. Clair 1989: 463), a situation confronted by Wollstonecraft, Mary Hays, and others. Anne Mellor asserts that writers such as Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, Hays, and Mary Shelley argued for "a radical reform of the social construction of gender" in their texts (Mellor 2000: 105). These women countered the traditional patriarchal social and legal systems existing in England by advocating egalitarian marriages and a redistribution of family roles in defiance of prevailing legal orders.

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- 6 Impl. and Rl. are abbreviations for Imperial and Royal (k.k. in German, kaiserlich-königlich), while the R. Ter. Academy stands for the Ritterakademie Theresianum.
- 7 The story was published in 1832 in *The Court Magazine* and again in *The English Annual* of 1836. The writer was identified as “the Author of ‘Frankenstein’”.
- 8 See CL’ANA 0055 for Wilhelm’s account of his sister’s death.
- 9 Equivalent of secondary school.
- 10 Unnumbered prefatory pages.
- 11 See CL’ANA 0210 and also CL’ANA 0423, a copy of “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” probably penned in Pauline’s hand (unpublished manuscript, Pforzheimer Collection).
- 12 Wilhelm’s son.
- 13 Austrian Newspapers Online, Austrian National Library, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vtl&datum=18910715&seite=5&zoom=33> (p. 5).
- 14 Wilhelm’s diary was not paginated.
- 15 Photograph of the death notice provided by Heraldic-Genealogical Society Adler, Vienna.

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## EDITORIAL SYMBOLS

<del>word</del>	Deleted legible word
[illeg.]	Illegible word
[ <del>illeg-</del> ]	An illegible word that has been deleted
c.	Editorial conjecture, typically used for a date
/	Line changes
{tear}	The manuscript is torn and is illegible
{ink}	An inkblot is visible, rendering the word(s) illegible
{section/line cut out of page}	Physical cut in the paper, made by an unknown person



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Abbreviations for names of letter writers and recipients:

Claire Clairmont: CIC  
Antonia Clairmont: AC  
Charles Gaulis Clairmont: CGC  
Pauline Clairmont: PC  
Wilhelm Gaulis Clairmont: WC  
Ottilia Clairmont: OC  
Emily Clairmont: EC  
Sidonia Clairmont: SC  
Charles Gaulis Clairmont (Charley): ChC  
Alma Clairmont: ACC  
Clara Knox: CK  
Alexander Knox: AK  
Alma von Pichler: AP  
Edward John Trelawny: EJT  
Emma Taylor: ET

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121)	15 February 1859	CL'ANA 0338	AC	CIC	304
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123)	1 March 1859	CL'ANA 0082	WC	CIC	309
124)	21 March 1859	CL'ANA 0336	AC	CIC	312
125)	3 April 1859	CL'ANA 0335	AC	CIC	315
126)	11 April 1859	CL'ANA 0207	PC	CIC	317
127)	15 May 1859	CL'ANA 0334	AC	CIC	319
128)	27 May 1859	CL'ANA 0333	AC	CIC	321
129)	22 June 1859	CL'ANA 0332	AC	CIC	323
130)	30 June 1859	CL'ANA 0331	AC	CIC	326
131)	4 July 1859	CL'ANA 0083	WC	CIC	327
132)	10 July 1859	CL'ANA 0330	AC	CIC	328
133)	25 July 1859	CL'ANA 0329	AC	CIC	329
134)	29 July 1859	CL'ANA 0084	WC	CIC	331
135)	1 August 1859	CL'ANA 0085	WC	CIC	333
136)	25 August 1859	CL'ANA 0328	AC	CIC	335
137)	29 August 1859	CL'ANA 0327	AC	CIC	337
138)	4 September 1859	CL'ANA 0326	AC	CIC	339
139)	7 October 1859	CL'ANA 0086	WC	CIC	342
140)	5 November 1859	CL'ANA 0087	WC	CIC	343
141)	8 January 1860	CL'ANA 0323	AC	CIC	344
142)	2 February 1860	CL'ANA 0322	AC	CIC	345
143)	23 February 1860	CL'ANA 0324	AC	CIC	347
144)	28 February 1860	CL'ANA 0088	WC	CIC	349
145)	7 April 1860	CL'ANA 0089	WC	CIC	350
146)	4 May 1860	CL'ANA 0090	WC	CIC	352
147)	25 May 1860	CL'ANA 0091	WC	CIC	354
148)	3 September 1860	CL'ANA 0092	WC	CIC	355
149)	5 September 1860	CL'ANA 0325	AC	CIC	357
150)	2 October 1860	CL'ANA 0093	WC	CIC	359
151)	30 October 1860	CL'ANA 0094	WC	CIC	360
152)	10 December 1860	CL'ANA 0095	WC	CIC	361

# LETTERS FROM 12 DECEMBER 1839–10 APRIL 1853

## 1 • Antonia Clairmont to Claire Clairmont

267 Wallner Strasse Vienna<sup>1</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1839.<sup>2</sup>

My dearest Claire!<sup>3</sup>

We are all erring mortals; in proof of which poor dear Toni, whom you supposed to be the only one not liable to be ill, is the only one who is ill at present;<sup>4</sup> I am sitting on the sofa with a very bad rheumatism<sup>5</sup> in my thigh, wrapped up in flannels it would do Mamma good to see me so like a gouty old Lady I look.<sup>6</sup> Thank God I can move my hands, but I write very badly owing to a little trembling. The contents of yours gave us great joy, it has removed a load from our minds, to think that Mamma is provided for for a couple of years is a blessing indeed, if she would come now, she might almost live on that capital here, and all our sorrows were ended for ever, however we see already she has made up her mind not to do that; and so we must submit to her; on your account we are most sorry; because you might live cheerfully and happily with us, instead of suffering from uncertainty and care as you do in your present mode of life. Our business goes on as usual, I have a few little girls that come to me, and I might have more but for want of time; it is true that more and more English men are coming to settle as masters here; but Charles's reputation is such, that it has nothing to fear from such newcomers, perhaps those cheap masters might injure the classes, but till now we have not perceived any evil influence, except the making Charles uneasy; the poor fellow's hard time begins now again; his lessons go on without interruption from 7 in the morning till 9 in the evening with a short half hour for dinner, and another for tea. —<sup>7</sup>

Since writing this I have been in bed four days with very bad pains and fair hopes of spending the winter more or less on the sofa; you may imagine what a trial this is for a [illeg.]ing economical housekeeper! though I took to my bed with the firm resolution to bear it out stoutly, and not to be cast down, but when I think of candles and butter more used, vegetables spoiled, potatoes thrown away, and meat that is not made go far enough, can you wonder when I confess myself entirely failed, and fretful and fidgetting as any cinic<sup>8</sup> would wish to see one. Today I could no longer bear it, and got up, and crept into the nursery, where

I found the Bonne d'Enfans,<sup>9</sup> changing her Bonnet, whilst the children were all unwashed, and the linen not put by since three days, nor last weeks stockings mended; the cook in full dress receiving visit and the housemaid was nowhere to be found; surely the servants are nowhere so bad than here; lazy, dirty, and good for nothing in every respect; but no more of them; let me rather try to be as amiable as possibly can be in this present dilemma.

Again I have been forced to leave off, and shall not say much more there are several points in your letter, that Charles wants to answer, I will only add about Mrs Wright, ~~that~~ I am the more inclined to take and love her boy, as I heard from M<sup>r</sup> Richter that he is a very quiet boy, and besides she Mrs. W. is so kind to you that we are glad to show our grateful sense for it. You say nothing about Emily; how is she? soon to be married or no?<sup>10</sup> the wizest thing for you to do were to get your things in order, and bring young Emilie's yourself, instead of looking for a situation; I had half a mind to send over Pauline next summer, as a Lady of our acquaintance goes there in spring and returns in autumn; but partly I am afraid she would be a burthen to Mama, and partly I wish her to be a year older, on account of her studies not being finished, especially her music, in which she makes astonishing progress;<sup>11</sup> we have this winter taken a first rate master for her at 5. s. per lesson, she goes on improving rapidly, perceptible almost at every lesson and it would be a pity to break off, at such a time when she is too young to go one alone, so I suppose I must give up my project and wait for another year; M<sup>rs</sup> Moreau is likewise satisfied with them, and they adore her; they are both good looking girls;<sup>12</sup> Pauline has more improved in this point<sup>13</sup> than Clary which was the first as I told you already; William gives me most trouble just now; some of his evil propensities may have been his fathers too, when a boy; but he, who wants to be faultless in my eyes, even to doubing his douts,<sup>14</sup> is too reserved as to converse with me on such subjects; therefore I can gather no lights, but my own wisdom to guide me on my difficult way. The others are all well and going on as they should. Mina and Emy<sup>15</sup> prefer french to English for the present but Charley<sup>16</sup> stoutly maintains he is an English boy. When I told them that a young English friend will come to stay with us, they were so glad, and look forward with the greatest impatience to see him. Good bye dearest Claire I can say no more, but do not think I am ill, it is only a very ~~dangerous~~ tedious thing, but not a dangerous one. do write again very soon we wish also much to hear from Mama.

ever yours A.C.

No envelope

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0405

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1 *Picture of Vienna Containing a Historical Sketch of the Metropolis of Austria* (1844) describes certain aspects of Viennese life in this period. Street numbers, the unnamed author noted, ran "from

1 to 1214, indiscriminately through the town” (p. 10), making it difficult to locate addresses. The book’s list of house numbers and the street on which they stood reveals that the Clairmont’s house, number 267, was on Wallnerstrasse. Houses numbered 263, 265 through 273, and 276 were also located on Wallnerstrasse (Vienna: Braunmüller and Seidel, 1844) p. 111.

- 2 This letter, dated 1839, is the earliest extant letter of Antonia Ghi(s)lain von Hembyze (1800–1868), the daughter of Georg von Hembyze and Anna Schönbichler, who married Charles Gaulis Clairmont (1795–1850) in 1824. Parish birth records for Charles and Antonia’s children identify Antonia as the daughter of Georg von Hembyze, a “Zollamts Oberbeamter” (customs office official). A document signed by Konstantin Bouhelier Beaulier of Belgium (Flanders), and dating back to the eighteenth century, shows the Hembyze family tree with its Belgium connections (see Pforzheimer Collection, unpublished manuscript, CL’ANA 0415). Charles was an English language teacher in Vienna. His children’s birth records listed his profession as “englischer Sprachmeister” (German for “master of the English language”).

Charles first moved to Vienna in 1819. Marion Stocking explains that the Austrian authorities deemed Charles and Claire (1798–1879), who was visiting him at the time, as “subversive[s]” in 1822, and ordered them to leave Vienna, acting on an anonymous letter Count Joseph Sidlnitzky, chief of the Police and Censorship Office, had received (see Charles’s letter to Mary Shelley, *CC I*: 202–9). Bias against their step-father, William Godwin, and against Percy Bysshe Shelley probably prompted the authorities to single them out for expulsion. Walter Clairmont (Charles’s grandson) confirmed the family connection in a document written in 1933 (CL’ANA 0428, unpublished manuscript, Pforzheimer Collection). Walter Clairmont observed: “Da die Stiefschwester Mary Godwin die Frau des berühmten englischen Dichters Shelley wurde, traten sie in enge Beziehungen zu den Familien Shelley und Byron. Die Freundschaft meines Großvaters mit Shelley ist aus jeder englischen Literaturgeschichte zu entnehmen”. (Translation by Anja Reiner: “Since [their] step-sister Mary Godwin became the wife of the famous English poet Shelley, they [Charles and Claire] maintained a close relationship with the families of Shelley and Byron. My grandfather’s friendship with Shelley appears in English literary history”).

