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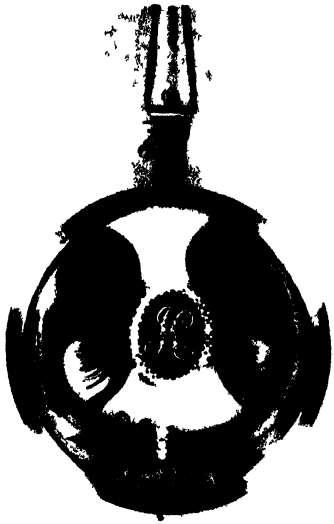
# FANNY KEATS



*Medallion*
*enclosing a lock of Keats' hair*

*Made for Señora Fanny Keats de Llanos,*
*and now in the possession of her granddaughter*
*Señora Elena Brockmann*

# FANNY KEATS

*by*

MARIE ADAMI

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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To
MY MOTHER

# PREFACE

TO the October 1935 and the February 1936 numbers of the *Cornhill Magazine* I contributed two articles on Fanny Keats, and it is the condensed story told in these articles, together with fresh material which has come to me since their publication, that I have expanded into the present volume. I have to thank the Editor of the *Cornhill*, Lord Gorell, for permission to use these articles, but not only for this. It has been said of Keats as of Spenser that he is the poet of the poets. Lord Gorell exemplifies the truth of this saying. His welcome to my subject and his interest in every aspect of it has been a constant encouragement to me throughout the preparation of this book, and I wish to express to him my special gratitude.

The two articles in the *Cornhill* included new material from a collection of letters written by Fanny Keats and her daughter Rosa to H. Buxton Forman. In writing them I acknowledged my debt to Mr. M. Buxton Forman for generously placing these letters at my disposal with permission to make full use of them, and I desire again to record my thanks to him for this and for other kindnesses.

The door of Keats House has always been

held open for me by Mr. Fred Edgcumbe, its Curator, and, as to every other modern student of Keats, he has given to me much friendly help, willingly sharing with me his knowledge of the treasures in his charge, and his information on all that touched my subject.

In all quotations from the letters of Keats, Fanny Keats, and Fanny Brawne, I have retained the spelling and punctuation of the originals.

So far as I am aware every statement in this book relating to Fanny Keats and her possessions is based, either on the letters she received from her brother John, on the personal recollections of her grandchildren, or upon documents. For these last, besides those I have mentioned above and acknowledged in the notes, I am indebted to the Marquess of Crewe who generously allowed me access to his collection, to the Hampstead Public Libraries and Keats House Committee, to the authorities of Harvard College Library who have granted me the use of original letters in their possession, and to Professor John Livingston Lowes and Mrs. Ada Russell who permitted me to make extracts from the Abbey Memoir. Mrs. Stanley Unwin has given me leave to quote from letters of Joseph Severn belonging to her, and Mr. Philip Speed Tuley offered and sent to me his collection of letters written by Fanny Keats and her daughter Rosa to himself, as well as much valuable information about the family. To these names I must add gratefully that of

Margaret, Countess of Birkenhead, who wrote and told me all she knew of Fanny Keats' friendship with her grandfather Joseph Severn.

There are many others to whom it is a pleasure to offer thanks. To Professor H. W. Garrod and Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie for encouragement and counsel, and to Mr. Edmund Blunden for much kindness in the early stages of my enquiry, to Dr. Mario Praz and Professor E. Allison Peers for information relating to Rome and to Madrid, and to Professor Willard B. Pope for lending me copies of documents not easily accessible, and other unpublished material. Miss Naomi J. Kirk of Indiana has shared freely with me her records of George Keats, and sent me many useful suggestions, and as well as to her I am grateful to the following who have assisted me in securing documents, in searching records, or in verifying special points: Mr. E. A. Barber of Exeter College, Mr. W. B. Briggs, Librarian of Harvard, Miss Ida Corbett, secretary to the Marquess of Crewe, Mrs. Herbert L. Wild, Mr. G. E. Roebuck, Mr. F. H. Gladwin, and Mr. Richard S. Smith, and I add to this list some of the oldest inhabitants of Edmonton, who cheerfully interrupted work or leisure to give one of their recollections or those of their forbears. I am indebted to Sir Humphrey Milford and the Oxford University Press for permission to use the *Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats*, to the Editor of the *New Statesman* for permission to re-print the articles

given in Appendices I and II, to the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* for similar permission for Appendices III and IV, to the officials of Walthamstow Borough Council and those of the Hampstead Public Libraries and Keats House Committee for illustrations, and to Fanny Keats' grandchildren for the photograph of the medallion which forms the frontispiece, a photograph sent to me by Señora Brockmann just before the outbreak of the civil war.

My warm thanks are due to Mrs. Charles E. Lovell for smoothing my path in Spain by introducing to me Señorita Nieves de Mayo, who acted as my interpreter, whose quick understanding and exactness made my work easy, and whose reliability as a witness to conversations has been specially valuable.

There are others to whom I owe much whose names, by their own request, are not included here.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Señor and Señora Brockmann for their very courteous welcome in Madrid. The greater part of this book is based on material not previously published, and a large part has come to me from my meetings and conversations with Doña Elena. Without her help it would have been impossible for me to weave all the scattered information together into a connected story of her grandmother's life.

MARIE ADAMI.

LONDON, *June* 11, 1937.

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*From a photograph taken by the author in Madrid, November* 1935.

# INTRODUCTION

. . . Brother, 'tis vain to hide
That thou dost know of things mysterious,
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
Weigh down thy nature.
*Endymion*, Book I, lines 505–508.

IF Fanny Keats had been told of an intention to write her life it would have taken a long time to obtain her consent, and she would have agreed to it only if she had been convinced that the writing of it would serve her brother's fame. To the English reader who thinks of the sisters of famous men of letters the name of Dorothy Wordsworth will be the first to come to mind, but Dorothy was the intimate companion of her brother for many years, and there is nothing of this in the life of Fanny Keats. She was seventeen when John left England to die five months later, and within a few years she had married and gone to Spain from where she never returned. Except for her husband she met there no one who had known her brother, and probably few who had heard of him. While she and John lived in England they were only together during her childhood, and she was too young to come within the circle of his friends. The only one of them whom she knew closely, Fanny Brawne, she did not meet until after

he had left for Italy, and later that friendship faded. Few of his group of friends knew her, and if afterwards those who did had been asked about her, it is likely that they would have spoken of her only as a child. As a child she has remained in literary history, and as a personality she has been mostly unrealised and disregarded. The few references to her as a woman tell us little; she never belonged to any part of the world of letters, never, like Dorothy Wordsworth, became part of an English landscape. She left no journal, and the only letters she had sent her brother were destroyed without hope of tracing.

Not that she herself would have wished for anything else. In the last years of her life she spoke of herself as an " insignificant person," and it was this, if she thought of herself at all, that she believed herself to be. She would have had no sadness to know that her brother, after leaving England, found her image in his mind " absorbed " by that of Fanny Brawne " to a degree incredible," and if, to the public eye as well as to herself, her life was commonplace and she an ordinary person, this, so long as her brother was known, she would have preferred.

Why then should her life be written ? That she was Keats' sister is not enough. The truth is the Keats picture is not complete without her, for what she was within it, and for what she has given to it. Compared with her brother's chief friends her place is small, compared with the quick brilliance

of Fanny Brawne she is slow and inarticulate, a figure all browns and greys; but she is not shadowy, within her limits she is clearly drawn. Fanny Brawne would fill a canvas by herself, painted in the clear enamelled colours Spenser knew, but it is Chaucer who would have created Fanny Keats, one of the lesser figures on his road, allowing her to be herself, allowing us to watch her, reticent and quiet, occupied with the details of day to day. Chaucer did not comment on his characters, and there is no temptation to speculate about Fanny Keats, to embroider what we know, or to conjure up where nothing is known, but she shows herself clearly in everything she does, and through it all there appears a code of living, of manners, of affection. From this place in the picture, from what she was, comes her contribution to the story of Keats' life.

One part of this contribution has received little public acknowledgment, and has never been given due significance in any biography of Keats. It is well known that during her childhood she received many letters from her brother. What has been hardly known at all is how she dealt with them. She kept them together and with her wherever she went, so that sixty years after they had been written she was able to send them for publication to England, and, solely because of her wishes, they were, after her death, handed by her children as a gift to "her native country." Solely therefore because of Fanny Keats the British nation now

possesses the only collection in existence of a series of original letters of Keats written to one person.

In her own life what is best known concerns the three years between the ages of fourteen and seventeen when Keats was writing to her. The history of these years we may trace from day to day, and week to week, and see her child's life as it was, more, may see Keats as he was to a child, to a small girl, to his only sister. He appears here as nowhere else and the picture of his life is enriched even more than hers is revealed. Unlike Dorothy Wordsworth she never knew her brother's life as it was really lived, not even when he was writing to her, knew scarcely anything of his hours of work and companionship in London, of his taste for music and the arts, of his passion for living, and if she heard little of the ordinary and the chance occupations of his days, she knew even less of the voyagings of his imagination. She was never bound up with him in the "shadows of the mind," nor in that "mighty abstract idea of beauty," which, for him, stifled "the more divided and minute domestic happiness." "I live not in one but in a thousand worlds," he wrote once to a friend, and even within the visible world, he looked upon "the Sun the Moon the Stars, the Earth and its contents as materials to form greater things—that is to say ethereal things." If Wordsworth had written so to Dorothy she would have understood. If Keats had written so to Fanny she would not. To her, both as a child and as a woman the real world was

the immediate one of her surroundings, built of their interests, pleasures and cares.

But though she never entered his world he entered hers. No more for her than for Fanny Brawne did he drop his integrity when writing, or " force " his letters, or " make sentences," and he wrote to her naturally, never subduing himself and without condescension, so naturally indeed that she was hardly aware that he knew any other world than her own, full of a child's needs, troubles and trivial happenings. Only later on she understood. Then she knew that while he had been to her what he was, written to her as he had done, he had yet lived in another place, thinking, writing, working, dying there—this was what she then discovered.

In the early days Fanny Brawne had written to her that John cast a spell over his friends. If spell is the right word it was upon his sister for the rest of her life, and with this, and in the new knowledge of him which came to her after he was gone, she thought of him " as of a mystery," not ghostly, as he saw her in the last weeks of his life, but immortal.

Reading the story of her later years it might appear that her thoughts of John were for the most part sentimental reflections upon his misfortunes. Such an impression would be wrong. It might seem that she was surrounded only with the relics of his early death, but that was as circumstances led, and not as she would have

chosen. She had seen him, known him, talked to him, and received his letters, for the remaining seventy years of her life she seems to have lived round and never far away from this recollection, and it was out of this knowledge that she talked constantly of him, and gave him again, living and young, to her children and grandchildren. To others she had little to say. George Keats could find adjectives when he wrote about his brother. Fanny had none. She never discussed or praised him, he was at once too near and too far for her to do so. She saw him always through emotion, but it was emotion deliberately and always guarded by self-control, and it would be a mistake to think that she lived chiefly in it, deep and persistent as were her affections. Like her brother she had a natural robustness of mind ; it had been one of his ambitions for her that she should learn to deal with life and circumstance, and this ambition was realised. All the long years in Spain with her family and her responsibilities show this, and so she appears in all her later correspondence. Her contribution to her brother's story is the simplest, the least critical, the most disarming of that of any of his friends. She kept the thought of Keats just as she had known him " fresh in her memory," as she kept the letters he sent her safely and through all misadventures, and she gives this, as she gave them, back to his country.