Charles secured the aid of many important Viennese families who petitioned on his behalf to allow him to stay. Signatories included Count Dietrichstien-Prosekau-Lestic, Princess Grassaltowitsch née Esterhazy, Baron Gump and Baron Eskeles (*CC I*: 206). As a result of these requests, the authorities granted Charles permission to remain in Vienna where he taught English for many years. Claire stayed until 1824, when she became a governess in Russia, an employment in which she would continue for some years. In July 1828, Charles and Antonia left for London with their two children, Pauline and Clara. They stayed for two years, then returned to Vienna. Writing to Mary Shelley from Tauplitz, Austria, Claire asked about her brother’s children, inquiring if they were “pretty”. She also asked Mary Shelley to share information about Antonia (*CC I*: 253). By 1839, Charles and Antonia had seven children. The parish register of the Church of St. Michael in Vienna (Michaelerkirche) provides their birth names: Pauline (Pauline Maria, 1825–91), Clara (Maria Johanna Klara Gaulis, 1826–1855), Wilhelm (Wilhelm Karl, 1831–95), Hermine (register information unavailable, 1832–47), Emily (register information unavailable, 1833–56), Charles Gaulis (Carolus Borromaeus, 1835–56), and Sidonia (1836–56). The register also records the birth of “Bertha,” daughter of Charles and Antonia, in 1828. No further information about Bertha is known. The announcement of Emily Clairmont’s death on 2 March 1856 in the 6 March 1856 edition of *Wiener Zeitung* lists her as Emma Clairmont (Austrian Newspapers Online, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <http://www.anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?apm=0&aid=wrz&datum=18560306&seite=11&zoom=1>, p. 11). Of the seven Clairmont children, only Pauline and Wilhelm would survive their mother.

- 3 See Introduction for more detailed information about the family.

4 Antonia was known as Tonie to her family. She was 39 years old at the time this letter was written.

5 Antonia misspelled the German “Rheumatismus” and the English “rheumatism”.

6 Antonia referred to Mary Jane Godwin (1768–1841), Claire’s mother and wife of William Godwin (1756–1836). Marion Stocking records that Mary Jane Godwin had moved by 1837 to “a retired spot at the beginning of Kentish town” (*CC II*: 354). In 1838, Claire wrote to Mary Shelley to ask

- whether she had seen Mrs. Godwin. Claire informed Mary Shelley that her mother corresponded very “seldom” with her (p. 354). Mrs. Godwin died in 1841 and was buried beside Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft in old St. Pancras’s Church. After Mary Shelley’s death in 1851, her son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, authorized the bodies of Godwin and Wollstonecraft to be exhumed and then reburied in St. Peter’s Church, Bournemouth. See Introduction for information about Mary Jane Godwin.
- 7 In *Picture of Vienna*, the author documented the presence of private schools for language instruction in Vienna: “English gentlemen or ladies, intending to pass some months in Vienna, and wishing during their stay to acquire a knowledge of German, cannot do better than to apply to Prof. Clairmont, Wallnerstrasse, Nr. 267” (p. 88). Charles was highly acclaimed as an instructor (see Introduction to this collection for information from Ernst Joseph Görlich).
  - 8 cynic.
  - 9 French for “nurse maid”.
  - 10 In a letter to Mary Shelley from Paris, dated 2 June 1843, Claire stated that she had received a letter from “Emily” who informed her that Mrs. Wright had married Count de Witts and had “given up business,” and that she considered the marriage not “prudent” (CC II: 377). Stocking identifies Emily as Emily Godwin, wife of William Godwin, Jr., (1803–32), named Mary Louisa Eldred but known as Emily. The son of William and Mary Jane Godwin, William Godwin, Jr. married Emily in 1830, and died without issue in 1832. Stocking was unable to identify Mrs. Wright, Count de Witts, or Mr. Richter.
  - 11 Pauline was extremely musical and played the piano. Her letters from Australia reference the piano she played as a governess at Brucedale (see CL’ANA 0210 and CL’ANA 0232). Charles Clairmont told Mary Shelley that Pauline was “considered one of the best female dilettanti” in Vienna and that she could earn her living with her piano playing. He called her “Beethoven mad” (CC II: 462).
  - 12 Writing to Mary Shelley from Moscow in 1824, Claire expressed her dissatisfaction at having to keep up with so many correspondents. She evidently wrote to “two Moreaus at Vienna,” one of whom Stocking identified with some probability as Jeanne Hulot Moreau, widow of General Jean Victor Moreau (CC I: 214). In 1845, Claire told Mary Shelley that she was visited in Paris by two friends from Vienna whom Stocking identified as the Moreaus. In 1849, Charles and Antonia wrote to Claire about their daughter, Clara, noting that “poor old Mrs. Moreaux used to swear by her” (CC II: 504).
  - 13 Pauline was considered extremely attractive, although she was plagued with bad teeth. In a letter to Wilhelm dated 9 June 1878, Pauline decried the loss of her teeth, saying it was far worse a condition than Wilhelm’s grey hair (see CL’ANA 0421, Box 3, bundle g, number 207). She also complained of becoming “stout”. Charles Clairmont told Mary Shelley that Pauline had “a very pretty face” (CC II: 462) but that Clara, although less “delicate” than Pauline, was in fact the prettier sister (p. 462). Pauline’s Australian lover, Willie Suttor, described her in his *Memoirs*: “I was a boy of eighteen and she a woman of twenty-eight . . . She was a short dark woman with jet black silky hair, dark brown eyes and very pretty hands and arms and a certain spice of devilry in her that made her (undeciphered word) to a raw country lad with all his passions just ripening unto manhood strength. I think she left us in 1857 having just taught me what it was to feel what love of a woman was like” (quoted in Voignier-Marshall, p.29). In her own journal, written in 1855 while she was living in Australia, Pauline compared herself to the woman Willie Suttor would eventually marry, Adelaide Agnes Henrietta Bowler. According to Pauline, while Adelaide had beauty and youth on her side (“You have beauty I have the mind you have youth I have experience”), Adelaide’s face was completely out of proportion: “& then her features are of that kind that will very soon look wizened – Nose and chin meeting – & though on the whole she is very handsome, yet I do not think I have in my face a feature so out of proportion as her nose is – But then I being plain one bad feature would not strike on so much” (CL’ANA 0176 pp. 10, 15; unpublished journal, Pforzheimer Collection).
  - 14 Antonia meant to write “doubting his doubts”.
  - 15 Hermine was known as Mina, and Emily as Emmy or Emy.
  - 16 Charles Gaulis Clairmont was known as Charley.

## 2 • Antonia Clairmont to Claire Clairmont

My direction – Madame Clairmont Nrs 57.58.  
Weidling bei Klosterneuburg<sup>1</sup>

Weidling 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1846

My dearest Claire.

Yesterday I was in town and Charles gave me your two last letters,<sup>2</sup> and I sit down immediately to relieve your fears on Charles' account and to thank you for your affectionate solicitude for his and our sakes; Charles is better in so far that he is going out, but there is still the same stiffness about the limbs; the arm is stiff and writing easily fatigues him, also ~~has~~ doctor Boehm has forbidden it.<sup>3</sup> the leg is rather stronger, but going up our high staircase must naturally weaken it, therefore Doctor B advises most strenuously to take another lodging, which however is not so easily done, good lodgings being scarce unless you pay a high price;<sup>4</sup> doctor B now seems to think the cause of the disease to be in the liver in that case a trip to Carlsbad<sup>5</sup> will be found necessary which I should greatly regret, not so much on account of the expense but because I am convinced Charles would feel so low and melancholy, separated from us all without occupation, always brooding on the future, that he would never reap the benefit from the waters that might accrue if taken with a mind free from cares: on the other hand if he were to spend the two months of the boys' holidays entirely at Weidling, enjoying the pure air, repose, and the cheerful society of his children it would do more for him, than either the waters of Gastein<sup>6</sup> or Carlsbad; his disease having been brought on by over exertion, repose and quiet both of mind and body will cure it; this I represented to D<sup>r</sup>. B. and he fully agreed with me as to the moral view of it, but said he would be guided in his final judgment by the effect of the baths he is now taking; so very likely no journey [Badreise]<sup>7</sup> will be necessary, but if it were my dearest Claire, pray do not distress yourself for the means we are fully able to meet the expense, if for such a purpose one must not regret a sacrifice. I am indeed deeply touched with your kindness and generous love; would to God I had other means of proving it to you but words; but never, never, kind and liberal sister, can we accept more from your kindness than the promised £80 pr annum; if Mrs. S.<sup>8</sup> will or can add something – as you seem to hint – £20 or 25 or whatever it may be, it will be a blessing to us; but you my dear Claire, neither I nor Charles could bear the idea, that after a life of storms and vicissitude you should deny yourself every comfort that your ill health or habits and an advancing age require, in order to support us; you do not seem to be aware of the immense benefit you are already conferring; for is it not the reliance on your promise that keeps up my courage now in this trying moment? without it I own, my heart would sink within me in bleak despair; but now secret tears of thanks to God mingled with those of pain when I first heard of his illness – for I was already at W: – you may well think, I was not unprepared for a catastrophe of that cost I saw him running on in his headlong career where he would not be stopped and have been expecting to see him sink these last six

years; many is the hour I have sat in painful meditation, how shall I do when he fails? what can I undertake, – and now the dread moment seems to come God has put a guardian angel on my path, and that guardian angel are you my dear Claire, you are our benefactress, such unexpected such essential help, that I should blush to accept more; if Mrs. S. can add nothing no matter £80 is a great sum; and though our wants be many, let my own and my children's activity supply the rest, and with the help of God we shall succeed, besides Charles' state of health is not so bad but we may hope if he will only be reasonable, and not begin his lessons too early, so as to bring on a relapse; I am sorry you are again prevented from coming here this summer, for I relied on your influence with him on that point. But ~~whether~~ let me now speak of the future. You speak of our retiring in the country, that I am afraid is impossible, though it would meet all our wishes as to taste, because we cannot afford to live without gaining something, and what should we do with the boys? they must have the advantage of studying; ever since Charles' great illness I had the wish of retiring from Vienna and settle in some smaller town where living was cheaper, and we should find some occupation which with the stipend you so generously fixed would carry us through, but Charles treated it as a ridiculous idea, to give up a prosperous business, numerous connexions, to go and teach English in a town where one does not even know whether anybody has a wish of learning it; there is certainly some truth in this, so the matter dropt, but last winter when he had the attack of deafness, which considerably frightened us, I again recurred to the old project; but he would not hear of it; "what would Claire say, if we were to sell Weidling ~~again~~, it would seem so vacillating, as if we did not know our own minds; the town I fixed upon is Grätz;<sup>9</sup> there is a university, so the boys could receive their education at home, instead of the house at Weidling we should buy one at a suburb of Grätz, which then would be a real dwelling house for the family towards whose maintenance a garden and a couple of fields well managed would go a great way, I might also take a ~~some~~ a few young ladies as boarders, the Styrian<sup>10</sup> nobility is poor, but I have been assured that an establishment for education is wanted there and would have some chance; but yet it is a difficult thing to begin, both Pauline and Clara are afraid of the risk, and though I feel sure we should all be benefitted in the end I cannot impart that conviction, to the others, so all will remain as it is. Of Weidling I can only say that we need not regret the bargain at all, our little garden is very productive, I mean the newly created kitchen garden; the field the same: the crop of potatoes very promising till now no trace of illness; we shall have about {~~tear~~} bushels to sell besides our own stock for winter and seeds; we have peasant peas and beans without end and all sorts of cabbage and lettuce; a piece of ground I sowed with turnips and they succeed too; we have had endless raspberry currants tarts and gooseberry fool,<sup>11</sup> all our shrubs bearing already, the trees we planted have of course no crop to offer, but we hope for next year. the meadows we have let, as also the wine cellar, they bring in about £15 of which the taxes are to be deducted about £5; we are just now making the repairs and then it will be all in the completest order, and the most comfortable dwelling house one can imagine; If we could live here all the year

round, I would keep a cow, and a couple of ~~geese~~ pigs and poultry, which would all tell in the kitchen department; the more I am convinced of the utility a little farm well managed might be to the family, the more I am desirous of realising my project about Grätz where we might join it with giving lessons and the means of education for our boys. In Weidl:<sup>12</sup> though the farm would succeed but the two last advantages are wanting; and as we only spend part of the year here and 2 parts in town, we have no chance of making that profit of the former as if nursed all the year round; well for this year at all events I can do nothing, and as I do not wish to harrass Charles' mind I shall say no more of it for the present; in so far my dear Claire I must own I feel reluctant that the few friends to whom I imparted my scheme seemed rather to take Charles' view of it than mine; Clärchen is now at home we are all overjoyed to have her again, she is a sweet good child and the Rismondo's hardly knew how to part with her, they made her leave all her winter clothes behind hoping she would come again to Görz till the autumn,<sup>13</sup> but I cannot spare her for the moment, her presence will be a consolation to me, in case Charles should fall ill there is nobody to nurse him, Pauline being engaged in out of door lessons, and I in my school; If it had been the will of Providence to send a repetition of the stroke, and poor Charles became seriously ill, then I could not have done without her; but that we need not fear, if he will only allow himself the necessary repose, not only now but always, also in the winter;

Now I will give you a statement of our money affairs; some years ago I told you we had saved about £500, this sum I am sorry to say has not much increased since then, having now two boys at school which cost a great deal but still it ~~has~~ is not less; we have paid £500 on the house and have £100 besides the necessary provision for the summer; these 100 pounds ought to remain intact except in case of Charles' going to some Bathing place, but what harasses him so much is that in Sept: another installment on the house pr £50 will fall due, but even that is cared for; ever since Sidi's illness took that turn as to show she would ~~be~~ remain sickly and deformed it has been my wish to buy an ~~one~~ small annuity of 12 or 15 pounds for her poor little life after my death, for this purpose I had already saved 60 pds in the saving bank;<sup>14</sup> this money then shall go to pay the installment, and I hope God will spare my life a few years longer, so that I may be able to accomplish this task which I have much at heart; the others are all strong and healthy, but this poor child, it would be hard indeed to leave her entirely to depend on the kindness of her brothers and sisters, however strong and durable that tie may be. So you see kindest and best of sisters that there is no need of your great anxiety, pray then keep quiet lest you injure your health; about our retrenching, little can be done we did not indulge in any unnecessary expenses, besides we ought to take a lower and consequently dearer lodging,<sup>15</sup> and if Charles goes on with his lessons, he will want to hire a carriage at least for half the day, besides provisions rise every day, wood, since the introduction of the railroads<sup>16</sup> has doubled its price, where then is the road to retrench under such auspices? Now good bye my dearest Claire I hope this letter will bring some quiet to your mind by showing you Charles has a partner willing and able to fulfil her duties, and who is not scared at the idea it

is now her turn to work in order and to give him rest; you know woman is always superior in bearing domestic misfortunes. Now God help you my dear Claire if your health permits you answer me soon, do give my best thanks to Mrs S.<sup>17</sup> for her kind sympathy. ever yours most affectionately

A.C.

the children are all well and happy even Sidi in spite of her complaint grows quite [illeg.] and stout in this good air. the affair with [illeg.]<sup>18</sup> is quite off, thank God – Pauline now has an offer of an elderly lover but has decided against it.<sup>19</sup>

Address: Aerogramme: à/ Mademoiselle/ Mademoiselle Claire Clairmont/  
24. Chester Square/ London  
Postmark: WIEN/ 10. JUL.

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0401

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1 Charles and Antonia Clairmont owned a house in Weidling, about 10.5 kilometers north of the capital city, Vienna. Weidling is located in the municipality of Klosterneuburg, Austria. Antonia described the “pure air” and the “very productive garden” at Weidling and the “beautiful tranquility and delicious air of this place” (see CL'ANA 0400). She also confirmed that, by December 1848, the house was “paid out and well furnished” (see CL'ANA 0403 and CL'ANA 0212). In his letter to Claire of 10–11 November 1848, Charles wrote from Weidling about revolutionary activity in Vienna. He described how the windows of their Weidling home were made to “tremble and clatter” from the “bombardment” in Vienna (CC II: 487). In *Picture of Vienna*, the author identified “Klosterneuburg” as a “town of 3000 inhabitants” which was located “about 8 English miles from Vienna”. The author observed that the town’s “chief interest” was the monastery of St. Augustin, which dated from the twelfth century and which had an enormous wine cellar (pp. 147–50). The German word “bei” means “near” or “close to”.

2 These letters have not survived.

3 Known alternatively by these various spellings, Dr. Boehm, Dr. Bohm, or Dr. Böhm, he was evidently the Clairmont family’s physician. In 1848, Charles wrote to Claire from Weidling, noting that his friend Mr. Böhm had fled from the town for fear of being “pressed into the service of the Nat. Gd” (CC II: 491). It is possible that Dr. Böhm was of Jewish origin given his absence from the city. In the revolutionary activity of 1848, the state denied Jews their rights as citizens and also forced many of them into military service. Charles recorded in his letter that another of his friends had fled as “Jews especially” found conditions unsafe (p. 492). See also Werner Mosse (ed), *Revolution and Evolution, 1848 in German-Jewish History* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981), p. 9. After Charles’s death in 1850, Dr. Böhm offered to become the guardian of Antonia’s children (see CL'ANA 0212).

4 See note 15.

5 The town of Carlsbad is located today in the Czech Republic some 420 kilometers north-west of Vienna. Known as Karlovy Vary, the spa town is renowned for its hot springs. In 1830, Claire suggested that Mary Shelley spend her summer at Carlsbad to “set up” her health and to prepare her for the winter (CC I: 270); she told Jane Williams Hogg (1798–1884) in April 1830 that she was going to Carlsbad in May (CC I: 275). Jane’s common-law husband, Edward Williams, drowned with Percy Shelley in 1822. Jane later entered into a relationship with Thomas Jefferson Hogg (1792–1862), Percy Shelley’s Oxford University friend and author of *The Life of Shelley*.

6 Another spa town, located 396 kilometers south-west of Vienna, Bad Gastein was known for its thermal waters. It was a well-considered nineteenth-century spa town. Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth of Austria are known to have visited the spa.

- 7 German for “spa travel”.
- 8 Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851), step-sister of Charles and Claire Clairmont, and step-sister-in-law of Antonia.
- 9 Known today as Graz and located about 198 kilometers south of Vienna, the city is Austria’s second largest. Graz boasts six universities today. Its oldest, the University of Graz (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz) was established in 1585. In 1871, Wilhelm moved to Marburg (today, the city of Maribor in Slovenia), some 50 kilometers from Graz.
- 10 Located in the south-east of Austria, Styria is one of the nine Austrian federal states (Bundesländer). Graz is its capital city. Styria is known as Steiermark in German.
- 11 A fool is a dessert made of custard and stewed fruit.
- 12 Weidling.
- 13 Clara Clairmont was known as Clärchen or Cläri. Antonia’s sister, Marie, had married Mr. Rismondo who was a lawyer. They lived in Görz, a city some 489 kilometers from Vienna and located in northeastern Italy. Known today as Gorizia, from 1848 onwards the town was – at various times – under Austrian, Italian, and Yugoslavian rule. While Gorizia is now part of Italy, the town of Nova Gorica was established in 1948 on the Slovenian side of the border with Italy to incorporate areas of Gorizia not included in the Italian city following the Second World War (The Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. “Gorizia”. *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc. n.d. Web. 9 May 2016. <http://www.britannica.com/place/Gorizia>).
- In November 1845, Charles wrote to Claire of Clara’s trip to Görz. He informed Claire that Clara was in “Gorica or Goertz – near Trieste in Illyria” with her aunt and uncle, who had asked to let her stay for another winter. Charles hoped that she would have the opportunity to learn Italian (CC II: 463). Trieste is a port in the north-east of Italy. During the nineteenth century, Trieste was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- 14 In November 1845, Charles wrote to Mary Shelley and described Sidi’s illness. He explained that Sidi had been a healthy child until 1842. According to Charles, Sidi was “seized with a scrophulous complaint,” where ulcers covered her body and her eyes became fixed rigidly in her face and incapable of movement. Charles explained that, since Sidi’s illness, her body had ceased developing and had turned “dwarfish and deformed”. Nevertheless, he did confirm that she was overall “lively and healthy” with a good appetite (CC II: 464). He praised her intelligence, her ability to play cribbage, her sense of humour, and her love of order.
- 15 Antonia referred to the stair case in her lodging (a “lower” lodging). A lodging on a lower floor would be more expensive as it would involve fewer stairs.
- 16 Robert Kann records that Austria “pioneered” the railroad in Europe. The first railroad was opened between 1825 and 1827 and the line ran from Budweis (Budějovice today, in the Czech Republic) to Linz, Austria, and covered a distance of about 77 kilometers. While horse-drawn cars were employed on this railroad, steam locomotives began running from Floridsdorf (one of Vienna’s districts) to Deutsch-Wagram (a distance of some 14 kilometers) in 1836 (*A History of the Habsburg Empire: 1526–1918* [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974], p. 286). Eric Brose explains that, by the late 1830s, plans were made to link Vienna with Galicia, Budapest, and Trieste. In 1841, there were almost 500 kilometers of railroad track in the Austrian empire. By 1847, the railroad covered some 1,350 kilometers (*German History 1789–1871* [New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013], p. 189).
- 17 Mary Shelley.
- 18 Illegible initial. Possibly S or J.
- 19 Antonia wrote this final paragraph on the side of the fourth page. Pauline’s love affair with Willie Suttor was well-documented in her Australian journal, as were her flirtations with other men (see Introduction to this collection and the introduction to Pauline’s Australian sojourn). See also CL’ANA 0208. For Pauline’s “solo” trip to Venice, see CL’ANA 0088.

**3 • Antonia Clairmont to Claire Clairmont**Vienna 18<sup>th</sup> March<sup>1</sup> [1847]

My dearest Claire.