## CHAPTER I

## EDMONTON

DURING the night of Sunday, April 16th, 1804, there was at least one fatal accident in the City of London.[1] About one o'clock in the morning the watchman on his beat in the City Road, well wrapped up in his caped great-coat, found a young man lying on the ground opposite the Methodist Chapel. Examining him by the light of his lantern, and that of the oil street-lamp on its wooden pedestal, he found that he was alive but unconscious and evidently badly hurt. The watchman called for assistance with his rattle, and presently had him carried to a house nearby. There it was discovered that his skull had been broken, and it seemed that his horse had stumbled on the cobbled roadway and thrown its rider. But he was also recognised as a familiar figure who had often been seen in the neighbourhood walking or riding between the livery-stables half a mile down the road where he was owner-manager, and a small house in Craven Street. He was well known too as an energetic

[1] Short notices of the accident may be found in: *The Times*, April 17, 1804. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan.–June, 1804; May, 1804, p. 482.

friendly young man, a cheerful acquaintance, ambitious for his business, and with every prospect of success. On this particular Sunday evening he had ridden to Southgate,[1] a village eight miles north from London, and had returned by way of Enfield to visit his sons at school. He had apparently been on his way to put up his horse at the stables before going home to Craven Street, when the accident happened. His wife was sent for and soon appeared, a tall girl with large dark eyes and a pretty figure, but he did not recognise her, and died without recovering consciousness some seven hours after he had been found, at eight o'clock on the morning of April 17th, 1804. His wife was wild with grief, and it was, as everyone agreed, a sad affair, for the dead man had been a fond husband and father, and besides the widow there was left a family of young children, three [2] boys of whom the eldest was not yet nine, and a baby girl just ten months old. Mr. Thomas Keats was the name of the young man, and Frances Mary the name of his youngest child and only daughter.

Twenty-three years later an acquaintance, hardly a friend of Thomas Keats, wrote his version of this

[1] Its name was derived from having been the southern gate to Enfield Chase.

[2] There were four sons, John, George, Tom and Edward, the last born in 1801. He died in infancy, certainly before February, 1805, when bequests were left to four children only by their grandfather, the three elder boys and Frances Mary.

accident,[1] according to which the dead man had been carousing with friends in the country at Southgate, and was returning with them "most probably very much in liquor." But Richard Abbey was malicious in all that he had to say about the Keats family. The evidence of Charles Cowden Clarke [2] of Enfield that he was returning from a visit to his sons at the school which Mr. John Clarke kept there, is much to be preferred, for he spoke of his own knowledge, and Abbey was only retailing gossip, much of it, it would appear, of his own invention.

Frances Mary Keats was born in the summer preceding this violent event to a family which was rising in the world. On both sides its origins are obscure. Several biographers of Keats have speculated as to the poet's antecedents on his father's side, but nothing certain has been established, and

[1] In 1827 Richard Abbey gave an account of the Keats and Jennings family to John Taylor, who sent it to his friend Richard Woodhouse with a short note and some remarks of his own on Abbey. The original of this document is in the Lowell Collection, Harvard College Library, and is known as the Abbey Memoir. His version includes, however, one point of interest not given in the account in the press. Abbey states that Mr. Keats' horse mounted "the pavement opposite the Methodist Chapel in the City Road" and fell with him "against the Iron Railings." In 1804 the railings outside the Chapel were of wood, but there are now and were at that time high iron railings enclosing the Bunhill Fields Cemetery immediately opposite Wesley's Chapel.

[2] *Recollections of Writers*, Charles Cowden Clarke, 1878.

the one statement about it which is worthy of notice is his sister's recollection that as a child she had heard that her father came from Cornwall, near Land's End.[1] Nothing is known of her maternal grandfather's family and the name of John Jennings successfully defies research, but if, as at least one biographer has supposed likely, he also derived from west-country stock it is certain that his wife did not. Alice Jennings came from north-east Lancashire, and had spent her early years at Colne,[2] then a village in the hills between the northern reaches of the Aire and the Ribble rivers, a bare stretch of upland valleys and grey streams. She must often have felt the imprisonment of London streets after her marriage, and in this she was like two at least of her grandchildren in their declared preference for the country. Neither John nor his sister liked living in a town, and often said so.

Their grandfather, however, built up his business in a great city, and their father was on the way to doing the same when he died. John Jennings was the owner of a large livery-stables at the sign of the Swan and Hoop,[3] Finsbury Pavement, Moorgate,

[1] *Life of John Keats*, Sidney Colvin, 1918, p. 3.

[2] Colne is within 3 miles of the Yorkshire border, and within ten miles of the Brontë country at Haworth. It is now a town of 23,000 inhabitants.

[3] The house bears a tablet showing that John Keats was born on the site. It is numbered 85 and is labelled The Moorgate. It stands next but one to the corner of Fore Street, has three storeys, two windows to each, and is narrow and high. It is threequarters of a mile from

and he and his wife and their two sons and one daughter lived on the spot. The boys went to a private school in the country and Frances remained at home, where, however, it is unlikely that she knew a dull moment. Her father's business was a flourishing one, and it brought round the house a continual bustle of arrivals and departures—the coaches, horses, stables, the sounds of hoof and wheel on the cobbled yard, the post-boy's bell, the splash of water from the stable-men's buckets—she spent her childhood in the middle of these. Indoors there was just as much going on. Mrs. Jennings had a north-countrywoman's views on the proper ordering of a household, its washing, sewing and baking, and during her long years in the south never relaxed them. Even if Mr. Jennings was not the 'gourmand' which a malicious acquaintance described him to be, it is not surprising if he enjoyed his meals : his wife was a superb cook. No doubt she did her best to train her daughter in these domestic arts. She was nearly forty when Frances was born, and the child developed early, pretty, impulsive, gay, always looking for excitements, and as independent as an only daughter is able to be with middle-aged and devoted parents. Into this prosperous but undistinguished family came the young man whose name was to link theirs with literary history.

Craven Street. The house next door was in the early nineteenth century The Moorgate Coffee House : to-day it is a large public-house.

There is no certainty as to the date when Thomas Keats first arrived at Finsbury Pavement. He was thirty when he died in 1804,[1] so that his birth, of which there is no known register, is established for 1773 or 1774, but at what age he entered Mr. Jennings' employment as ostler we have no evidence, and all that is certain is that by 1794 he had risen to be foreman of the business. Neither of the Jennings boys had got in the way of his promotion, for one of them had died young and the other was a Lieutenant of Marines and only visited his home on infrequent leaves. Thomas Keats had every chance to become virtually the son of the house as well as the trusted foreman of the inn, and he was ambitious and did not miss his opportunities. Neither did Frances Jennings. She was only a year younger than he, and they must have seen each other on most days from the time she was fifteen. Perhaps they arranged things together early and then waited to ask the consent of her parents until Thomas' position was secure. As soon as it was, things happened quickly, and they were married in 1794 apparently with her parents' full approval. John Jennings may have been, as his grandson George described him later, " an extremely generous and gullible man," but he had had sufficient time to test his foreman, and perhaps Mrs. Jennings, more discerning than her husband, and more enlightened

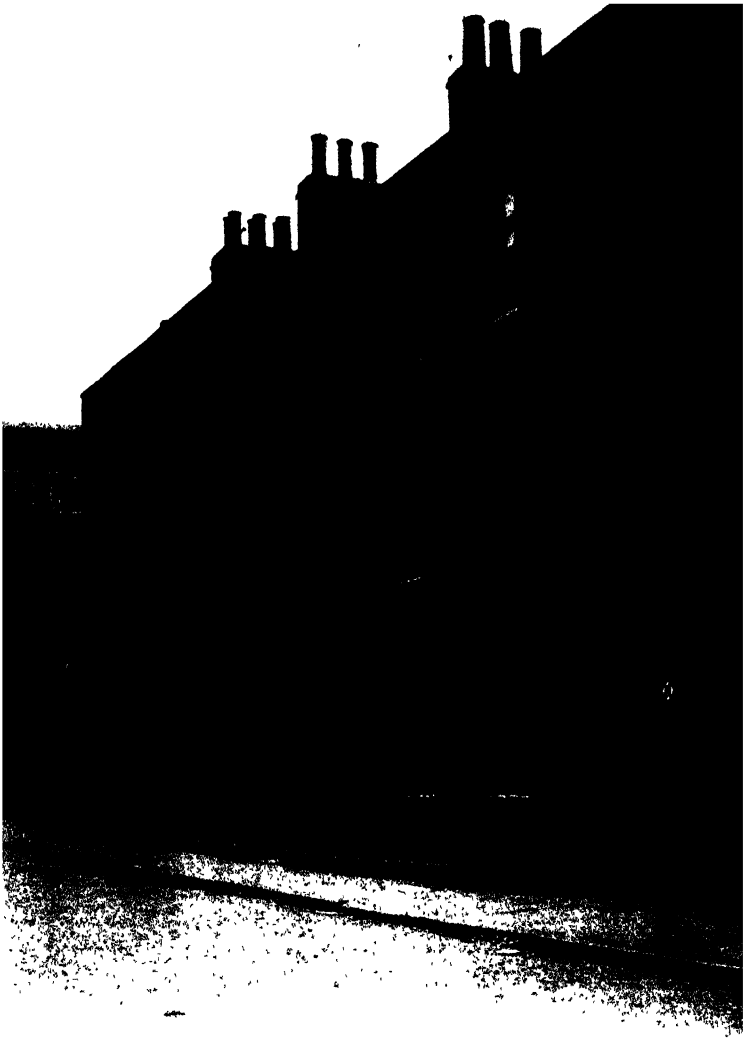
[1] Burial Register, St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, cf. Letter in *Times Lit. Supp.*, Dec. 22, 1932, by Prof. W. B. Pope.

than he about Frances' waywardness, gaiety and sudden attachments, encouraged his assent to the match, seeing in Thomas Keats, as well as the youthful passion which matched her daughter's, a combination of liveliness, good sense and ambition that might be expected to ensure lasting happiness for his wife. Both parents were probably aware that even if they had objected Frances would have had her way in the end. But they did not object. The wedding took place on October 9th, 1794, in a locality different enough from that of the stable-yard to satisfy the bride's social ambitions—St. George's, Hanover Square—and Thomas and Frances Keats returned soon after to the Swan and Hoop and settled down there to a life together, which, from that day until its ending ten years later, never betrayed the promise of its romantic beginning. They were absolutely different in temperament and in behaviour, they were perfectly happy.

The first child was born at the end of twelve months and was named John after his grandfather. About the same time Mr. Jennings, with a sufficient fortune laid by, and perhaps finding the Swan and Hoop small for a double household, decided to retire and leave the business to his son-in-law and Frances to manage. In 1795 the Jennings moved to Ponders End where a few houses stood among trees on the borders of Edmonton village, close to the Enfield highway. It was a district well known to John Jennings, for down the road from his

house, past the wooded hill and the bend of the New River was Mr. John Clarke's school where both his sons had been educated. Here, at a comfortable distance from city bustle, he and his wife watched with increasing satisfaction the rising fortunes of the livery-stables, and the regular arrivals of their grandsons. In a few years the Swan and Hoop was again too small and Thomas Keats moved to Craven Street,[1] about threequarters of a mile farther north, behind the City Road. It was a narrow street of small houses with a right-angled turn in it, but it was quiet, and Charles Square, a green place of trees and grass, was only three minutes away, and Frances could take the children there to play. There were already three. George the second boy was born sixteen months after John, Tom two years later, Edward in April, 1801. Apparently Frances Keats was so busy with her babies that she forgot their christenings, and the three younger boys were taken together to the nearest church, St. Leonard's Shoreditch, when Edward was six months old. But she had been longing for a girl, and when at last she arrived, two years after Edward, Frances behaved like a model mother, added Mary to her husband's choice of Frances after herself, and had her christened on

[1] The north side of the street is now entirely occupied with large manufacturing premises for cardboard boxes and industrial machinery, but there is one building on the south side which bears the date 1794, and most of the houses on that side are obviously over a hundred years old.