Yesterday the 17<sup>th</sup> a person called and delivered into my hands the sum of 786 fC.M.<sup>2</sup> paid by ordre of Miss Clairmont – Charles having been from home he could not sign the receipt and so that post day was lost and you will stay three days longer before you receive Charles signature. How can we ever thank you enough for your generous help! we were afraid circumstances might prevent you to send it, as we heard very discouraging accounts about the opera house, the more rejoiced and happy are we now.<sup>3</sup> I must again and again repeat you do not know how great a benefit you are conferring; I cannot believe you can spare so large a sum without some inconvenience to yourself; comforts denied, pleasures renounced, not lost, but made over to others who will ever feel grateful to you. Charles' not writing is a good sign, it shows him to be occupied; his health is not quite recovered, but we thank God it has not suffered during the fatigue of winter; the intense cold we had affected him, the stiffness in his limbs could not be expected to go off during the winter, we must hope this from the warmer season; his going again to Gastein has already been fixed by Dr Böhen,<sup>4</sup> and we can now look forward to it with a tranquil mind;<sup>5</sup> your egg system he has not yet adopted, not having fully digested it, but it could not have come more seasonably than just now when fresh eggs are so temptingly coming in; besides on the very day when your letter arrived but before we read it, he had complained of pain in the side and said whether it might not result from the liver and he had not better try Carlsbad instead of G.<sup>6</sup> all of which coincided with your view of the case, he intends writing to you whenever he finds a moment, probably the Easter holidays. The children are all well, of the boys we have excellent account, Charley got the first prize in the half yearly examination, and William is the 2<sup>d</sup> in his class;<sup>7</sup> Charley's 12<sup>th</sup> birthday is on the 22<sup>d</sup> his sisters are now busy making up some little gifts for him, to arrive just on the right day, they girls<sup>8</sup> were all clamorous for the permission, to let them come down to spend the Easter holidays with us, but I was obliged to refuse on account of the expense; there has been a great deal of illness in Vienna, we too have lost a valued friend, poor Mrs. Moreau, fell ill in nursing a friend at whose house she had been staying for that purpose it was with difficulty she was transported home, and never left her bed –<sup>9</sup> poor Mrs Herz<sup>10</sup> is to be pitied, having never been for a moment separated from her mother she must feel her loss intensely; she is now surrounded by her husband's family a {tear} of purseproud jews, and even the comfort of a daughter is denied her; having o{tear} 2 boys of her own, and one by the fir{tear} the little girl she had died some years ago Paul has made a most disgraceful marriage with a French milliner, which however has never been recognized by the family, and may have embittered the last years of his mothers life.

Of Weidling I cannot say much, the frost has just been broken, so we have hardly been thinking of sowing and planting; we are quite at a loss whether or no to plant potatoes, the price of seed is so high, and as we are not there, and must

trust everything to menials, we are liable to be cheated. In the Easterweek I shall go out to look round a little to see what is to be done; there is no doubt it might be made very profitable, if one could reside there, but four months in the year is not enough. When I am once out there I will write you a long circumstantial account of all, in answer to something you mentioned about W. in one of your former letters. The good people of this town are all mad with Jenny Lind<sup>11</sup> there was never such enthusiasm! for your sake I wished she might be kept to fulfill her original engagement at the Opera house, as yet we don't know how it will turn out; she never appears without having wreaths and garlands showered upon her by the admiring adoring public.

Charles<sup>12</sup> bids me add that it is considered as quite sure Miss Lind's engagement with Lumnley is to be fulfilled. he sends best love. ever

yours affectionately Antonia C.

Address: Aerogramme: à/Mademoiselle/Mademoiselle Claire Clairmont./  
Chester Square. 24./ London.

Postmark: WIEN/ 19. MAR.; AUTR. [illeg.]/ 25/MAR[illeg.]/ 47

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0404

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- 1 This letter dates from 1847, as the aerogramme postmark confirms. Antonia stated in the letter that Charley was turning 12 years of age. He was born in 1835.
  - 2 In *Picture of Vienna*, under the section entitled "Value of money," the author described the two different types of currency used in Vienna: "*Schein* or paper money; the other *Conventions-Münze* or good money" (p. 39). The author recorded that only C. M. (Conventions-Münze) was used for large transactions, while *Schein* was offered for smaller purchases. Another term for "*Schein*" was "*Wiener-Währung*" (abbreviated as W.W. and translated as Viennese Currency) while "*Silber*" (Silver) was the term used for C.M. According to the author, one Florin in C.M. was equal to two and a half *Schein*. C.M. was not frequently used and was often not in circulation. In *Beyond Nationalism*, István Deák explains that the Austrian currency was the Gulden and that it was written as "fl" (Florins). There were 60 Kreuzer (kr.) in a Gulden. Fl. C. M. was worth 2 fl. 50 kr. W. W. In 1858, the Österreichische Währung became the new form of currency. The Gulden was then divided into 100 Kreuzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 115.
  - 3 Claire considered herself relatively well-off by the mid-1840s. After the death in 1844 of Sir Timothy Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley's father, Claire received £12,000, the result of a bequest from Percy Shelley's will. In his will, Percy Shelley left the bulk of his estate to Mary Shelley. As well as to Claire, Percy Shelley left bequests to his children, to his first wife, Harriet Shelley (who would commit suicide in 1816), and to his friends, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Lord Byron, and Thomas Love Peacock. In the draft copy of his will, dated 24 June 1816, Percy Shelley stated: "To Mary Jane Clairmont (the sister in law of Miss Godwin) ~~42~~ 6 12,000, one half to be laid out in an annuity for her own life, & that of any other person she may ch name if she pleases to name any other, the other half to be at her own disposal" (Kenneth Neill Cameron [ed.], *Shelley and his Circle 1773–1822* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970], vol. iv, p. 703). Cameron explains that Percy Shelley based his will of 24 September 1816 on this draft copy and that he left \$6,000 to Claire and an additional \$6,000 to his trustees "to invest in the purchase of an annuity 'for the life of the said Mary Jane Clairmont and the life of such other person as the said Mary Jane Clairmont

should name (if she should be pleased to name one) . . .’ These bequests were repeated in his next will, on February 18, 1817” (p. 712). Cameron further records that Mary Shelley told Leigh Hunt that the bequest was in fact twice what Percy Shelley had intended. In spite of Mary Shelley’s assertion, Claire received the full \$12,000 after Sir Timothy’s death.

Mary Shelley had advised Claire to invest the money wisely so that it did not lose interest (*LMWS* III: 125, 127, 132, 134, 140–2). Initially, Mary Shelley had proposed sharing with Claire the cost of an opera box which they hoped to rent to others. But as Mary Shelley decided to invest elsewhere, Claire invested £4,000 of her income and purchased Box 23 at Her Majesty’s Theatre in London in 1845. Her letters to Mary Shelley from 1845 discussed the purchase in great detail. She was hopeful that the purchase would yield a good interest income, positing that the purchase of a whole box would solve her “present difficulties” (*CC* II: 434). Indeed, Claire considered herself to be financially comfortable and she was relatively generous in her support of her brother’s family. Unfortunately, the purchase of the opera box proved a financial disaster for her.

4 Antonia wrote either “Böhen” or “Böhm”. It is unclear in the manuscript.

5 See CL’ANA 0401.

6 Gastein.

7 Wilhelm and Charley were both considered good students. The Pforzheimer Collection includes prospectuses written in Latin from the Gymnasiums they attended: *Gymnasii Ad Scotos* (Charley) and the *Gymnasii Mellicensis* (Wilhelm). Charley studied religion, Latin, Geography, and Arithmetic while Wilhelm studied Greek, Geography and History, Mathematics, Religion, Culture, and Interpretation of Style. See CL’ANA 0060. Charley’s school was known as the Schottengymnasium and it was run by the Benedictine Order. The Irish monks who founded the monastery in the twelfth century were known as “Schotten” whose name reflects the Latin name for Ireland, “Scotia Maior” (Dr. U. Denk, Universität Wien, personal communication: 2 March 2015).

8 The word “girls” is inserted above the line.

9 See CL’ANA 0405.

10 Unidentified. Antonia’s anti-Semitism reflected attitudes common to Austrians at the time. Anti-Semitism flourished even though Jews held important positions in industries such as banking and commerce. Before 1848, Jews were not permitted to reside in Vienna. Marsha Rozenblit notes that, by 1840, about 2,000 Jews lived in Vienna, the vast majority of them tolerated by the authorities who only allowed wealthy merchants to settle in the city. By 1848, the number had risen to 4,000. Rozenblit suggests that, after the Revolution and the easing of the rules which prevented Jews from living in Vienna, the number of Jews residing in Vienna rose dramatically. By 1869, there were 40,000 Jews in Vienna and over 73,000 by 1880 (in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992, p. 226]). Rozenblit explains too that, in spite of Emperor Joseph II’s Edict of Toleration of 1782, which removed or relaxed many of the discriminatory laws against Jews (“Toleranzpatent”), Jews in Vienna “endured endless restrictions, oppressive taxes and a profoundly precarious legal status” (p. 227). This marginalization was a continuation of pervasive historical anti-Semitism in Austria. See also CL’ANA 0326, CL’ANA 0324 and CL’ANA 0421, Box 3, bundle g, number 185.

11 Johanna Maria Lind (Jenny Lind, 1820–1887) was also known as the “Swedish Nightingale”. Born in Sweden, Lind was a soprano who performed to great acclaim in Europe and America. She first appeared in London in 1847 at Her Majesty’s Theatre where Claire owned her box. She performed as Alice in Giacomo Meyerbeer’s opera, *Robert le Diable*, causing Queen Victoria to write in her diary, “The great event of the evening was Jenny Lind’s appearance and her complete triumph” (quoted in Isabelle Emerson, *Five Centuries of Women Singers* [Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2005], p. 155). Lind’s agent was Benjamin Lumley. Lumley began managing the theater in 1842 but he ran into tremendous difficulties by 1847 when a rival company installed itself in Covent Garden. Many of Lumley’s singers and musicians defected to the rival company. Lumley was thus forced to go to extraordinary means to bring singers to the stage and he believed that Jenny Lind would be his company’s saving grace (*LMWS* III: 295, 329). After much anxiety,

12 DECEMBER 1839–10 APRIL 1853

(Henry Scott Holland includes in his *Memoir of Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt* a letter to Lumley from singer Luigi Lablache urging him to encourage Lind to perform in London [Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1891], p. 58), Lind finally appeared on stage. She was an overwhelming success. The reviews following her performance were complimentary and Lumley, who was in the midst of a fray with his rivals at Covent Garden, considered the opera saved. See also CL'ANA 0373.

12 Antonia wrote this final section on the cover of the aerogramme.

## 4 • Antonia Clairmont to Claire Clairmont

Weidling the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1847.

My dearest Claire.

Your kind letter reached me yesterday and I sit down immediately to answer it; – your goodness almost overpowers me – is it possible you would make such a sacrifice for the dear boy's sake as to go and live in a village, out of the reach of your friends? of society and the stir and resources of a great town which you are so accustomed to? how will you spend your long winterevenings in the country? or what if you should want physical advice? have you considered all that?<sup>1</sup> As for Willy, I should prefer it of all things – to receive his professional education as an agriculturist in England is beyond what I ever dared to wish<sup>2</sup> – I consider it also of more advantage to his intellectual development, to spend the next two or three years in which his estimation of things and manners are formed in an enlightened country, and to have him removed from the narrow bounds of an Austrian university education and the society of the flat youths he would have had to associate with whose mental faculties are mostly drowned in the most frivolous love of trifling amusements, but not such as are fit for young people – they neither of them know how to throw a ball or any gymnastical amusements diversion – dancingparties concerts and lovemaking to little girls in trousers are the order of the day. – children are regularly taken to balls at ten and twelve years of age – they are more like little men and women – One remark I have however to make – will it not be necessary for him to study Physiks,<sup>3</sup> Chemistry and Mechanics before he begins the practical course of instruction? it seems to me that, that will be absolutely necessary, he might perhaps devote next winter to it, and go to England in the Spring – but you have certainly considered all that and will tell me the result; Charles seems more to lean towards a mercantile life, but I can't help giving a sigh to think his tall thin figure bent down on the writing desk day after day, instead of strengthening his fine limbs by some active occupation and movement in God's free air! He is now full six feet English – but wanting nerve and grace, that will come in time, his character is like most tall men's, gentle and placid, kind and affectionate – there is nothing brilliant in him, but a fund of good and promising qualities, a slow but clear understanding open to conviction, simple in his tastes and habits, punctual and true with a strong sense of his duties and the best temper in the world such is the boy from whom to part even now cost me tears, but cheerfully will I submit to it – for his own good; he is not so active now as he ~~go~~ used to be, that is owing to his growing so very fast – with regard to your remark about the children's diet I am so fully of your opinion that it has been repeatedly an object of dissent between Charles and myself; he being always furious against suppers insisting it being fully enough for any man to eat substantial food once a day – every year in the holidays I made a fresh trial and always was defeated – this year I again found it necessary – and so the first evening of the boys return, without saying anything, I had only 3 cups brought in

for Papa Pauline and Clara – ~~and~~ besides a ham and some vegetables declaring ~~we should~~ all the rest should take supper in future; poor Charles made a face like a thundercloud so that the whole assembly was awestruck – but I was afterwards obliged to tell him of Emmy's illness to convince him what the too early use of tea brings to, and how natural it was to give nourishment not stimulants to growing children – Emmy has had no fit since I last wrote for which I am truly grateful. I did not think of giving the children beer, it is a practice not known here – and Weidl. being a wine district, we have none – but on our removal to town I will make the trial, Emmy likes it, perhaps it is a sort of instinct that her nature requires it. Charles is not gone to Gastein – he had such a distaste for that journey, and was so irritable and nervous so miserable and cross all the time the scheme was in agitation that I was afraid of a bit of illness from mere vexation, and lost all courage to urge him any further, nobody else having the right of doing so, he {tear} it entirely, and came out here last Sunday, when he ought to have been already far on his road – in radiant good humour which did all our hearts good, and not a word of Gastein was mentioned any more, his health improves with his spirits, he has begun to drink Creutzbrunnen wasser<sup>4</sup> which he says agrees very well – and we must hope for the best.<sup>5</sup> We have an excellent fruit year; such abundance of apples pears and plums as never was seen; potatoes are likewise very promising, no traces of illness as yet; every day we go to the field and bring in a basket of vegetables of some kind or other; this morning we went out before breakfast to get beans and peas for winter crop – and it is always remarked {tear} Charley and Willy are sooner fatigued exhausted and com {tear} of heat and hunger than Sidi and Emmy, which shows that im Grossen wie im Kleinen<sup>6</sup> – men are less able to bear and conquer small difficulties than women. I have not told you that Charley brought the first prize and Willy the second – the joy of our meeting was however greatly diminished by poor Minna's loss; the poor boys hardly had an idea that she was seriously ill<sup>7</sup> and do not think the children have forgotten their aunt; it is rather a fault of omission on my side than want of affection in them; just now little Sidi flitted by and enjoined me not to forget their best love to Aunt Claire, they are all good and affectionate, the elder ones know your goodness to us; they thank you for having thought of them in chusing your letter paper.<sup>8</sup>

accept once more my dearest Claire my warmest thanks for your ready assistance and the kind sympathy you take in our children's welfare; I am also much pleased with your agreeing so entirely ~~with~~ in my views, and fully approve of your remark on the effects of constant occupation on the mind and temper – I know that on this consideration every compliance from my side on domestic arrangements or the minor concerns of life is Charles' due but I cannot deny that I find it more difficult in things which must affect the comfort of his old age and almost impossible if the question is of the future welfare of the children. Let us hope that Providence will not put me to the proof so far; but will send relief by your means and in your shape. Good bye my dearest Claire I embrace you most

warmly – I don't think the culprit will be in a hurry to write to you, he will be at a loss to explain for his not going to Gastein.

ever yours most affection.

A.C.

You don't mention Mrs. Shelley's health? how did the sea air agree with her?<sup>9</sup>

Address: Aerogramme:

Mademoiselle/ Mademoiselle Claire Clairmont/26 Osnaburgh Street/  
Regent's Park. London./ England.

Postmark: WIEN/ 22. AUG:/ OES[illeg.]REICH/24 [illeg.]

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0397

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- 1 Claire had proposed that Wilhelm study in England and she offered to sponsor her nephew.
  - 2 The letters that follow provide an account of Wilhelm's relocation to Queenwood College.
  - 3 Antonia added the English plural ending to the German word, "Physik".
  - 4 Antonia's spelling for Kreuzbrunnen water. This is a type of mineral water from Marienbad. Marienbad today is part of the Czech Republic. See A. Granville, *The Spas of Germany* (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), pp. 128–9.
  - 5 Antonia left a space in the document.
  - 6 German for "[events] large and small". The phrase means "overall" or "in general".
  - 7 Hermine died of consumption in 1847. Stocking includes in her collection a letter from Charles to Claire which Herbert Huscher originally published in "Charles und Claire Clairmont". In this letter, Charles described his daughter in the most positive of terms. He refused to allow a priest to attend Hermine's deathbed, stating that she was "a spotless being" (CC II: 482). He referenced her domestic abilities, her kindness to others, her love of books, and her consoling ways.
  - 8 The back page of this aerogramme has the address and these final lines of the letter.
  - 9 Mary Shelley had gone to Brighton. In June 1847, she told Claire that Brighton was too noisy (*LMWS* III: 316), and on 1 August she declared that she was "bored" in Brighton (p. 325) and that the noise and heat were considerable (p. 325). By August 31, she was back in London.

## 5 • Antonia Clairmont to Claire Clairmont

Vienna 1<sup>st</sup> of Dec. 1848.

My dearest Claire.

Yours containing the post bank Bill arrived yesterday, and a thousand thanks and blessings on you for it; Charles had already set off for Ollmütz<sup>1</sup> the day before, but he left me directions what to do; I went to M<sup>r</sup> Biedermann<sup>2</sup> and got it cashed, he paid me 220 fl C.M.<sup>3</sup> and once more of my best thanks for your generous assistance – I shall now be able to clear all the claims, that will fall due between now and the new year, and still be able to spare the expense for Willy's journey should you decide upon calling him near you – I am then alone with the three youngest children, and can live with the strictest economy – I shall let two rooms that will bring in something; besides less fuel and light is required, if before we had 4 stoves to heat now we heat but one, instead of 3 large lamps, one small one serves us now, and thus I hope to make up for decrease of income, and make things go as far as possible; in so far I have also dismissed one servant

I am glad of Charles' absence, retrenchments of this sort are very painful to him, whilst to me they are a consolation, I feel I am doing something towards my object; but also in other respects it is better for him, these horrid staircases he need not mount and descend the whole day, not having so many lessons, he will have time to take his meals properly and rest a little after them, and ~~rest a little~~ if he do indulge in a little comfort, it needn't be shared by 7 persons, which is the case at home, for he will never suffer me to put an extra dish on the table for him, and it was really painful to me, to see him dine on the simple fare, † my larder lately afforded – this moment I got a letter from him; he has been extremely well received and the two Archdukes<sup>4</sup> have already begun to take their lessons, some of the court people too, they live so near together if not at the same house, so next door, Pauline has two lessons promised, so you see it will go well, lodgings are not very plentiful at Ollmütz they have nothing found as yet, and complain of horrid bad inns. Things will go better when has all his little comforts around him, his own good bed, teapot and breakfast cup et et. Pauline is with him to nurse or amuse if need should be. I have advertised for my school, what success is uncertain, till now I have hopes of 6 scholars, if their number increase to 15 I shall be very happy indeed; to day Charley's school or rather the Humanitäts Classen<sup>5</sup> were opened, and the first salutary effects of our young and much abused liberty are shown in a new and most judicious distribution of school hours, and the entire omission of church service; the latter is most wise measure, for churchgoing was carried to such a degree, it made the young people both indifferent and careless of religion to spend so much time there ~~at church~~<sup>6</sup> – of the university and Polytechnic<sup>7</sup> we know nothing as yet. the two little girls were extremely sorry to leave Weidling, and come to town, they have all a great inclination for the country Willy among them; soldiery he detests, being of a retired turn, simple wants and habits, shall I tell you; that he will be most happy to come to England, or will you consider it as indelicately pressing the matter upon you? Clary has got your letter

and answered it too she is quite happy at having got into correspondence with you – We hope the family of Lichtenstein<sup>8</sup> will go to spend the winter at Ollmütz, then Clara would have the pleasure of her father's and sisters company – Countess Wimpfen<sup>9</sup> was not in town – she had her share of the troubles at an earlier stage of the business, at Venice when she was detained hostage by the insurgents – excuse this very bad scramble, but since in town we have been immensely busy to restore order and cleanliness, for our town lodging as well as the country home served as an asylum to some friends, but now every thing is bright and shining, curtains and window cushions washed and got up, pictures cleaned and arranged every thing done to satisfaction – I missed Pauline very much; Clary not she is no great hand in things of this sort; Emmy and Sidi were a great help; the former is now 15 – and the latter makes in up in<sup>10</sup> understanding what she is wanting in strength. Now good bye my dearest Claire Charles will write to you as soon as he is a little settled – the children send their best love, of the cannonading Emmy was most afraid, having been in town with us on the memorable 6<sup>th</sup> of oct. when the Arsenal was stormed, and we felt as if our house was hit every time so near was the report.<sup>11</sup>

yours affectionately  
A.C.

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> Dec.

Address: Aerogramme: To/ Miss. Clara Clairmont./ Field Place, Horsham/  
Sussex/ England.

Postmark: WIEN/ 5. DEC/; HORSHAM/DE 8/ 1848/A

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0402

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1 The town of Olomouc (known as Olmütz in German) is located in the Czech Republic today, some 297 kilometers north of Vienna. In December 1848, Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830–1916) was crowned Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary in Olmütz. By 1867, Austria and Hungary were designated equal partners in the Dual Monarchy which would last until the end of the First World War in 1918. Franz Joseph would rule the empire until his death in 1916. The kingdom was alternatively known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Vienna served as its capital city.

In his letter to Claire of 10–11 November 1848 (CC II: 487–92), Charles informed his sister that the Archduchess Sophie had asked him to come to Olmütz to teach English to the young Archdukes and the children of other aristocratic families. Charles proposed to take Pauline with him and to leave Antonia and the rest of the family at Weidling. He expressed concern too about the interruption to his sons' education, as he anticipated that schools in Vienna would remain closed for the year. He hoped to find someone to teach Wilhelm in Olmütz. Charles also recorded that he had written to the Archduchess to request an extension on his decision to move to Olmütz, hoping first to see if his services at the Theresianum (Theresianische Akademie Wien) were still needed.

Archduchess Sophie was the wife of Archduke Franz Karl. Her son, Franz Joseph, would be crowned Emperor in December 1848. Her second son, Ferdinand Maximilian (1832–1867), became Emperor of Mexico in 1864. Maximilian was executed in 1867 (see also CL'ANA 0295).