*Old houses in Craven Street, City Road*

June 17th a fortnight after her birth, in the church where her first boy—John, the darling of her heart—had been baptised eight years earlier, St. Botolph's Without.[1]

From their country home at Ponders End Mr. and Mrs. Jennings surveyed these adventures with approval. There were no relatives on Thomas Keats' side, and Frances' parents might have interfered as they pleased had they had a mind to do so. But there was little to criticise, for Thomas Keats justified all their hopes. Devotion to his wife did not deprive him of common sense. He was as ambitious as Frances for the children, but he knew what he could afford. She wanted the boys to go to Harrow, the school on the hill whose buildings she could see from miles away when they drove to the country. Thomas shared her ideas at first, but decided he would be satisfied if they escaped from the noise and dirt of London and received a sound education. In 1803 with three boys to bring up that was about as far as he could see, and he could argue that a small private school, Mr. Clarke's at Enfield, had done well enough for both her brothers. Soon he had settled it, and in this year, the year when Fanny was born, Mr. Thomas Keats might have been seen in his high gig with his pretty wife beside him, and his two elder boys behind, driving from Craven Street along the north road to Enfield, presenting on their arrival at the school such a picture of prosperity

[1] Bishopsgate.

as won the admiration of the head master and his wife.[1] So 1803 closed and 1804 opened without a cloud in the family sky.

Four months later came Thomas Keats' violent death, which changed immediately the lives of five people, and first of all that of his wife. It left her, naturally high-spirited and gay in spite of a delicacy of health which a happy married life might have cured, at the mercy of futile and degrading attachments, and without the will or energy to preserve the business he had built up ; it interrupted all the normal family life and upbringing which he had planned for his children. John, whose gifts, however different from those of his father, might have been encouraged and supported, was bound early to a profession for which he had expressed no choice, and George and Tom were removed from school three years before they would have been, and were tied to desks in a city office, a life which must have increased for Tom his tendency to the consumption from which he died before he was nineteen. George, deprived of the advice and support behind him which would have allowed him time to look round for the work he preferred, despaired of finding anything congenial in England and at twenty-one left for America. Fanny, the baby girl, who should have learnt her nursery-rhymes from young parents, never knew her father or any home provided by him, and if she preserved

[1] *Recollections of Writers*, Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, 1878.

any memory of her mother it was that of someone constantly ill from whom she received a passionate but unpractical affection. Her earliest years were spent almost alone with an elderly woman, and at the age of eleven she was thrown into such conditions of isolation that they could hardly be relieved even by her brother John who regarded himself, he said, as her " only natural protector." The letters he sent her, which she would hardly have received in happier circumstances, and which constitute her chief claim to the interest of the literary public, are the heritage of this unnatural childhood.

It would have been even more unnatural than it was if it had not been for her grandparents. Mr. and Mrs. Jennings took the whole situation in hand, for their daughter was of little use to her children. Frances Keats who had known nothing of trouble until her husband's death chose recklessly and without patience in her search for consolation. On June 27th, only two months after Thomas Keats had been buried, she married his successor in the livery-stables, William Rawlings,[1] selecting with a careless or a deliberate impartiality the church of her first marriage for the solemnisation of her second. But this time there was no approval from her parents and from that day her children's

[1] According to Richard Abbey, Rawlings was " a clerk in Smith Payse & Co. and would have had a situation of £700 a year eventually had he continued in his situation." Abbey Memoir—" When Rawlings married my mother he had no property of any kind," wrote Fanny Keats in 1886.

lives were taken out of her control. "We never lived with them," wrote her daughter, Fanny, afterwards, "but went at once to my grandmother who disapproved of the marriage." All four children were settled at Ponders End by the time she was twelve months old. Only Tom and she were about the house, John and George being at school for most of the year, but for their grandparents it promised to be a lively retirement.

The Ponders End household however, did not last long. Old John Jennings was taken ill early in the following spring and died on March 8th, 1805, having disposed of his fortune of over £13,000 in a will dated five weeks before. He left nearly £4,000 to his son, Midgley John, and a comfortable income to his wife together with his house and furniture. Discretion must have weighed against his affection in deciding the legacy to his daughter. The livery-stables had been her dowry and without Thomas Keats his hopes of its success were small. He left capital to give her an income of £50 a year, to pass to her children at her death, but he also left £1,000 to accumulate until the youngest child was twenty-one, then to be divided equally between the four children. Whatever way of life Frances Rawlings had chosen there would thus, by the time Fanny came of age, be a useful sum for each of his four grandchildren.

His fears for his daughter were justified. The Rawlings marriage was a disaster, and Frances was too miserable to care anything about the

business and left it and her second husband within a year. Nothing ever satisfied her after Thomas Keats' death, all the drugs she took for her loneliness were useless, and she came to know it. Wearying of further attachments, and becoming conscious of a creeping ill-health, she found herself longing for her children. When John Jennings' estate had been settled his widow determined to leave Ponders End, and in the early summer of 1806 she took her four grandchildren to live in Church Street, Edmonton. It is not clear if Frances Rawlings was with her mother before this removal, but it seems certain that she joined her at the beginning of the Edmonton household. All six were settled there together by the time her daughter Fanny was two.

In later life, though she found much to write and to say about her childhood, Fanny Keats scarcely mentioned her mother. Frances Rawlings lived for four years at Edmonton, but her share in the household is doubtful, and for a great part of the time she was in bed with chronic rheumatism and consumption. If John had written of her to anyone it would have been to his sister, but there is no mention of their mother in his letters to her. She was eight years younger than he, and could not be expected to remember. But it was not that he had forgotten, for he had watched her being sung to sleep in Craven Street, and sixteen years afterwards the sight of it was clear in his mind :

[1] 'Tis the witching hour of night,
Orbed is the moon and bright,
And the stars they glisten, glisten,
Seeming with bright eyes to listen— . . .
Moon ! keep wide thy golden ears—
Hearken, stars ! and hearken, spheres !—
Hearken, thou eternal sky !
I sing an infant's lullaby. . . .
Child, I see thee ! Child, I've found thee
Midst of all the quiet around thee !
Child, I see thee ! Child, I spy thee !
And thy mother sweet is nigh thee ! . . .

But Fanny would remember little of Craven Street, and little of her mother's illness at Edmonton, and nothing of the nights when John had sent his grandmother and the maid to bed and had sat up in the great chair beside his mother, feeding her and reading her novels to help the hours to pass. She was only six years old and was fast asleep in bed, and had not known that her mother was dying, and so could make little of the news that was taken to her brothers at school one March day, news which made John creep below the master's desk to hide. " We have been unfortunate for so long," he wrote to her in 1820, " every event has been of so depressing a character." The family fortunes had first turned their reverse side in 1804, but he had only been eight then, and probably their mother's death was chiefly in his mind when he wrote these words, the nearest

[1] ' A Prophecy : to George Keats in America.' *Posthumous and Fugitive Poems.*

reference to it he ever allowed himself.[1] He was fourteen and a half and Fanny not quite seven when, on March 20th, 1810, Frances Rawlings was buried beside her first husband in the north aisle of the Church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street. In 1820 Keats wrote to his sister-in-law : " You have a heart that will take hold of your children." Wilful, impetuous, squandering her gifts of mind and person, yet his own mother had done that.

But behind every catastrophe stood Mrs. Jennings—a secure background for them all. Fanny and her brothers had a splendid time with their grandmother, and all of them but Tom, who died when he was nineteen, have left their memories of it.[2] There were so many things to do, and they were allowed to do almost exactly as

[1] Fifteen years after her death George Keats described her as a " woman of uncommon talents, a most excellent and affectionate parent." John never described his mother, and only once mentioned her—in a letter to Fanny Brawne, dated July 25, 1819. " My seal is mark'd like a family table cloth with my Mother's initial F. for Fanny : put between my Father's initials."

[2] According to Richard Woodhouse (*Woodhouse's Scrapbook*, Pierpont Morgan Library) Keats composed a sonnet in memory of his grandmother. It was written in the late winter of 1815 or early spring of 1816. It was published in *Posthumous and Fugitive Poems*, and begins—" As from the darkening gloom a silver dove. . . ." See Abbey Memoir, Lowell Collection, Harvard College Library and C. L. Finney, *The Evolution of Keats' Poetry*, in two volumes, Harvard University Press, 1936, Vol. I, p. 98.

they liked; the maid was the only person who scolded.[1]

Edmonton in 1805 was a country village with the high road from London to Hertford running through it, and with inns of which even the names, the Bell, the Cross Keys, the Angel, the Golden Lion, were full of excitement for children. Mrs. Jennings' house was on the south side of Church Street, half-way up the twisting road to the old church where she took them on Sundays. Fanny knew all about the church. It had a grey stone tower, but all the rest of it was of red brick, and limes and elms shaded it in summer. But all year long there was a dark coolness inside, for on one side a gallery hid the windows, a gallery which was entered by an outer staircase, so that sitting below she could see people suddenly appear in it without having entered by the ordinary door. By the font beneath the tower were three little brass figures set in the wall, small girls in long skirts, tight bodices and close bonnets, and she always passed them as she went out of the north door with her grandmother, before walking down the path with the black yew tree on the left to the gate, and out past the Rose and Crown and home. Farther

[1] " In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
Nor afraid
Of his Granny-good—"

from ' A song about myself,' written in a Letter to Fanny Keats, July 2–4, 1818.

down the road just before you came to the Charity School and a dark cedar tree, was a high red wall with an orchard [1] behind, and opposite was a tiny house hidden at the end of a long stone path,[2] and past it but on the same side a large house with a flat front and many windows where Mr. Hammond the surgeon lived. Directly you turned out of Church Street, Fanny knew, you were on the village green, a triangle of sloping grass set round with trees and with a pond at the lowest corner. There was a wooden bridge crossing the pond over which John liked to lean and count the fish, and whenever he called out "My eye" she would know he had seen a tittle-bat,[3] but horses were led down there to drink under the shade of the old elm tree while the coach passengers dined, and the best place for minnows, as he and Fanny had proved, was Salmon's Brook, which wandered through the Stark's Nest [4] and came down between high gravel banks by the Cross Keys Inn to the pond. You could slide down its banks and skate on it in winter,

[1] Glebe land belonging to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's called The Hyde.

[2] Charles Lamb's house. Charles Lamb went to live in Edmonton in 1833.

[3] cf. 'A Now: descriptive of a hot day,' a paper written by Leigh Hunt with contributions from Keats. It was first published in the *Indicator*, June 28, 1820. To the end of his life Keats was interested in fishing, cf. Letter to Mrs. Brawne October 24, 1820, from Naples, "tell Sam the fellows catch here with a line a little fish much like an anchovy, pull them up fast."

[4] Common land.

and in summer you could sit beside it for hours, fishing for "Minnows, Ticklebacks, Dace, Cock-salmons," [1] or bubbling water through a reed, or floating ships made from alder chips with leaves and moulted feathers stuck in them for masts and sails.[2] There were fields of bean and clover and "poppied corn" [3] round Edmonton, and there were green lanes too in Stark's Nest, "thick set with hedge-row elms," [4] where goldfinches, linnets, and tom-tits hopped in the branches,[5] and where, even if you were not fishing, you might still hear the noise of the stream "rumbling in pebble-stone," [6] "one of the pleasantest things in the world." The "whole tribe of the Bushes and the Brooks," [7] wrote John to Fanny once, but the story is in his first poem : [8]

"I was light-hearted, . . .
How silent comes the water round that bend ; . . .
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams . . .

Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low hung branches ; little space they stop ;

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[1] Letter from John to Fanny Keats, March 13, 1819.
[2] *Endymion*, Bk. I, l. 880.
[3] *Endymion*, Bk. I, l. 255.
[4] 'A Now : descriptive of a hot day.'
[5] cf. 'Sleep and Poetry,' l. 342, "A linnet starting all about the bushes."
[6] 'A Now : descriptive of a hot day.'
[7] Letter, March 13, 1819.
[8] 'I stood tip-toe.' *Poems* published in 1817.

But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek ;
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak :
Or perhaps, to shew their black, and golden wings,
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings."

Fanny's version was written seventy years later from Madrid : " I well remember our pleasure in keeping little fish, and his love of birds, especially a favourite Tom Tit. I have always in my room a Goldfinch and Linnet whose sweet wild notes remind me of the green lanes of dear England."