- 2 Charles wrote to Claire in November 1848 to ask her for financial assistance. He told her that, if Mr. “Biedermann” were in town, he would be able to obtain what he needed with his own signature as proof. Biedermann, he noted, had fled town, because as a Jew he did not feel it was safe (see CL’ANA 0404).
- 3 See CL’ANA 0401 and CL’ANA 0404.
- 4 Charles was the tutor of Maximilian and his younger brother, Karl Ludwig (1833–1896). See Herbert Huscher, “Charles und Claire Clairmont” (pp. 65–6). Huscher quotes from R. Glynn Grylls, who confirmed that Charles saw the young Archdukes daily.
- 5 German for “Humanities Department”.
- 6 In *Europe in 1848: Revolution and Reform*, Heinz-Elmar Tenorth observes that after the Revolution of 1848–9 in Austria, “there were no lack of plans for reform and restructuring, nor of demands for a liberal educational system . . . an independent ministry of Education was created for the first time, the dominance of Catholic clergy in secondary schools and universities was temporarily reduced, and laws were passed concerning duration and subject matter of secondary school education” (p. 737). While in 1849, churches were restored to their “old rights . . . [and] from this time on, an alternative form of public education existed, which was then introduced in wide-ranging reform after 1866/67” (Dieter Dowe, [ed.], [New York: Berghahn Books, 2001], p. 737).
- 7 In his November letter to Claire, Charles mentioned his concern that both the University and the Polytechnical School in Vienna would remain closed for a year (CC II: 487). Known today as the Technische Universität Wien, the Polytechnical School was founded in 1815 as the k.k. Polytechnisches Institut (Imperial and Royal Polytechnical Institute). In 1872, it became known as the Technische Hochschule and in 1972 as the Technische Universität Wien. See [www.tuwien.ac.at](http://www.tuwien.ac.at). The University of Vienna (Universität Wien) was founded in 1365 and is the oldest university in Austria.
- 8 Clara had given lessons to the children of the Prince and Princess of Liechtenstein. In July 1849, after Clara’s elopement with Alexander Knox, Charles told Claire that he had reminded Clara that she would have “lost all character” with people such as the “princess L –” had he and Antonia not protected her character (CC II: 504). In *Picture of Vienna*, the author provided a list of the palaces in Vienna and included the palace of Prince Liechtenstein, located on Herrngasse and the “entailed family mansion of prince Liechtenstein, in the great Schenkenstrasse. One of the finest buildings in the whole city, by Dominic Martinelli” (p. 46).
- 9 The wife of Franz von Wimpffen (1797–1870), an Austrian General who was also head of the Austro-Hungarian Navy between 1851 and 1854. Von Wimpffen fought during military campaigns in Bologna, Trieste and Vicenza.
- 10 As written in the letter.
- 11 On 6 October 1848, fighting broke out in Vienna when some Austrian soldiers refused to follow orders to march against the Hungarian Magyars. Students and other disenfranchised soldiers and workers took the part of the dissenting soldiers in an ensuing bloody conflict. By 26 October 1848, Vienna was bombarded and subdued by the anti-revolutionary forces of Alfred, Fürst zu Windischgrätz (Prince of Windischgrätz, 1787–1862). Those responsible for the uprising on 6 October were punished. Emperor Ferdinand I (1793–1875) fled to Olmütz as a result of the incident and his nephew, Franz Joseph I, succeeded him in December (CC II: 492–3; Tóth, I. G., *A Concise History of Hungary*).  
Charles mentioned the “bombardment” to Claire in his letter of 10–11 November 1848. He explained that their windows were made to “tremble and clatter” (CC II: 487). On 23 October, cannon fire was apparently heard at Weidling. Charles described in some detail the devastation wreaked on Vienna as a result of continuous cannon fire. On 7 October, the Zeughaus (Armoury) was stormed and destroyed. Between 1849 and 1856, the Zeughaus was rebuilt on a different site.

**6 • Antonia Clairmont to Claire Clairmont**Vienna 18<sup>th</sup> dec. [1848]

My dearest Claire.

This morning at 5 o'clock Willy set off with the railroad, you may therefore expect him about the 26<sup>th</sup> or so. your desire to let him go by Ostende<sup>1</sup> met our intentions, for Charles had already fixed that route for him before going away to Ollmütz – but I was greatly relieved by your directing him to Brighton at once without passing through London, which would have been rather difficult for so inexperienced a traveller – but now everything is smooth and easy; Capt. Andoe<sup>2</sup> gave so much good and useful advice and notes and directions about places of stoppage, inns, porters custom house, and so forth, that I think he will get on well; he does not come to you as an Austrian, but a British subject – on Capt. A's advice, I went with him to the English Embassy and asked a passport for him as he being the son of an Englishman and entitled to it by right of law et. et.<sup>3</sup> – and after a little consideration they gave it; so you have no bother with the Austrian Embassy nor have we here with the Police for leave of absence,<sup>4</sup> and so; I think Charles will be very happy to hear it – to day he reaches Ollmütz and will spend a day with his father and sisters, for we hope Clara will come to see him<sup>5</sup> – I gave him your last letter that they might all read, and find consolation in thought how much love and kindness expect him there for the parting is painful however happy we may find ourselves in his going – your assurances touched me to tears, you will find him meriting all – he is so pure and innocent, so good never he hurt his parents by a disrespectful look or word obedient, sensible, open to advice, steady beyond his years, never a lie sullied his lips, simple in his wants, you will find all this to be true, not merely a fond mothers praises. another source of consolation I found in your saying you address a daily prayer for our welfare to the Almighty; Oh could I ever hear Charles utter such words! I may then hope that also in this most important point you will act a mother's part to the dear boy – he is not quite what I wish him to be - living so long in a monastery, where he saw the insidious ways of the clergy on ~~the~~ one hand – on the other was wearied with too much religious exercises, he lost all respect and grew indifferent the more so as at home he soon found out thought the same – but I hope in time he will perceive it was the form and not the matter, is in fault;<sup>6</sup> I put a book of devotion in his trunk calculated to carry conviction to the most refined understanding and made him promise to read at least one chapter every week it is not a catholic prayer book, but by the most powerful protestant writer Zchokke a swiss clergyman, I dare say the work is translated into English – but you know German well enough to read it; it is one vol: out of 6.<sup>7</sup> I <sup>8</sup>was really pained to find you will send him money to Ostende; he would have been quite well with what I gave him – such is the state of his finances – from here to Dresden<sup>9</sup> he goes with Austrian money 30fl C M. from Dr: to Ostende is Prussian money for which purpose I exchanged him 32 Dollars – then I paid in 34 fl 30 x<sup>10</sup> good money at M<sup>r</sup> Biederman's for which he received a Bill for Ostende for three pounds – so he is well furnished – if he saves the three

pd or any part of it, I told him to keep it for any little wants he may have – he will have to buy a hat the calabrese<sup>11</sup> he wore here, several of our English friends here were of opinion, he could not appear with in England, so he took a cap for the journey, which is moreover preferable [~~illeg.~~] in every thing else he is provided for a long time; his wardrobe and linen is just as it was, I could not make any additions the time was so short [exeipt<sup>12</sup> a black satin waistcoat Capt: A telling us he could not wear a white one]<sup>13</sup> and as he is still growing it would be a waste to give him more clothes. I gave him 6 pair of gloves, because I think this a dear article in England and two pair of new strong boots, he must find his own clothes, I shall always find means to [~~illeg.~~] with him a small bill of 5 or 6 pounds every 6 months, without troubling Charles for it, it shall be furnished of my own little economies – since my marriage I have always been saving – when we returned from England we were poor indeed, Charles had to borrow money to furnish our lodging; that is now 18 years ago where we began anew housekeeping – first we paid off our debts, then the yearly increase of family the education of the two elder ones, my savings all went to suffice the wants of the increasing household, later I bought silver spoons, linen, beddings – or I put the money in the stocks, always wishing to make a small provision for Sidi,<sup>14</sup> sometimes I sold out again ~~but~~ I have now £120 in the stocks, but they are so low I should get but 60, if obliged to sell now – besides it brings me £6 interest which is just half of the sum I mean to allow Willy – but you will ask in what my savings consist? Charles was in money affairs unlike most other husbands, he never gave any fixed sum, but I had the key of his desk and took out what I wanted, certainly I never abused his confidence, but was the more careful, but I began early to give a lessons even when the children were quite young, or when he composed a new book, I copied all and corrected the press, ~~then~~ for which he always made me a present with some share of the Honorar;<sup>15</sup> then I myself composed a small book for young children which brought me in £20 at once,<sup>16</sup> but when my school began, I became rich indeed, first I paid the clothing for myself and family at least the girls – then the rest I divided in half, one I put to the kitchen expenses the other into my own private cashbox, and in this manner I was enabled to go on satisfactorily; since Charles' ill health, I haven't of course put by any thing but many a grateful prayer I sighed out to Him if enabled to meet any larger expense without troubling Charles such as perhaps Willy's black suit, of which I wrote you last spring – or the bill for wood et et. If it were not for the troubles of the moment brought on by the disastrous turn of things, as by Charles' ill health, I think we might look back with satisfaction upon the result of our exertions of these eighteen years; we have a comfortable and gentil lodging well furnished always considered upon a moderate footing; the house at Weidling is now paid out and well furnished, besides we have done for our children rather more than our circumstances warranted and shall reap our reward in their success in life the consciousness of this keeps me always quiet and cheerful even in the calamities of the moment, the clouds will blow over and we shall have a clear sky the only thing that really vexes and troubles me is Charles' imprudence and obstinacy with regard to his health – money embarrassments may change but,

a ruined health not – he is well I hear, about his income I know nothing as yet, but trust it must be pretty well, and that we shall be enabled to make up the sum for Gastein, without accepting your generous assistance beyond Willy’s – how I thank God the dear boy is in safety, for we do not know what they will at again by next spring – good bye dearest Claire thousand and thousand thanks and blessings, you say you are laconic, but your words go straight to the heart, now it is 8 o’clock evening, the dear ones are all assembled now at Ollmütz reading your letter and blessing you and so do we – the children send their love – Emmy and Sidi some cuffs<sup>17</sup> of their own work and Charley some letter covers, ever yours gratefully and affectionately.

A.C.

Address: Aerogramme: à/ Mademoiselle/ Mad<sup>lle</sup> Claire Clairmont/  
at Colonel Pringle’s.<sup>18</sup> 5. Brunswick Square/ Brighton/Sussex/ England  
Postmark: [illeg.]/DEC 25/1848

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL’ANA 0403

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- 1 Ostend is a port-city in Belgium on the North Sea. In 1846, a ferry service began from Ostend to Dover. Mail was frequently routed through Ostend for England, as many of the postmarks on the Clairmont letters indicate. Some of the Clairmont letters include handwritten directions, “Via Ostend”. Ostende is the German for Ostend (Oostende in Dutch and Ostende in French).
  - 2 Captain Andoe was a friend of both the Clairmonts and Mary Shelley. An Austrian, he spent time in England and provided much needed assistance to Antonia and her family. Clara Knox also mentioned meeting Andoe in her letter to Claire (see CL’ANA 0188 and CL’ANA 0189).
  - 3 Charles Clairmont and his children retained their British citizenship, as a document from 1880 shows. Sir Henry George Elliot, “Her Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador Extraordinary,” granted Wilhelm a document in Vienna which gave “Mr. William Gaulis Clairmont, British subject, travelling on the Continent, accompanied by his wife and his three children” the right to “pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford him every assistance and protection of which he may stand in need”. The document is now amongst the Clairmont papers (CL’ANA 0408, unpublished manuscript, Pforzheimer Collection).
  - 4 In *Picture of Vienna*, the author noted that any visitor to Vienna’s environs would need, upon arrival, to leave his passport with the police and then, within twenty-four hours, to appear at the police station to receive his “Aufenthalts-Karte” (German for “residence card,” and spelled “Aufenthaltskarte”), granting him permission to stay for six weeks (p. 39).
  - 5 See CL’ANA 0402 for information about Clara Clairmont’s whereabouts. Pauline was with Charles in Olmütz.
  - 6 Antonia was Catholic while Charles was Protestant. Wilhelm attended the Gymnasium of Melk Abbey in Lower Austria. See note 7, CL’ANA 0404, and CL’ANA 0060.
  - 7 Johannes Heinrich Zschokke (1771–1848), a German-born, Swiss writer who wrote both literary and philosophical works. Antonia probably alluded to his *Stunden der Andacht* which was published in 1806 and translates as “Hours of Devotion” (Bäbler, J.J., “Zschokke, Johannes Heinrich Daniel” in: *General German Biography* 45 (1900), pp 449–465 [Online version]; URL: <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118637266.html?anchor=adb>).
  - 8 Antonia left a large space in the letter before starting this sentence.