These diversions were for the holidays, at Christmas and at Midsummer, when all her brothers were at home and when, as George wrote to her later, " John, Tom and I were always devising plans to amuse you, jealous lest you should prefer one of us to the other." [1] Apart from preferences it was Tom whom Fanny knew best at this time. Tom was delicate and his going to school had been delayed. For a year or more after the move to Edmonton he and she had most of the days to themselves and did everything together, playing in the garden, escaping through the gate down the street to the green, watching the coaches unload and the horses being watered at the inn, seeing on winter evenings the covered waggons leaving with parcels for London with lanterns swinging behind, and every year in September being taken as a treat to the Fair on Lomas Field, with its swings and roundabouts, and travelling menagerie, with spiced ginger-bread to buy, and sometimes little cupfuls

[1] Letter from George Keats to Fanny Keats, Feb. 7, 1825.

of curds and whey and caraway comfits. John and George were out of most of this, and by 1808 Tom had joined them and Fanny was left to herself.

But Enfield was not far away, and she and Mrs. Jennings often went over to see the boys. The coach would take them to the Greyhound Inn where the sitting-room faced the green with its spreading oak tree, or, if they walked, they would cross the Edmonton stile by the brook where the Holborn coach set down its fares, and would continue for two miles across the fields until they reached the meadow and the row of sapling oaks planted by Mr. Clarke himself, and entered the garden by way of the iron railings, the arbour and the pond.[1] The school-house as Fanny saw it was different from anything in Edmonton. Inside it was vast and airy, with a great schoolroom forty feet long, where John and the other two showed her their desks, and outside the upper part above the front door was built of rose-red brick, and cherubs and pomegranate garlands hung above alcoves between four curved pillars. Charles Clarke, so she was told, had once, when he was supposed to be ill in bed, climbed on to the lead flat over the entrance to examine the cherubim.[2]

[1] "Now the apothecary's apprentice, with a bitterness beyond aloes, thinks of the pond he used to bathe in at school." 'A Now,' Ref. *supra*.

[2] Note on the School House at Enfield by Charles Cowden Clarke printed in the St. James' *Holiday Annual* for 1875.

She was taken everywhere. She knew the fat elm tree in front of the house, the row of poplars too high for stones to clear them,[1] the playground over which the rooks flew every evening on their way to roost, the courtyard where the baking-pear grew, the ancient morello cherry tree exposed on its sunny wall, and the strawberry-beds slanting round the pond. Probably while Mrs. Jennings sat with Mrs. Clarke, Fanny was taken away and told of what had happened since her last visit. It was usually some account of a fight. The boys had all determined that they would be as brave as their sailor uncle Midgley,[2] and John and Tom always seemed to have been fighting, either a funny ugly boy called Wade, or Edward Holmes, or each other. Once John had even struck the usher because, when Tom was impertinent, he had boxed Tom's ears. But before she left they would take her to see their gardens, small plots where they could grow what they liked. John was trying roses and pinks and violets. "I hope you have good store of double violets," he wrote to her when she was sixteen, "I think they are the Princesses of

[1] A visit to Enfield by Charles Cowden Clarke. Leigh Hunt Serials. The *Tatler*, Oct. 11, 1830.

[2] Midgley John Jennings, a Lieutenant of Marines, 1st Lieutenant 1799, promoted to Captain 1808, died Oct. 8, 1808; said to have served in some ship of the fleet at the Battle of Camperdown. He was regarded as a hero at the Enfield school, of which he was an old pupil (see p. 214).

flowers." [1, 2] Fanny learnt on these visits what a garden might become, though she was apparently a little overawed by the size of the house and estate, and was too shy to run about as she did at home. "How palpably," wrote Charles Cowden Clarke to Joseph Severn in 1864, "does the event represent itself to me, and my seeing her as a very young child walking round the grass plot in our garden with her brothers—and my mother saying 'that is a very sweetly behaved child.'" John held a less sedate view of what her behaviour should be in a garden. "Play as much . . . on the grass-plot as you can," he wrote to her in 1819, "I should like to take possession of those Grass-plots for a Month or so; . . . for I want you to teach me a few common dancing-steps." [3]

Fanny was taught the "pretty and simple manners" remarked on by Mrs. Clarke by her grandmother, and a good deal more besides. Mrs. Jennings had a succession of sorrows in these

[1] Letter to Fanny Keats, April 13, 1819. In his note-book as a medical student at Guy's Hospital, Keats drew flowers down the margin of one page. The second was a pink, but the first was a violet, "that queen of secrecy." Letter to James Rice, Feb. 16, 1820, "I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy. The simple flowers of our spring are what I want to see again."

[2] "Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The Shrine of Flora in her early May."

*Poems* published in 1817. Dedication to Leigh Hunt.

[3] Letter, Feb. 27, 1819.

years—she had lost her husband and son-in-law, and by the summer of 1808 her only surviving son who had just gained his Captaincy in the Marines was dead, and her daughter had become hopelessly ill. Against this dark background she must have found the behaviour, wants, and appearance of her small grand-daughter a distraction and a relief, and she spent herself upon her. Fanny might play about as she pleased but she must speak gently and hold herself well, and learn to control her feelings, she must be able to sew, to embroider, and above all to cook. Standing beside the kitchen table in Edmonton, Fanny watched her grandmother—a thick apron over her plain black dress—make her pies and buns and at last she herself mixed and baked the favourite Lancashire recipe for rich cake with raisins and cherries. Mrs. Jennings always wore one ring above her wedding-ring, a circle of black and gold enamel, and she explained to Fanny as she worked that she never needed to take it off because, though flour and dough might stick to it, there were no stones in it to drop out. Fanny would have it one day for her own. The child may have been a little spoilt, but she made nothing of it if she was. The days were not long enough for all there was to do, and she wanted nothing more than to go on like that for ever.

Her mother's death was the first step towards the coming change. Mrs. Jennings was seventy-four when her daughter died, and she found herself responsible for four children, the eldest not fifteen,

and without a single member of her family with whom she could consult or in whose charge they could be left. She had never indulged in sentimental reflections, however, and she did not do so now : she looked steadily at the future and made her plans. In July 1810, five months after Frances' death, she executed a deed by which the four children and the greater part of the money left to her by her husband were placed in the charge of two trustees, and to them, though there was no outward change in the arrangements of her household, she virtually relinquished the greater part of her responsibilities from that moment. One of the trustees, a Mr. John Rowland Sandell, Merchant, of Broad Street Buildings, she had known since the days of Finsbury Pavement, his office had been close by. But he counts for little in the story, for after 1816 his financial affairs became so precarious that he found Holland a safer place than England and he died there the next year.[1] From the first, indeed, Mr. Sandell appears to have left most of the decisions to his colleague, who, from the time of the execution of the deed in July 1810,[2] was therefore, from a practical point of view, and doubtless in his own opinion also, in sole control of the destinies of the four Keats children and the

[1] Fanny, however, stayed at least once with the Sandells ; an extant testimonial confirms this, dated Jan. 14, 1816, and signed by Sandell.

[2] Mrs. Jennings' will was proved on April 14, 1817, by Richard Abbey as the surviving executor.

money to provide for them. Richard Abbey, Tea dealer, the torment of John, Tom and Fanny Keats, but the friend of George, comes to the front of the stage.

## CHAPTER II

## WALTHAMSTOW: SCHOOL

ABBEY was not a new figure to the Keats children, and if they had been asked for their views about him before 1810 they would probably have expressed them plainly enough. He was the stout man with the large shiny forehead who dressed so oddly, and who came over with his yellow landau and coachman to see their grandmother. They understood that he did not like their school at Enfield. Sometimes he brought with him a little girl—his child apparently—with whom they were expected to play. He seemed to them a dull and boring person, always smiling, always rather grand. Since their mother died he had come oftener than before and stayed for long talks with their grandmother. She appeared to like him: it was a mystery to them why she should do so.

It has been a mystery to other people since. Richard Abbey was a north-countryman from Colne who had been in business in London for many years, a prosperous wholesale tea and coffee merchant in the City, with a business house at No. 4, Pancras Lane, and a country house for himself, his wife and his adopted daughter at

Walthamstow. He would not deserve or receive a moment's attention if it were not for his influence on the Keats family. The modern reader with the whole story before him will see Abbey as commonplace, well-intentioned, pompous and vain, convinced of the rightness of his own opinions and decisions on all occasions, with the obstinacy in dealing with others and in getting his own way often found in people without imagination. He was conventional in outlook and behaviour, delighting in gossip, given to embroidering his own good deeds and the moral delinquencies of others, honest according to his standard, utterly without humour, entirely ignorant of culture, the last person in the world to guide successfully the lives of four highly sensitive children.

Mrs. Jennings could not see the complete picture, but even so it seems surprising that a woman so shrewd, with the judgment and foresight which had made her refuse support to the Rawlings entanglement even against the choice of her only daughter, and had rescued her grandchildren from its consequences, should have selected Richard Abbey to look after them and to carry out her wishes. She and her husband were people of property, well known round Edmonton and Enfield, and had many friends. Surely from among them she might have found someone more suitable, and willing to accept the charge, and if she needed an adviser in choosing, why not Mr. Clarke who had educated two generations of her family? He

more than anyone else could appreciate the delicacy of the undertaking and he knew also that Mr. Jennings had bequeathed a substantial [1] fortune to his widow and that the children were well provided for. There was no financial burden, and to anyone fond of children though it was a responsible it need not be a harassing task. Why then did Mrs. Jennings choose as she did? Was it a lapse in old age from her habitual shrewdness, or was it a hasty decision conceived in bewilderment at her own loneliness? The whole of her earlier behaviour forbids such conclusions. Or was it, as has been generally assumed, merely a return to the memories of her Lancashire upbringing, merely the fact that Abbey had been a contemporary of hers in Colne, all the years in the south having failed to convince her that it produced more reliable stuff than the northern village of her girlhood? Probably this had much to do with it, probably also Abbey's comfortable size, his benevolent behaviour, and his knowledge of the world encouraged her. Apparently she knew nothing of his dislike of her own husband and her son-in-law, or his low opinion of her only daughter.[2] He concealed

[1] Mr. Jennings' fortune in modern value would amount to more than £30,000.

[2] In 1827 Abbey in his account of the Keats family to John Taylor made malicious and inaccurate statements about Mr. Jennings, Thomas Keats and Frances Jennings. The only person who had his approval was Mrs. Jennings.

these from her. She was simple-minded, and in spite of her shrewdness was persuaded by his managing ways to accept him at his own valuation: they may even have given her a sense of security. But these were not the only reasons for her choice. The chief was that she had already tested Abbey and had convinced herself that he was not only a good business man but generous and kind-hearted, for, on an earlier occasion, when as an old acquaintance she had asked his help, he had come to the assistance of some orphaned children. What she had then seen had persuaded her that she might ask his help in a case which was not wholly dissimilar, and leave in his charge the future welfare of her four grandchildren.

The story is given in John Taylor's unpublished Memoir written after his conversations with Abbey in 1827.[1] Even allowing for exaggerations on Abbey's part the main points are clear. Apparently a young girl from Colne known there to Mrs. Jennings, married, and came to live in Edmonton. The girl was murdered by her husband in a fit of rage, and Mrs. Jennings, who was sent for after the tragedy as a neighbour who had been kind to the wife, found two children—a little girl of two, and a boy not more than three months old. "She sent for Mr. Abbey," the Memoir relates, "and said that if he would take charge of the Girl till the Parents of their late

[1] Abbey Memoir.

Mother should come to take them she would provide in the meantime for the Boy. Abbey cheerfully consented and brought the little Creature home to his Wife. At the end of a month the old Grandmother arrived in London to take the Children, and the Boy was given up to her, but the little Girl was requested to be left till an Opportunity which would soon occur afforded them the means of sending her safely to Colne in the care of another Friend. When that time came however Mrs. Abbey was grown so fond of the Child that she could not bear to part with her. The old Grandmother was easily persuaded to let her stay and She is at this moment with Mr. Abbey having been brought up by him as a Daughter—She was the playmate of the young Family of the Keatses."

This was probably the chief reason for Mrs. Jennings' choice, and whatever were its results she can hardly be blamed. Abbey's reasons for consenting are not so difficult to surmise. He was not going to lose by it financially, and to be known by his friends as having been selected as guardian, and to be deferred to and depended upon by Mrs. Jennings would flatter his vanity. But however "cheerfully" he consented to this second demand he cannot have had any idea when he accepted as to what it would mean. To look after a little girl who had never known her own people, who was entirely dependent for everything upon her adopted parents, and too docile

to oppose anything they decreed, was one thing; to look after a group of four children, all of them with character and will, and with very different temperaments, who were under no financial obligation to him and his wife, and had no reasons either to like them or to be grateful to them, was quite another. At the beginning the problem did not appear for what it was, for Abbey laid plans for the three boys to which he soon persuaded Mrs. Jennings, and, as he talked it all over with his wife, even Fanny did not seem to be much of a difficulty. She was only a little girl of seven now, and later on she would make a nice companion for their adopted daughter. But they were reckoning without any imagination of the Keats' temperament and character. "Mrs. Abbey was saying that the Keatses were ever indolent, that they would ever be so, and that it was born in them," wrote John to George and Tom in 1818,[1] describing one of his visits to Walthamstow. "—Well, whispered Fanny to me if it is born with us how can we help it—" Mrs. Abbey's vocabulary was perhaps hardly equal to her feelings: 'her husband had then been guardian for eight years. 'Indolence' for her covered a good deal.

But at the beginning there was no opposition to Abbey's plans for them all, and though Mrs. Jennings may have felt surprised at the completeness with which he assumed his new duties, it

[1] Letter of Jan. 5, 1818.

was probably a relief to her to watch what happened when a man took charge. By the summer of 1811 John had been taken away from school and apprenticed to Mr. Hammond the surgeon, and George knew that soon he would be leaving also and going to London to live there and to work in Mr. Abbey's counting-house. Tom, who was twelve, was allowed to remain at Enfield a little longer, and Fanny stayed at Edmonton for the next four years, but the old life for all four of them together with their grandmother was over.

Yet Fanny enjoyed the four years after 1810. Mr. Abbey's plans for the boys did not trouble her. George and Tom were at school, but John, instead of being away there almost all the year, was living at Mr. Hammond's only just across the road,[1] she saw more of him than before, and when she did she had him to herself. She saw him at many odd times each day. If he was too busy to come over, she could watch him across the road holding the horse for Mr. Hammond till he marched down the path with his bag, or, standing with her grandmother at the gate, holding her hand to her forehead to keep the sun out of her eyes,[2] would see John beside his master

[1] Pink brick houses now occupy this site : it is named Keats Parade.

[2] cf. " Now the little girl at her grandmother's cottage-door watches the coaches that go by, with her hand held up over her sunny forehead." ' A Now,' op. cit.

in the gig, driving up Church Street on his morning round. Or she would escape across the road and run round the back of Mr. Hammond's house [1] and look in through the door of the surgery where John and the other apprentice made up the medicines and wrote labels for the bottles of physic. When he came to the house he told them his news, once of how he had driven out with Mr. Hammond to Enfield School, and how one of the boys had pelted him with snow and escaped before he could cuff him. But that was the only story of fighting, for he was now, so it seemed to Fanny, interested in quite different things from when he was at school. He still liked to look at her gold-fish in their bowl, but he had given up fishing and watching for birds, and seemed to do nothing but read in his spare time. Mr. Charles Clarke told her that in his last terms at school John used to get up at seven in the mornings to read, and that he sat indoors all the afternoon play-time learning French and Latin, and that he even ate his meals with a book propped up between him and his plate. Their grandmother would not have allowed that, she thought. But he had brought home medals and prizes in those last terms, and now he always had a book under his arm and there were piles of his books all over the house. There was one book he had begun to translate at school [2] and he was finishing

[1] The dispensary was at the back.
[2] Virgil's Aeneid.

it at Edmonton. He often walked to Enfield to spend the evening with Charles Clarke, and told her of it afterwards : of how they had sat reading in the arbour, while a nightingale sang on a bush close by, and of how Charles had walked halfway home with him with an armful of books which he had lent to him. They were reading Shakespeare's plays she heard, and one day John came back with a book called *The Faerie Queene* and could do nothing but sit over it. It seemed to her an exciting name for a boy's book, but when she looked inside it was all in verse and hard to make out, much harder than the book of rhymes she and John laughed over together,[1] by Miss Taylor. But after he had read *The Faerie Queene,* John was writing as well as reading, lying on the grass [2] in the back garden and scribbling on bits of paper, and he told her that he was making verses himself. And though he seemed to have less to say to her Fanny was happy enough, for there was always so much for her to do. She could cook quite well by this time, and knew how to manage her sash, and how to keep the edge of her long frilled frock from getting dirty, and how to keep her bonnet on in a wind even though she always preferred to carry it over her

[1] *Original Poems for Infant Minds,* Jane and Ann Taylor, 1807.

[2] cf. " Stretch'd on the grass at my best-lov'd employment,
Of scribbling lines for you."
' To my brother George.'

arm. Her grandmother had taught her all these things, and hers was the pleasantest house in the world, and Fanny wished only to live in it with her for ever. But suddenly when she was eleven-and-a-half all of it came to an end. Her grandmother was taken ill and died, and in a few weeks the house was empty of all her things,[1] and even before that Fanny had left it, and left John too, for he was staying on in Edmonton with Mr. Hammond. She did not know how much she would be able to see him in the future, for Mr. and Mrs. Abbey were taking her away to live with them in their large house, with that other little girl who had sometimes come to play. Apparently she was told she might take with her her goldfinch in its cage.

Although Fanny lived as long at Walthamstow as she had done at Edmonton, in later life she found little to say about the years spent with the Abbeys. There was indeed little that she could have wished to remember, yet the picture of a jealous guardian visiting reproof and unkindness upon a forlorn and orphaned child is one which, if craved by the sentimentalist, is not the whole truth. The plain fact was that in spite of Mr. and Mrs. Abbey's planning she did not fit in. Everything was so different from anything she had known before, she was not quick at adapting

[1] Mrs. Jennings' house was vacant by Lady Day, 1815. It was pulled down before 1870.

herself to new conditions, and she was unable to make her own life easier by pretending pleasure when she did not feel it. The Abbeys and their adopted daughter lived in a big house of red brick on the south side of Marsh Street, which looked over the marshes and River Lea to open country. There were four indoor servants, a coachman, a carriage, and a general atmosphere of substantial comfort. Mrs. Abbey never touched any housework, and apparently enlivened her empty hours with gossip, the adopted daughter was something of a mope, and one day followed another in a settled satisfied routine of the commonplace, the only diversion being short visits to the Pancras Lane house or occasional lunches for friends of Mrs. Abbey's for whom elaborate preparations would be made to advertise the luxurious resources of her larder and her vegetable garden. In such a household, comfortable, conventional, and strictly regulated, the arrival of a child of eleven, accustomed only to simple living, and, though unused to attendance, needing supervision and care, must certainly have been a problem, and Fanny had to endure the dull seclusion of the days, the watchfulness on all her doings, many of which created astonishment, and the reproaches visited on her by Mrs. Abbey for any action which seemed to her unusual. And at six o'clock each evening Mr. Abbey arrived back from London, an overwhelming person in his " white cotton Stockings, Breeches and half-

Boots,"[1] wanting to know everything that had happened since he left for his office that morning. Fanny had not before lived in a house with a man as its head. Abbey of course was adequately paid for her board and lodging, and John sometimes reminded her when things were at their worst that she must remember her own independence and think of herself merely as "Abbey's lodger," but Abbey held all the money,[2] and such an idea was not of much use to a child who had to live with two massive grown-up people. The position was aggravated for both sides by the teasing reflection that however strained things became they could not be altered until Fanny came of age, and probably for her guardians as well as for herself the prospect sometimes appeared to be interminable. There were ten years of it to come.

Abbey has been alternately vilified and whitewashed for his treatment of the Keats children, but there is nothing to show that he was either specially kind-hearted or wilfully cruel. He was self-satisfied, set in his ways, alarmed at anything unusual which might threaten his security, and

[1] Letter from John Taylor to Richard Woodhouse, April 23, 1827, when sending him the Abbey Memoir. Taylor states that not until April 22, 1837, did Abbey wear "Trousers for the first time, as, having become so conspicuous as to be an object of attention in the streets, he had at last resolved to come into the Fashion."

[2] "All my accounts are entirely in my Guardian's power." Letter from John Keats to Haydon, April 13, 1819.

determined to confound anything or anyone which might attempt to do so. John once spoke of the "alertness and suspicion" of his guardian, and he was not exaggerating. Abbey was suspicious of anything new, of the democratic tendencies of the Cowden Clarke School, of the behaviour of his office staff, of the marriage of his partner, and his four wards, whom he had expected to manage easily enough, and who would, he hoped, give him new chances for exercising his love of power, were always placing some surprising and uncomfortable problem before him. Not one of the three boys was content to settle down as he had done and earn their living at some "useful" trade. He took George and Tom into his office, but Tom was inconsiderate enough to develop consumption and had to go away on expensive holidays to the sea, and even George, who was in his opinion the best of the four, quarrelled with Mr. Hodgkinson, his second-in-command, had to leave the office, and then got engaged, and began to talk of a wild scheme of going to America. As to John, Abbey was really alarmed. He found him a strange young man, imprudent about money, totally without worldly ambitions, and with many odd friends who, Abbey was convinced, would do him no good. Nor, he was equally certain, would he do Fanny any good. After a time all three boys were, by circumstances, removed from his direct supervision, but Fanny was always there, and he worked off his discontent at her

brothers' behaviour by exaggerating his responsibility towards her and by directing and overlooking everything she did. The result was she shrank into herself, and became nervous and depressed. She had been taken out of the easy life with her grandmother where she might run about as she pleased, and had been shut away in a household where there was no laughter, and where her most harmless wants and wishes were occasions for watchfulness and comment. In the whole affair there was for her perhaps only one advantage, and it was one of which, as a child, she was entirely unaware—the opportunity during these years of building up a sound physical health. For if there was no freedom and no fun, there was good air, good food, and regular hours. While George and Tom were living above the counting-room at Pancras Lane, or in cheap City lodgings, while John was sitting up late in Dean Street working for his Apothecary's examination, Fanny was pursuing an ordered existence at Walthamstow, eating proper meals, and, we may be sure, being dismissed to bed each evening at an early hour. She was a thin child, given to sore throats, chilblains and small ailments, she caught cold often enough to provoke John's frequent reminder "to wear warm cloathing especially in a thaw," but in December 1818, in spite of her grief for Tom, even John admitted that she was a little plumper. There was a large garden at the Marsh Street house, and she was

allowed a plot of her own and spent much of her playtime on it. She was the only member of her family who lived to old age, the only one, save her father, who did not die of consumption.[1]

The full meaning of the Abbey household did not dawn on her at once because in January 1815 she was sent to boarding school, and for the next three years spent only holidays with her guardians.[2] Abbey chose a school close by in a house on the opposite side of the road from his own, a " Ladies Boarding Academy " of about forty pupils at No. 12 Marsh Street,[3] kept by two sisters, the Misses Tuckey, Miss Mary Ann being twenty-eight, and Miss Susanna twenty-two. Theirs was the most important girls' school in Walthamstow, flourishing enough apparently for an overflow of boarders to be taken in by their devoted friend Miss Caley, who lived across the road at No. 21, for some of Fanny's letters are directed to her

[1] It is of interest to compare the view of a French historian of Keats, Albert Erlande, who wrote : " elle subissait la tutelle du sinistre Richard Abbey . . . et, en dépit de la déplorable hygiène physique et morale de son enfance (elle) termina ses jours à Madrid en 1889." *La Vie de John Keats*, par Albert Erlande, Paris, 1928, p. 27.