- 9 Vienna is located about 479 kilometers south-east of Dresden. Dresden is 860 kilometers east of Ostend. There are 166 kilometers from Ostend to Dover. Dr: is the abbreviation for Dresden.
- 10 Antonia wrote the letter x, which was the abbreviation for Kreuzer (kreutzer, in English). See CL'ANA 0404 for more information about Austrian currency.
- 11 Calabria is a region in the south of Italy. A calabrese hat would have been conical-shaped and possibly had a ribbon tucked into its headband or attached to the cone.
- 12 Misspelling for "except".
- 13 Antonia placed these words in square brackets.
- 14 See CL'ANA 0401.
- 15 German for "professional fee".
- 16 In 1845, Antonia wrote a book entitled *Erste Schritte zur Erlernung der englischen Sprache, für Kinder von sechs bis zehn Jahren* ("First Steps to Learning the English Language, for Children ages six to ten"). The book juxtaposes lines of English with lines of German, with the German text inserted above the English lines. The title pages lists the author as "Antonia Clairmont, geb. Ghylain v. Hembyze" ("born Ghylain von Hembyze"). In the German-language foreword, Antonia opined that few books had been written about English language learning for younger children, and in particular books which provided broad grammatical knowledge. She expressed her belief that mastery of a foreign language occurred more quickly and with greater ease in younger students and her hope that her book would help support early language learning. She expressed her desire that young mothers, in addition to teachers, would use her book to educate their children.
- The text is structured as follows: The content pages list stories in both German and English. Examples of the German stories include "Der Schneefall," "Samuel und Heinrich," and "Der Franzose" (Antonia translates them as "The Fall of Snow," "Sam and Harry," and "The Frenchman"), while the English selections include chapters about animals and their behaviors, such as "The Ant," "The Rattlesnake," and "The Stork," and stories like "The Purple Jar" and "The Cherry Orchard" (in which Antonia depicts a character named William). The nursery rhyme section includes selections such as "King Arthur's Pudding," "The three Children," "Jack and Jill," and "Oranges and Lemons". The book begins with an explanation in German of the English alphabet and provides phonetic pronunciations of each letter. In each of the earlier lessons, Antonia includes German translations beside the English sentences. Many of Antonia's characters have Clairmont or Shelley family names. In one of the lessons, Antonia gives her young protagonist one of Claire's names (Jane). In another lesson, which Antonia titles "Charles and Jane," students learn that Charles is a "good boy . . . we all love him, and he loves us . . . Jane! she is a sweet child" (p. 15). Another story revolves around a character named Fanny, possibly named for Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter Fanny Imlay who died in 1816. "The Fall of Snow" tells the story of a boy named Willy, while "The Dormouse" introduces readers to a character named Mary. In the later lessons, Antonia writes only in English. She provides a list of English "common phrases" with the accompanying German translation for each one. There are sentences to describe various activities and events. Section headings include: "Weather, Health, Clothing, Needlework, Breakfast and Tea (where Antonia provides a sentence about Charley, "Let Charley have some tea for his breakfast" p. 112), Dinner, Time, Dwelling-house, Furniture, Relationships and Domestic Connexions, Animals, Birds and Poultry, Fishes and Insects, Parts of the Body, Fruit and Flowers, Plants and Trees, Religion and religious Ceremonies". The book also introduces a few English nursery rhymes which, Antonia notes in the foreword, she believes are particularly effective in helping students with memorization and retention. She also provides an appendix in which she conjugates some verbs in both German and English (Vienna: Braumüller & Seidel, 1845).
- 17 A band to finish the bottom of a sleeve.
- 18 Colonel and Mrs. Pringle were Claire's friends. Antonia referred to them on numerous occasions in her correspondence. Claire told Mary Shelley that Colonel Pringle's regiment was located at Winchester and that the Pringles had "lovely children" who would perform difficult deeds for a show of "kindness" (CC II: 444). See also CL'ANA 0191.

7 • Wilhelm Gaulis Clairmont to Claire Clairmont

Malling<sup>1</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> June 1849.

Dearest aunt.

I hardly know what to say to your letter, but that the difference of opinion concerning the marriage existing between you and my sister grieves me very much.<sup>2</sup> I do not know what you have to say against it, nor do I know what she has to say for it, so it naturally is impossible for me to speak at all upon the subject; but on the whole I cant help thinking the affair by far not so entirely settled as you seem to do, for considering that they know eachother only so short a time it always is possible that yet some disagreement may happen. I had a letter from lady Shelley<sup>3</sup> the other day, in which she speaks in highly favourable terms of Mr Knox; so you see from ~~the~~ one side I hear all good from the other all bad, so that I dont know what to make of it – I shall be very glad to see you dearest aunt, and hear from your own mouth what you think. –

I thank you many times for the money succours you sent me, it was very welcome to me for I should have had not what to pay my bill with, next Thursday; the 5 £ note arrived quite save<sup>4</sup> and sound and is now in my possession. I aad<sup>5</sup> here a little account – to tell you what I spent – the other ten pound on –

My health is perfectly well. I only wish<sup>6</sup> you had as little to complain of, as I have but I trust that a little London change will do you good; I understand Miss Hammond<sup>7</sup> is arrived. I hope that the society and conversation of so intimate a friend as she seems to be to you will also help to restore your health a little.

Now, dearest aunt, I must conclude for I am in a hurry I am your ever attached nephew

William.

M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Black's best compliments<sup>8</sup>

Address: No envelope

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0041

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1 Malling is located in Kent, England. West and East Malling are towns in the county of Kent, some 56 kilometers from London.

2 In late April 1849, Clara Clairmont traveled from Vienna to London to join Wilhelm, who was staying with Claire. From January through April 1849, Mary Shelley urged Claire and Wilhelm to visit her at Field Place in Sussex (*LMWS* III: 355, 356, 358, 359, 360, 363, 366, 367), and she extended her invitation to Clara: "By this time Cleary I hope is with you . . . Pray come with her as soon as you like" (*LMWS* III: 367). Claire responded that Wilhelm's health was precarious, that she would remain with him in Kent, and that she would not be able to meet Clara at Field Place (*CC* II: 501). Claire asked Mary Shelley to receive her niece alone: "So seeing every thing in this uncertainty, I think it best to propose that Cleary should come alone – with the proviso that if I can come I will" (*CC* II: 501). Clara therefore arrived unaccompanied in England and went to stay with the Shelleys at Field Place. There, she met Alexander Andrew Knox (1818–1891), a Trinity College friend of Sir Percy Florence Shelley (1819–1889) who had traveled

to Italy and Germany in 1842–3 with Percy Florence and his mother. Within a week of their meeting and without her parents' consent, Clara and Knox were engaged. They married on 16 June 1849. Mary Shelley's apparent support of the marriage angered her stepsister enormously. Claire accused Mary Shelley of poor chaperoning and of encouraging her niece (at least in Claire's opinion) "to outrage every law of natural tenderness, every filial duty, every family tie" (CC II: 533). The incident caused a rift that never repaired. After Mary Shelley's death on 1 February 1851, Claire wrote to Percy Florence of the "contemptuous way" she was treated in his house and of her anger at the ball the Shelleys had held to celebrate Clara's marriage to Knox (CC II: 536 and *LMWS* III: 391–2). Percy's wife, Lady Jane Shelley (1820–1899, and whom he had married in 1848), held a different view of Mary Shelley's involvement in Knox and Clara's courtship. In a conversation with Maud Rollston many years later, Lady Jane Shelley denied Mary Shelley's approval of the match: "When I told Mary she was much troubled, and said, 'Don't allow it, dear, don't allow it; they don't love each other, and the Clairmont blood always brings misery'" (quoted in CC II: 508).

Both Charles and Antonia Clairmont took more a moderate stance in response to their daughter's marriage. While Charles was initially stunned by the news (CC II: 503), he looked forward to a reconciliation between Claire and her niece. He characterized Clara's behavior as "foolish," but assured Claire that he did not suspect his daughter of "dissimulation" (CC II: 505). To Charles's letter, Antonia added: "we have had a terrible time of it, and shall thank God if Knox is not quite as bad as you at first seemed to think; but at the Shelleys' we are both highly incensed, we see from Clary's letter that they all urged her to consent to this hasty marriage before she left Field place; I begged and entreated her to withdraw her confidence from one who could make so unworthy a use of it; but it will be impossible for her to avoid seeing them, if her husband wishes it" (CC II: 507). Antonia forgave her daughter for the marriage (CC II: 507), which Clara Knox's few surviving letters suggest was happy until her death in 1855 (see CC II: 509, CL'ANA 0188, CL'ANA 0189 and CL'ANA 0191). Knox continued to support both Wilhelm and Charley Clairmont after their sister's death. Wilhelm told Claire that he refused to intervene in her dispute with the Shelleys because Knox had promised Antonia £20 a year for as long as Charley remained a student (see CL'ANA 0052).

- 3 Lady Jane Shelley, wife of Sir Percy Florence Shelley and daughter-in-law of Mary Shelley. Lady Shelley was a great favorite of Mary Shelley for whom she cared until Mary's death in 1851. In Lady Shelley's *Shelley Memorials*, published in 1859 and for which she served as editor, she expunged all negative aspects of the Shelleys' lives and instead provided a sanitized version of events. Percy and Jane had no children of their own, but adopted Bessie Florence Gibson, Lady Shelley's niece from her first marriage. Bessie married Lieutenant Colonel Leopold James Yorke Campbell Scarlett.
- 4 Wilhelm misspelled "safe".
- 5 He meant "add".
- 6 Wilhelm's spelling for "wish".
- 7 Marianna Hammond was a governess and friend of both Mary Shelley and Claire. In 1840, Claire wrote to Mary Shelley about Hammy (as she was known), calling her a "darling" with "so tender and affectionate a disposition" (CC II: 355). Emily Sunstein records that Mary Shelley spent time in Paris in 1840 with Claire and Marianna (p. 351), and that she saw Marianna at Kissengen in Bavaria in 1842 when Mary Shelley, Percy Florence, and Knox traveled to the spa town (p. 357). Sunstein notes too that Marianna and Mary Shelley attended the opera and theater together in 1844. See *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 365. Betty Bennett speculates that Claire met Marianna through the Mason family (*LMWS* III: 28). Lady Margaret Mount Cashell (Claire Tomalin spells the name as Mountcashell) was one of Claire's closest friends in Italy. As the former wife of Lord Mount Cashell, Margaret styled herself as Mrs. Mason and was the mother of two daughters, Lauretta and Nerina, by George William Tighe. Nerina Tighe would marry Bartolomeo Cini, Claire's close friend whom she hoped would be the executor of her will (he died, however, some years before Claire). Claire was still corresponding with Hammy as late as 1875 when she told Cini that she had received a letter from Hammy (CC II: 624). See also CL'ANA 0394 for more information about Lady Mount Cashell and Cini.
- 8 Unidentified. Wilhelm could not be referring to John Black, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, as he was unmarried. See CL'ANA 0058.