[2] She paid at least one visit in the holidays to her other guardian Mr. Sandell, as the following note testifies : " This is to certify to whom it may concern, that Frances Mary Keats, during the time she was on a visit to Mrs. Sandell was a very good girl. J. S. January, 1816."

[3] On the site of what is now the Palace Theatre, between the present Westbury Road and Erskine Road.

at this second address,[1] and presumably Miss Caley, who long survived her two friends, and took over the school after their deaths, was an assistant-mistress in Fanny's time. Nothing is known of these ladies save their names, dates and virtues,[2] set out upon the massive table tombstone they share in Walthamstow Churchyard. Evidently John approved of them, evidently Fanny was happy, but there is little more to be said about these three years at school. She had no intellectual curiosities, and no special love of books, she was not being prepared to earn her living as a governess like her contemporary Mary Novello, who acquired fluent French at Boulogne, and Latin from Mary Lamb, and the teaching at Miss Tuckey's, limited to the usual feminine

[1] Keats' first letter to her was addressed, 'Miss Kaley's School,' the second 'Rich[d]. Abbey's Esqre.,' the third and fourth 'Miss Tuckers',' the fifth to the eighth 'Miss Tuckey's,' and the ninth 'Miss Caley's School.' The remainder are addressed to her at one or other of Abbey's residences, Walthamstow or Pancras Lane, Cheapside.

[2] This Monument is Erected to the Memory of Susanna Tuckey Whose Remains are here Deposited. She died October 31st, 1824, In the 31st year of Her Age.

Farewell Blest Shade, From Earth to Heav'n Remov'd
In Death Lamented And in Life Belov'd
Of Gentlest Manners Unaffected Mind
Lover of Peace In Every Action Kind
Compos'd in Sufferings and in Joy Sedate
Good without Noise, Without Pretension Great
Accept Our Tears ! Mortality's Relief
And, till We Share Thy Bliss, forgive Our Grief.

curriculum of the time, no doubt satisfied her—music, dancing, deportment, a smattering of literature, and of French, painting in faint water colours, and constant practice in the fine sloping Italian hand then in fashion.

Between the Septembers of 1817 and 1820 Fanny received forty-eight letters from John and most of what is known of her between these dates comes from them. They divide themselves into three groups, the first containing one letter only, that of September 10th, 1817, the second containing ten between July and December 1818, and the third containing thirty-seven between January 1819 and September 1820. The first arrived when she had been two and a half years at school. If she received others after leaving Edmonton she did not keep them, and perhaps there had been none to keep. When she went to Walthamstow she was only eleven, John was nineteen, and he may have decided that in her early schooldays she was too young either to need or to keep up a correspondence; probably he depended too on the occasional visits he paid her at school, for he had been too busy to write many letters in these two years. He had entered Guy's in 1815, and passed his Apothecary's examination the following summer, had lived with students in St. Thomas Street, then with his brothers in Cheapside, and had also been much out of London. Fanny was safe and happy at school, her worst period of isolation had not

begun, and there were no restrictions on his visits to her. But in the Spring of 1817 he had begun his real struggle with his guardian, and this involved new efforts for her. So long as he was following the course Abbey had mapped out for him and was working at medicine, there was no difficulty about his visiting his sister, but by the Autumn of 1816 he had thrown up his medical course for poetry, and from that time Abbey's attitude, always suspicious and critical towards his eldest ward, had changed for the worse. Early in 1817 John took Abbey his first book. "Well John, I have read your Book and it reminds me of the Quaker's Horse, which was hard to catch, and good for nothing when it was caught. So your Book is hard to understand and good for nothing when it is caught." "I don't think he ever forgave me for uttering this opinion," said Abbey to Taylor some years later.[1] Whether John did or did not does not matter. What matters is the effect of his decision on Fanny's existence and his own. He had refused to remain in the profession Abbey had chosen for him, he became therefore a suspected visitor at Walthamstow, and Abbey's attempts to isolate Fanny from him began then and for this reason. John, however, with his choice made, and his interests widening, did not have her less constantly in his thoughts; she was growing older, he did not wish to see less of her in the future

[1] Abbey Memoir.

but more, and if he could not see her he would write. By September 1817, what might be described as the Keats circle had been formed, the first volume of poems was published, and 'Endymion' was half written. George was engaged to Georgiana Wylie, Wentworth Place was built, and John was on terms of lively intimacy with its occupants, Dilke and Brown. Fanny was the one member of the family who was out of it all—shut away in Walthamstow. It is at this moment and with this background that the letters to her begin:

"My dear Fanny," she read, on September 11th, 1817, after she had broken the wafer, looked at the seal, and her own name "Miss Keats," and had spread out the large sheet of thick cream paper folded into three:[1]

"Let us now begin a regular question and answer—a little pro and con; letting it interfere as a pleasant method of my coming at your favorite little wants and enjoyments, that I may meet them in a way befitting a brother.

We have been so little together since you have been able to reflect on things that I know not whether you prefer the History of King Pepin to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress—or Cinderella and her glass slipper to Moor's Almanack. However in a few Letters I hope I shall be able to come at that

[1] Envelopes were not in use in 1817. The sheet of paper was folded in half, then folded in three and secured with wafer and seal. All Fanny's letters from John came to her thus.

and adapt my scribbling to your Pleasure. You must tell me about all you read if it be only six Pages in a Week—and this transmitted to me every now and then will procure you full sheets of Writing from me pretty frequently—This I feel as a necessity for we ought to become intimately acquainted, in order that I may not only, as you grow up love you as my only Sister, but confide in you as my dearest friend." . . .

She turned the page and the Walthamstow schoolroom faded as she read,—about a Shepherd boy sleeping on the grass with a moon goddess bending over him, about John writing a poem in a city of Spires and Towers and clear streams, a city which he had no doubt was the finest in the world,[1] about George and Tom in France looking at Cathedrals, Manuscripts, Fountains, Pictures and going to the play, and about people and things she knew herself, such as Washer-women, Lamplighters, Turnpikemen, Dancing Masters and Rocking horses. And John, so she read, was coming to see her in three weeks, and was sending her a little book of rhymes,[2] rather like the one they had laughed over before. It had his name and hers inside [3] it, and he wanted to know how she liked it. Better than what came over the next page, she thought, where he

[1] Oxford. Keats was staying with Bailey at Magdalen Hall.

[2] *Essays in Rhyme on Morals and Manners*, by Jane and Ann Taylor, 1816.

[3] 'John Keats to his Dear Sister.'

was writing about the French language. Yes, he understood she found it difficult to pronounce it in her lessons, she liked English best and always would, French, as John knew, seemed to be crammed down one's throat. She read on to the end :

" Now Fanny you must write soon—and write all you think about, never mind what—only let me have a good deal of your writing—You need not do it all at once—be two or three or four days about it, and let it be a diary of your little Life. You will preserve all my Letters and I will secure yours—and thus in the course of time we shall each of us have a good Bundle—which, hereafter, when things may have strangely altered and god knows what happened, we may read over together and look with pleasure on times past—that now are to come. Give my Respects to the Ladies—[1] and so my dear Fanny I am ever,

Your most affectionate Brother,

JOHN.

" If you direct—Post Office Oxford—your Letter will be brought to me."

" I will secure yours," John had written. It is tantalising that none of Fanny's letters to him have been preserved. Probably he kept all she sent him until he left England, but it is almost certain that he took none of them abroad, and if he did not destroy them before he left for Italy, and they remained at Wentworth Place, it seems likely that Fanny herself must have had the chance

[1] To her schoolmistresses.

of burning them. She would not consider her own letters as of the slightest importance. Fortunately there are two sentences which supply the clue to all the letters he received from her.

"You must tell me all you read," John wrote in his first paragraph; "write all you think about, never mind what," he said in his last. No addition could have been more fortunate. A correspondence may have more possibilities for intimacy than meetings, especially when those meetings cannot be frequent or prolonged, and in this letter Fanny was shown what this correspondence might be. She was given freedom to write anything she liked, and encouraged to believe that everything she told John was of interest. She never lost this belief.

Fanny received all her letters from John at Walthamstow, but only eleven while she was at school, and there is a gap of ten months between the first of September 1817, and the second in the following July. The only explanation for this silence seems to be that in spite of Abbey John was contriving to see more of her than he had expected. Tom was not well, and in December 1817, George took him off to Teignmouth, and John was alone in Hampstead. When the Abbeys went to Pancras Lane for Christmas and the New Year he managed to see Fanny. "My dear Haydon," he wrote on January 10th, 1818, "I should have seen you ere this but on account of my sister being in Town. . . . Fanny has called

me into the City; and the Xmas Holydays are your only time to see Sisters, that is if they are so situated as mine." What she and John did together is not known, perhaps they were too gay, for Mr. Abbey's reaction was immediate. "Fanny has returned to Walthamstow," wrote John on January 23rd. "Mr. Abbey appeared very glum the last time I went to see her, and said in an indirect way that I had no business there—"

In his first letter John thought of her as having begun to reflect upon things, but did not feel sure where her reflections would lead—to Fairy Tales, or to Greek Mythology, and, conscious of the change which three years between eleven and fourteen could bring about, and feeling his ignorance, fell back on what he remembered of her tastes in the past, and wrote to her as a child. "It appeared to me to be suitable to you," he had written about the cautionary tales he was sending her. It was. What he learnt of her during the next ten months is shown in the next group of letters beginning in July 1818. She had a canary for a pet, which was apt to get ill, and she asked him for a flageolet[1] to play on, and so that she might train her chaffinches to sing, she liked to watch goldfish change their colours in a bowl, and she had a small girl's excitement over little playthings, scotch pebbles, shells, medals of Royalty, Tassie gems, and seals from the shop

[1] A small wind instrument with six holes and sometimes keys.

in Leicester Square. She had a hoop, and was amused to count buns and tarts in a pastry-cook's window, and, like John, sucked bulls'-eyes and barley-sugar drops, and ate ladies' fingers, and had a mischievous delight in giving nick-names to people travelling in the coach.[1] She learnt poetry by heart, and so he wrote her verses she could understand, one about an old gypsy in Scotland [2] and one about himself at Edmonton,[3] looking back into the past with her and laughing at what they saw. There was no one else with whom he did this.

Fanny had asked for a letter once a fortnight, but neither she nor John were punctual correspondents, and she never knew when a letter would come from him, or what it would look like when it came. Sometimes it was on thick cream paper, sometimes on a thin blue sheet [4] that crackled in her hand, sometimes it was long, sometimes short, sometimes there were verses inside. The seal [5] was always taken in red or black, and was almost always different, a head of Shakespeare or Milton, or a lyre with a French

[1] cf. Letter to Woodhouse, Sept. 21, 1819, "The Coachman's face says eat, eat, eat."

[2] 'Meg Merrilies.'
[3] 'A Song about Myself.' } Letter of July 2–4, 1818.

[4] Haslam sent Keats thin blue paper for his transatlantic correspondence.

[5] There are nine different impressions of these seals on the letters in the British Museum in red and black wax. In John's desk, which George took to America in 1820, and which is now in Keats' House, there are three Tassie Gem

motto round it in black, or a tiny branch of olive with an Italian motto in red no larger than her finger-nail. Sometimes a book would arrive, with her name on the front page; once there was even one in a special binding.[1] These early letters were always surprise packets, and only one thing about them never varied. Though she was a child, she felt grown-up when she saw it —she was invariably addressed as "Miss Keats."

By the summer of 1818, however, there were other things to help her to grow up. It had been a dull July holiday. George had left for America, and John had gone at the same time to Scotland with Brown. Tom was not well, and she had no visitors. She sent John a long letter full of questions early in June, but it must have been delayed, for though she had a long letter from him early in July he had not then received hers, and she had to wait until August for her answers. On the 19th she had a letter from him apologising for his silence. He told her that he had left Brown in Scotland and had arrived himself at Well Walk[2] the day before, having landed at London Bridge after a nine-day passage in the

reproductions, two in glass and one in dark stone, which John may have used.