**8 • Clara Knox to Claire Clairmont**

June 18 1849.

Dear aunt

I beg your pardon for not having sent a written answer to your kind note and thanks for the pretty cap – but I was afraid of making the boy wait too long and thought you could do without my note better than without your box. So I made haste and unpacked that –

I hope you are well We are both well and very happy; we have been to Richmond<sup>1</sup> were we spent a delightful day, and we mean to go on a train as long as we can for it is very pleasant –

Pray give my compliments to Mrs Bird<sup>2</sup> and tell her I was very sorry not to have had an opportunity of wishing her goodbye before I left her house so abruptly, but I shall make a point of calling ere long. My boy<sup>3</sup> joins me in all kind things to you –

Ever yours

Clari Knox.

If Captain Andoe should remain in town untill next week I think it would be more suitable that I should defer seeing him untill then. If however he is leaving town at once I would not omit seeing him on any account. Pray drop me a line about this.<sup>4</sup>

Address: No envelope

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0188

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1 Richmond, about 9 kilometers from London.

2 According to Huscher, the Post Office directory listed George Bird (a surgeon) as “occupier” of the home in which Claire resided (“The Clairmont Enigma,” p. 20).

3 Her husband, Alexander Knox. See CL'ANA 0201.

4 On 15 August 1849, Antonia and Charles wrote to Claire asking her to instruct Wilhelm to write to Andoe for information about Clara and Knox (CC II: 518).

## 9 • Alexander Knox to Wilhelm Clairmont

[18 June 1849]

My dear W. Clairmont – I need not say how much pleasure it will give me, I will not say, to make your acquaintance, but to gain your friendship, as well as that of all those who are so closely connected with my dear dear<sup>1</sup> wife – Believe me none of you have any cause of anxiety about her future fate whilst it is in my keeping – if I can help it she never shall know an anxiety or a care, or have cause for one.

I was so very sorry that we were compelled to be so precipitate in our measures, for as a mark of respect to her family I would have preferred waiting the return of a letter from your father; but, (although I cannot explain all until we meet,) we felt that our only means of avoiding great trouble and annoyance was to keep our own counsel and act for ourselves – I am sure no one who was interested in my dear little Clari's happiness, would have interposed the obstacle of a moment to our marriage, but I was not so sure, that the absolute and plain truth about us would have been told – under these circumstances we thought it best to act for ourselves; and let the blame fall upon me alone if anything has been done amiss – but no one who sees how happy we are will blame us at all –

Whenever you think that it will suit your convenience to come to London, you will always find a home and a most hearty welcome here – and your sister the same as ever, only I hope somewhat happier. Meanwhile until we meet – Believe me to be

always most sincerely yours  
A. Alex. Knox.

77. Warwick Square. Pimlico.

June <sup>18/</sup><sub>49</sub>.

Address: No envelope

Unpublished. Text: M.S., Pf. Coll., CL'ANA 0201

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<sup>1</sup> Double repetition of “dear” in the letter.

## 10 • Wilhelm Clairmont to Charles and Antonia Clairmont

Malling 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1849.

Dearest parents.

It may seem impudent on my part, that I should endeavour to say anything about so serious an affair. as just occupies our minds; on the other hand however I think it a hard thing for poor Clara that she should be condemned in that way without having anybody to plead her cause. ~~for her.~~ – You will now say; how is it that you did not say all you have to say with A.C.'s<sup>1</sup> letter? In answer to this question, which it is [~~illeg.~~] probable, you will put to yourselves, let me deviate in only a few words from the chief and original tenour of this letter. – When A.C. first came from London (29<sup>th</sup> June) down to Malling – she darted quite unexpectedly, without my knowing of her being here, into my room and made me a terrible scene; she worked herself into a terrible state of fury and at last said: that if I would not side with her. throughout this affaire, she would give me money and I was to go home instantly!; I was not prepared for such a decided step but however assented at last for a variety of reasons; first because I thought Clara more in the wrong than A.C. than because I ~~thought~~ did not consider myself entitled to take without your consent such steps as would have caused my being sent back to Vienna, and lastly because I thought it safest in a dilemma to choose from two ways the one that you have in your power to go back again if necessary. (I allege all these motives that you may see that I had at least good intentions if I perhaps did wrong.) I accordingly kept my lipps sealed hermetically during the three first days; but now A.C. seems to forget the affair at least she is very kind and cheerful again with me; however I hope this will be sufficient reason why I could not write yesterday, so as I should have liked exactly; for she would have misinterpreted the slightest word and then we should have had a new row. besides I think Aunt Claire is likely to forget the whole affair much sooner if she is allowed to give uninterrupted vent to her feelings, than if by constant arguing and proveing her guilt /: for this would be the consequence of my defending Clara:/ all the different disagreeable recollections were kept fresh in her memory. I trust you will after these explanations understand the tone of my postscription to A.C.'s long letter from the 2<sup>nd</sup> July; which you ought to have received the day before this. A.C. desires Papa to send a very severe and reprimanding letter to Clara and I totally agree with her in the opinion that it will have an excellent effect. Her husband being a man of the world must see himself how she committed herself in leaving her aunt and putting herself in that way into the hands of strangers.<sup>2</sup> It will accordingly not only make him respect [~~illeg.~~] our family so much the more but it will also show him at once, that he is sure to have constant advocats of the right, the true and the just in his new parents of law, a feeling which certainly will exercise influence over him; as for Clara the good effects of sound reason and serious reprimandings are quite evident. Now you will say: how very altklug<sup>3</sup> of that boy to talk in such a way; and so it would be, I dare say, wasn't it that I brought up this way of reasoning not perhaps ~~to~~ with the erroneous intention of improving anybody's opinions on the subject or

anything of that kind, but merely in order to found the following argument upon it viz. – that if the letter is to have the desired, above mentioned good effects it also must have certain qualities; that is I mean to say: that if this letter is to convince her of her guilt and make her really acknowledge her faults, it must not go one jota<sup>4</sup> beyond the truth; for it's known how difficult it is for human nature to find fault with itself, even with the best intention of seeing the truth; thus I think she will on finding one reproach that she knows herself unguilty of, think the whole the work of her aunts's disinclination or perhaps even revenge; where as I am most firmly convinced that she will and must come to rights again if her dearly beloved parents point out to her ~~these~~ as most grieving and hurtful offenses these very wrongs, that I am sure her own conscience is mortifying her about already now. – I think I am now arrived at the point of my arguments. viz. that the letter to Cl. ought to convince her of her [illeg.] guilt and in order to obtain that object ought to strictly true. I accordingly proceed to say, that I do not think that A.C.'s accusations are all strictly true. I naturally can not judge Clara's behaviour or pass a regular opinion over her [illeg.] howl<sup>5</sup> conduct because this requires experience, sound settled principles, knowledge of the world etz. still I can see wether single accusations are quite sound. So for instance she accuses her for having been quite reckless for you, and us all; this I positively know and can prove ~~to be~~ not to be the case; for although the accusation might perhaps be merited with regard to her not waiting for your approval, still it is unmerited in all the other senses in which it easily might be understood. – It can not be denied that A.C. is of an extremely imperious and despotic disposition, this frequently gives arise to little disputes the worst of which is that A.C. sees every where some secret plot[illeg.] or intention; and if you give your real cause she only says that she has been very much in the world, knows human nature thoroughly, has an eye as sharp as an eagle and that you are much to young to deceive her. I dont mean to say that she does so always, but she treated me in this way several times and so I naturally suspect that with Clara in whom she has so much less confidence this was the case still oftener. besides she sneaked before the Shelley's and other things which I dont believe to be ~~through~~ true. I hope dearest parents you wont misunderstand me; I dont think of excusing Cl's real guilt but I only wanted to mitigate A.C.'s accusations, where it is possible, to a little degree. As for the marriage itself all has been as legal and regular as possible. – I dont think, I confess, A.C. has behaved very well on one point and that is that she makes the busiest job of informing about among all her acquaintance, even those that have been quite laid by and tells them the whole affair in the least favourable light; even to quite common people as the old woman whom I lived with –, she talks with an indelicacy about it, as I should not have expected. Yesterday she [illeg.] went in a acarriage down to Black;<sup>6</sup> and bid me come down an our<sup>7</sup> afterwards on foot. I immediately suspected the reason (for this she had never done before) and really heard her talking about it when I arrived; for you know the groundfloor parlours with the large windows entering into the garden. – She says she was so very ill in L.<sup>8</sup> but now I find out by and by from her own narrations that she successively invited all her friends to [illeg.] tea

in order to communicate to them the great news. What I said about her health in yesterdays letter was a modyified extract of what she bid me to tell you; my private opinion does not even go so far.

I wish you would keep this letter a secret to A.C. because she would be most suspicious and angry at my not showing her what I wrote; also to Clara I think it would be better a secret. – I hope you are all quite well, and in good health; I am glad that there is nothing illegal in the marriage itself. Knox is an exceedingly clever man and may make her very happy.<sup>9</sup> No<sup>10</sup> goodbye dearest parents. many kisses to Paulin and all the others. your obedient son.

Willy.

Address: Aerogramme: via Ostend./Charles Clairmont Esqr./  
Vordere Schenkenstrasse N° 35–1<sup>st</sup>. Stock/ Vienna./ Austria.<sup>11</sup>  
Postmark: Dover/ JY 4/ 1849

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1 Wilhelm and Pauline often referred to Claire as A. C., A.Cl. or A' in their letters. In a letter from 2 July that has been lost, Claire evidently wrote to Antonia and Charles about the marriage. Their letter to Claire of 14 July referenced the 2 July letter which they claimed was a “thunder stroke” to them (CC II: 503).

2 Claire blamed the Shelleys for Clara’s marriage to Knox, because Clara had been visiting them unaccompanied when the two met and became engaged without her parents’ consent.

3 German for “precocious”.

4 German for “iota”.

5 whole.

6 Probably John Black, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. Both Antonia and Charles remained skeptical that Knox worked for the *London Times* and they wanted Claire to ask Black to confirm this fact (CC II: 517–18).

7 An hour.

8 London.

9 Both Antonia and Charles were eager to find out more about Knox. In her note to Claire (appended to Charles’s letter of 14 July 1849), Antonia expressed the hope that Knox was “not quite so bad” as Claire had intimated (CC II: 507). On 15 July, Charles informed Claire of the letter he received from Knox in which Knox described his family. According to this letter, Knox was the second son of George and Letitia Knox. His father was a merchant in Jamaica while his mother had died during childbirth. At the time of his marriage to Clara, Knox was thirty-one years of age. He had attended Trinity College, Cambridge, and was a lawyer by profession. He apparently wrote for the *Times*, for which he received £720 a year in addition to the pay he received for his work as a lawyer and a writer (CC II: 514).

10 Wilhelm probably meant to say “now”.

11 “Stock” refers to the floor or story.