Fanny Brawne used for her letters to Fanny Keats a seal similar to one used by John.

[1] *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems.* Published in 1820.

[2] Well Walk, Hampstead, where John, George and Tom had rooms in the house of Bentley, the postman.

smack from Cromarty, that he had had a sore throat himself while he had been away, and had found Tom ill. He promised, however, that he would persuade Abbey to let him bring her to Hampstead, and on August 26th she heard from him again. Tom was worse, he was wanting to see her, and, as it had been impossible for John to get to Walthamstow, he had written for Abbey's permission for her to visit them hoping he would not "make any objection." Abbey gave a grudging consent, and during the next five or six weeks she went more than once to Well Walk escorted by John. "With a great deal of trouble," he wrote to George and Georgiana, on October 16th,[1] "I have succeeded in getting Fanny to Hampstead—she has been several times." But when she went she found it all very strange and difficult; Tom was really ill, as she could see, and yet she could do nothing for him, and every time she went they found it harder to say good-bye.

The dates of these visits can be confined within limits; they were all paid between the last few days of August and the first few days of October. In a letter of Friday, October 9th, John wrote, "Poor Tom is about the same as when you saw him last. . . . I shall be punctual in enquiring about next Thursday." It is evident, however, that this proposed visit for the 15th never took place, for on Friday the 16th he wrote, "You must

[1] (Though he did not know what day of the month it was, only that it was a Friday.)

not condemn me for not being punctual to Thursday, for I really did not know whether it would not affect poor Tom too much to see you," and he continued that if Tom kept "pretty well" he would try for permission for her to visit them on Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week, on the 20th or 21st. But she never went, and his next note, dated October 26th, gives the reason. On one of the last of her visits to Well Walk he had taken her to see some of his friends in Hampstead and she had innocently spoken of it on her return to Walthamstow. Abbey had disapproved of it, had at once determined to put every possible obstacle in the way of her going there to see Tom or anyone else, and though John saw him three times about it, he refused any general consent. "He says that once more between this and the Holy-days will be sufficient. What can I do?" John wrote to her on November 5th, "I should have been at Walthamstow several times, but I am not able to leave Tom for so long a time as that would take me. . . . Write to me as often as you can, and believe that I would do anything to give you any pleasure—we must as yet wait patiently." The 'once more' never arrived, for in November Tom became suddenly worse and John himself deliberately postponed her visit, knowing it could only distress her and Tom. The 'last time' therefore to which John referred on October 9th was the last time she went to Hampstead during that autumn, the last

time she saw Tom alive. It cannot have been later than the first few days of October.

We do not know how she received news from Well Walk during November : there are no letters to her from John in the last three weeks of that month, but in the night of November 30–December 1, knowing what the next hours would bring, he wrote to prepare her. It was a short note.[1] "I cannot say he is any better this morning—he is in a very dangerous state—I have scarce any hopes of him. Keep up your spirits for me my dear Fanny—repose entirely in

Your affectionate Brother

JOHN."

Perhaps nowhere so much as in the last words of this letter, as one reads them over and over again, are the tenderness of his care for her and his penetrating imagination of her, as she was,

[1] According to a letter from Brown to Woodhouse quoted by Miss Lowell (*Life of John Keats*, Vol. II, p. 117), Thomas Keats died at 8 a.m. on December 1st. In a letter quoted by Colvin (*Life of John Keats*, p. 320), Brown says that "early in the morning I was awakened in bed by a pressure on my hand. It was Keats who came to tell me that his brother was no more." Keats' letter to Fanny is dated "Tuesday morn," and the postmark is December 1st, which fell on a Tuesday. It seems almost certain, therefore, that Keats wrote the letter to Fanny during the night, to prepare her, and that he posted it on his way to Brown. The fact that it was addressed to her at Miss Caley's, when all other evidence points to her having been in Miss Tuckey's house at this time, was presumably due to Keats' distraction of mind. cf. p. 47, note 1.

more clearly shown. Waiting in the inaction which the last hours of unconsciousness bring to the watcher, he looked beyond them to Fanny, foreseeing her coming grief, bracing her against it. He gave her something to do, he gave her something to hold. Found and set down as they were, it would be hard to imagine words more moving.

Tom was dead and the Well Walk rooms were empty. Bentley had carried John's books down for removal to Wentworth Place and in a week or two he had settled there with Brown, next door to the Dilkes. Fanny had two visits from him before December 14th, once taking Mrs. Dilke with him, the second time Haslam. Mrs. Dilke had known John, George and Tom, at least since early in 1817. She was a dark-eyed smiling little person with curly hair, gay, impetuous, vivacious, unpunctual, and generous-hearted. She had a devoted husband, a son whom she adored and spoilt, a charming house and garden, and many friends both men and women, with whom she liked to share all she had. She perfectly understood the Abbey household, and had been anxious to get to know Fanny and do what she could, and as she was among John's greatest friends in Hampstead, there is every reason to believe that her house was the 'place' or one of the 'places' to which he had taken Fanny in September.[1] This supposition is supported by

[1] Miss Lowell has said (Amy Lowell, *John Keats*, Vol. II, page 126) that "if it cannot be stated as a certainty never-

the fact that Mrs. Dilke was at Wentworth Place during September, and that, writing on October 26th, John spoke to Fanny of Mrs. Dilke in terms which show that they had already met.[1]

Still hoping for another visit to Hampstead from Fanny he concluded his letter that day, "I will try for permission for you to remain here all night should Mrs. D. return in time." Fanny was making a present for Mrs. Dilke and had finished it by December 13th when John took it back with him to Wentworth Place. On December 18th Mrs. Dilke sat down and wrote to thank her, allowing John to add a note on the back of her letter :

"I know not how to express my thanks my dear Miss Keats for your very kind present, and fear much I am depriving some other Friend of

theless it appears quite evident that the Brawnes were the friends to whose house he took his sister." The probability of this cannot be admitted. According to Dilke Keats did not know the Brawnes until "October or November," and Fanny Keats' visits to Hampstead, as we have seen, were all paid between August 25th and the first few days of October. Also it must be decided from Keats' last letter to his sister (Sept. 11, 1820), dictated to Fanny Brawne, that she was not then acquainted with Fanny Brawne, and when the latter first wrote herself to Fanny Keats (Sept. 18, 1820) she wrote as a stranger.

[1] According to Keats' letter of Feb. 8, 1820, Fanny knew Mrs. Dilke's house, but there is no record of any visit of hers to Hampstead after September 1818.

them, they are very beautiful, and I shall value them much, do you think I may hope for the pleasure of your Company? . . . Pray do give my Compliments to Mrs. Abbey and ask her to allow you to come, say that both myself and Mr. Dilke will take the greatest care of you, and do everything in our power to make you comfortable. Your Brother has just been with us, and is very well, he got home very well the other Evening, but not till past ten o'clock, very cold and very hungry both. I must now conclude and should like to hear from you much, believing me to be

Yours most sincerely,
MARIA DILKE

Please to present my Compts to Miss Tuckey"

On the morning of the 21st of December, two days after the arrival of this letter, John went to see Fanny and found her full of two important questions. Would he ask Mrs. Abbey to let her accept Mrs. Dilke's invitation, would he prevent Abbey from taking her away from school? He left her promising to do all he could, and Christmas passed for her at Pancras Lane while she waited. On New Year's Eve John's letter arrived: he had done his best, but evidently he had not much hope, though in the interval he had striven all he could and more than she knew about the decisions. Now she read, "I shall not neglect any chance of an endeavour to let you return to School—nor to procure you a Visit to Mrs. Dilke's which

I have great fears about." [1] Six weeks later he wrote on the decision which had by then become irrevocable. "I had always a presentiment of not being able to succeed in persuading Mr. Abbey to let you remain longer at School—I am very sorry that he will not consent."

No reason ever appeared why Fanny should have been obliged to leave Miss Tuckey's at the age of fifteen. Mr. and Mrs. Abbey were agreed about it but why they were so remains a mystery. Mrs. Jennings had left plenty of money for her grandchildren and a special bequest to Fanny,[2] and it is surprising that Mrs. Abbey should have agreed to end an arrangement which kept Fanny out of her house for nine or ten months of each year. The plan was made, however, with no reference to her wishes or entreaties, and in spite of John's efforts; Abbey was her legal guardian and his decisions were final. She went back to the Abbey household at the end of the Christmas Term of 1818, and settled down to a life there which John, writing to her two months later, rightly described as "idle and retired." Between Walthamstow and the high dark house in Pancras Lane she passed unwillingly the whole of the next five-and-a-half years.

[1] She never paid this visit.

[2] All her jewellery, plate, linen, and wearing apparel, to come to her when she was twenty-one.

## CHAPTER III

# WALTHAMSTOW: THE ABBEY GUARDIANSHIP

AS soon as she had left Miss Tuckey's, Abbey tightened his regulations. Even with Fanny across the road the last few months had been trying enough for him and his wife. Tom's illness, Fanny's misery had disturbed the comfortable routine of their days, and now though Tom was dead, and a most troublesome incident ended, matters would be no easier. Fanny was to be in his house, John would be wanting to visit her constantly, perhaps bringing one of his strange friends, and when he did not come he would be writing to her and sending her parcels. It was all most unsettling, and Abbey was determined, if he could, to protect himself. Perhaps he could forbid John the house, he would do his best, at any rate, to restrict her letters. He set to work. Early in February, John wrote to Fanny. "Your Letter to me at Bedhampton [1] hurt me very much,—What objection can there be to your receiving a Letter from me . . . I am in hopes Mr. Abbey will not object any more to your receiving a letter now and then from me. How unreasonable!"

[1] He had gone to Hampshire for a short change of air.

John did not resign himself to this behaviour. He knew Abbey to be stupid, and something of a bully, "who will not see the necessity of a thing till he is hit in the mouth"; and for "the only Man in England who dared to say a thing to me I did not approve of without its being resented or at least noticed." But Abbey still controlled his money affairs, there was Fanny to be thought of, and if he told Abbey exactly what he thought of him it would not make her life any easier. He had counselled her before to a little duplicity in dealing with her guardians,[1] for her sake he now used it himself. "I have had a little business with Mr. Abbey"—he wrote to George and Georgiana on February 14th, "From time to time he has behaved to me with a little Brusquerie—So I wrote him about it and have made an alteration in my favor—I expect from this to see more of Fanny—who has been quite shut out from me." His guile succeeded where violence would have failed. Fanny was not allowed to visit him often, and certainly not allowed to have other visitors of her own, but if her letters from John were noted they were no longer forbidden, he was allowed to pay her occasional visits, and Marsh Street was no longer closed against him. In June, 1819, Mrs. Abbey even asked him to lunch.

[1] Letter of Oct. 26, 1818: "It is as well as things are to be prudent in making any communication to anyone, that may throw an impediment in the way of any of the little pleasures you may have."

But, with this much gained, John could not alter Fanny's life as a whole. He knew it for what it was, and the thought of her enclosed in the Marsh Street household with no friends of her own age, and " with nothing to do, surrounded with unpleasant human identities who press upon one " and of his own powerlessness to take her out of it was such a " continual vexation " to him that, as he once admitted to her, it often prevented him from reading and composing. She was, as she wrote years afterwards, " a complete prisoner, having no other companions than my books, birds and flowers," and to John the picture was almost intolerable. What was he to do ? He did the only thing possible, wrote to her oftener than before. In the Spring of 1819 he was writing the great Odes and ' Hyperion,' he was engaged to Fanny Brawne, he was worried about money, and he was aware that his ill-health was increasing. More than at any previous time he might have excused himself by his private preoccupations and his work, and have delayed or slipped letters to a younger sister, yet Fanny had thirteen letters between February and July. Neither of them were perfect correspondents. She did not always date her letters, he never once fulfilled his expressed intentions of paying the postage on his own,[1] but if ever he realised he was late in answering her last letter

[1] Fanny Brawne's letters were the only ones on which he paid the postage.

he always confessed it. "I shall henceforth shake off my indolent fits, and among other reformations be more diligent in writing to you and mind you always answer me."[1] "I am so hard at work that perhaps I should not have written to you for a day or two if Georges Letters had not diverted my attention to the interests and pleasures of those I love, and ever believe that when I do not behave punctually it is from a very necessary occupation, and that my silence is no proof of my not thinking of you, or that I want more than a gentle philip to bring your image with every claim before me."[2] In fact he needed no incentive. She, like George, was always in the background of his thoughts, not shadowy but living people with wants and needs. "I do not know how great a sinner I am," a letter begins to her, and closes, "You did not say a word about your Chilblains. Write me directly, and let me know about them. Your Letter shall be answered like an echo."

Nothing shows more clearly Keats' robustness of mind and the strength of his affection for Fanny than the efforts he made to counteract her surroundings. It was not easy. The days at Walthamstow were long and empty, she herself was shy, reserved, and quickly depressed, and she was, as he once wrote of Reynolds, "in the worst

[1] June 16, 1819.

[2] Written on July 6, within a few days of his first letter to Fanny Brawne.

place in the world for amendment, among the strife of women's tongues." He never tried to make out her surroundings to be other than they were, "it is impossible," as he once wrote, "to prove that black is white, it is impossible to make out that sorrow is joy or joy is sorrow," [1] but he never commiserated with her, and only rarely dropped his natural reserve and let her see what he felt about it all. "I feel myself the only Protector you have. In all your little troubles think of me with the thought that there is at least one person in England who, if he could, would help you out of them—I live in hopes of being able to make you happy." In his letters words like these are unusual in their plainness, and he concludes, "I should not perhaps write in this manner if it were not for the fear of not being able to see you often or long together." He turned always with her away from the domain of feeling to the plane of practical common sense: he chose, in fact, as on another occasion, energy rather than despair.[2]

It was the best treatment. If she had been dosed with frequent sympathy she would have liked it at the time but it would not have made living easier. He did not offer it to her, but instead gave her practical help with each of her guardians and tried to fill her mind with interests.

[1] Letter to Mrs. Wylie, Aug. 6, 1818, in reference to her sorrow at her daughter Georgiana having left for America.

[2] Letter to Miss Jeffrey, May 31, 1819: "I must choose between despair and Energy—I choose the latter."

" You must pay no attention to Mrs. Abbey's unfeeling and ignorant gabble. You can't stop an old woman's crying more than you can a Child's. The old woman is the greatest nuisance because she is too old for the rod. Many people live opposite a Blacksmith's till they cannot hear the noise of the hammer," and for her mortification at Abbey's meanness there was practical consolation:[1] " I am vexed that Mr. Abbey will not allow you pocket money sufficient," and he enclosed her a Note. " Tell me also," he wrote, " if you want any particular Book or Pencils or drawing-paper." He had learnt by this time that she must not have too much time for thinking: he must find her things to do.

The early months of 1819 were probably some of the longest she spent at Walthamstow, for they were the first since her grandmother's death in which she had not been either at school or looking forward to returning. If she had been given an invitation she would have looked back to Edmonton or to Miss Tuckey's. John never encouraged her to become reminiscent, he was always occupied with the present, and, if he mentioned her schooldays at all, it was only to remind her of how, now that they had so unfortunately come to an end, she must continue

[1] Abbey appears to have treated her brothers in the same way. To George and Tom in Teignmouth in January 1818, John wrote: " I see by Wells' letter Mr. Abbey does not over stock you with Money."

her education for herself. It was not an exacting prescription—music, dancing and deportment, and to keep free of " awkward habit or behaviour," " Whether you sit or walk, endeavour to let it be in a seemely and if possible a graceful manner." She was to look after her garden, and he would send her some heaths in bud so that she might watch them come out. She rose to these enticements. Soon she was asking him for roots and seeds which she might raise herself and was receiving them from the Tottenham nursery. On the most important point of all John knew her tastes exactly by this time with no requests from her, and did not now wonder if she would be interested in Greek mythology or the *Pilgrim's Progress*. " I recommend you to keep up all that you know," " keep on reading," he wrote, then : " I shall send this little parcel by the Walthamstow Coach. I think you will like Goldsmith." [1] Apparently in the placid couplets of ' The Deserted Village ' he had exactly gauged her taste : she asked him for more. A fortnight later he wrote that he would send her another book the first time he was " in Town early enough to book it with one of the morning Walthamstow Coaches."

His treatment had its reward. She told him

[1] Goldsmith's *Poems and Essays*, London. Published June 1, 1817, by I. F. de Valenqui. The book was inscribed " Fanny M. Keats from her affectionate Brother John." cf. p. 227.

everything, certain that whatever she needed he would somehow contrive to supply. By the middle of March 1819, she was faced with her biggest problem so far and handed it on to him. Whether plans for her Confirmation had been made by Miss Tuckey, whether Mrs. Abbey decided it, finding in its weekly preparation classes a useful way of employing some of Fanny's empty afternoons is not known. During the Lent of 1819 she found herself walking up the hill, and turning past the red brick almshouses through the gate to the Parish Church of St. Mary to the Confirmation classes held in the vestry there every week by Mr. William Sparrow the Curate,[1] who, not content with verbal instruction and answers, gave his candidates homework. About the 20th of March Fanny took back with her to Marsh Street a list of questions, eleven in number. They were to be answered before the next class, she did not know the answers, and she would not dream of admitting her ignorance to the Abbeys. It looks as if she sat down at once and summoned John to come to her in a hurry, and, as she had expected, he did not fail her. Business in town kept him from visiting her on the 24th, he wrote,

[1] There was a Pluralist Vicar, Edward Conyers by name, who held also the living of Epping and lived at Copt Hall, and most of the instruction at the Parish Church of Walthamstow was undertaken at this time by the Curate, the Rev. William Sparrow, who lived at the Vicarage for thirty-nine years and kept a school there.

but he would appear next day. He did, and to her relief took away with him the list of questions, promising that she should have the answers. Six days later [1] he despatched to her from the bookseller's in town a little book,[2] and sent her as well, a summary of the answers [3] she needed, signing the letter " Your affectionate Parson John." She must have thought there was nothing too difficult for him. Unfortunately she did not reply as quickly as she might have done, for on April 13th, he wrote, " I have been expecting a Letter

[1] Letter of March 31, 1819.

[2] Although in the shop Keats may have dipped into the book, and refreshed his memory thereby, we can derive no certainty from his letter as to the actual book he had sent. Though the nature of the " questions " may be gathered in some degree by the " heads of the answers " he sent to Fanny, those questions were not extracted by him from this or from any other manual, but were those which had been set her by her instructor. A search among Confirmation manuals published between the years 1816–20 leads me to believe that the " little book " was probably the following: " *The Catechism set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.*" Briefly explained by short notes grounded upon Holy Scripture. To which is added an essay of questions and answers framed out of the same notes for the exercise of Youth. A New Edition 1817, Oxford. Printed at the Clarendon Press by Bensley, Codie and Collingwood, printers to the University. Price 6*d.*, 70 pages. I would however, lay emphasis on the word probably, for on the evidence we now possess we cannot be certain.

[3] Only one question is not answered, No. 5. " You must here repeat your belief—and say the question is too hard for you." We do not know what the question was.

from you about what the Parson said to your answers," but she did him credit when she next met Mr. Sparrow. "I am glad you got on so well with Monsr. le Curé," John wrote on April 17th. We do not know the date or place of her Confirmation,[1] or whether John attended it. It seems unlikely that he did.

These were the needs, the demands of a child, but in 1819 Fanny was growing up. She was sixteen and John was more aware of it than she was and more ambitious. "I think she will be quick," he had written to George two years before. He wanted to see her develop, but there was not much chance of her doing so unless she could see the world, and, "I am affraid it will be some time before I can take her to many places I wish," he told Bailey. There was nothing for it but to take the world to her, and he gave her as much of it as he judged she could deal with. During the summer of 1819, enclosed during the long hours in the 'Abbey' precincts, with peaches, apricots, and nectarines drooping on the hot red brick walls, the only excitement Mrs. Abbey's descents to count the bunches on the white currant tree which she kept for company,

[1] There is no record of this Confirmation at Walthamstow Parish Church, and I have been unable to trace any register of candidates for the period in Episcopal records. "Registration of Confirmation is not legally necessary though clearly desirable." cf. J. H. Blunt, *Church Law*, and J. C. Cox, *The Parish Registers of England*.

the only prospect a possible excursion to the Walthamstow fair in the evening if the domestic horizon had been clear during the day, Fanny turned with relief to John's descriptions of his journey and visits out of London. "You have never seen the mountains" he told her regretfully, she knew nothing of the bare perfections of Westmorland, and so could not measure Steep Hill [1] by Mount Rydal, but, as John pictured them for her, she could imagine the rounded outlines of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. She saw Bonchurch with its "Cottages all romantic—covered with creepers and honeysickles with roses and eglantine peeping in at the windows," and the people who lived in them according to John's fancy, "romantic old maids fond of novels" or "soldiers' widows with a pretty jointure." She saw the sea view from the house, set so high that the ships seemed like "Weather-cocks" sailing on a level with the Cottage chimneys, and when he had moved to Winchester she was given the view from the east of streets and buildings buried in trees. Reading of these adventures she learnt that there was more in the world than the formal lawn and the drowsing lily-pond at Marsh Street. Shanklin, she wrote many years after, was one of the places she most wished to visit, she remembered it so well from what John had told her.

She heard of many other things as well, but it

[1] Isle of Wight.

is significant of his attitude towards her that he told her nothing, or almost nothing, about his poetry. There are a couple of references to Kean, who was being annoying enough to leave for America just as he and Brown wanted him for the leading part in their new play, 'Otho the Great,' and without him, she was told, Covent Garden was "execrable," but during these months which saw the peak of Keats' poetic achievement, there is hardly a word about his work in his letters to her. There is no hint of disappointment about this. He had found Dorothy Wordsworth "enchanting" to meet, but he did not crave for Fanny to be his intellectual equal, and it is difficult to imagine him at any time holding arguments about poetry and poetic feeling with his only sister as William did with Dorothy. In 1819 Keats accepted Fanny as she was and acted accordingly. The 'Ode to Psyche' was copied out to go across the Atlantic to George in a letter of which the closing date was May 3rd, but not a word of it reached her by letter, and though he wrote in June that when he went away with Rice he would copy such of his "lines as would be most pleasing to" her "in the confidence" that she would show "them to no one," they never arrived.[1] Between July and September when 'Lamia,' the second 'Hyperion,' and the 'Ode to Autumn' were being written no reference to

[1] Letter of June 16, 1819. Fanny wrote late in life that she did not possess any MSS. of Keats' poems.

them went to her, and the only verses she had in these months were the nonsense lines written on April 17th, 'Two or Three Posies.' Probably he had learnt in his visits what pleased her most, and realised that he would get no poetic appreciation from her, realised that his best gift would be to train her social sense and to help her to laugh, to laugh even at her companions, though without malice. This would be of more use to her than sending her his Odes. It was not yet time to preach detachment in general terms to Fanny. To Miss Jeffrey he could write about the same time: "to be thrown among people who care not for you, and with whom you have no sympathies forces the Mind upon its own resources, and leaves it free to make its speculations of the differences of human character and to class them with the calmness of a Botanist." Fanny could not do that yet, but she might find amusement now from the oddities of her companions, and learn to joke with John about them on equal terms.[1] He did not send her the 'Ode to Psyche,' he sent her nonsense rhymes to make her laugh.

She had all her fun from John, all her news

[1] Letter of April 17, 1819: "Two or three spiteful folkes to spar with; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three numskuls to argue with—instead of using dumbbells on a rainy day. . . .

Two or three sandies,
And two or three tabbies,
Two or three dandies—
And two Mrs. —— mum!"

of the outside world, she had too all the family news. While Tom was alive John had sent her reports about him, now in the year after his death he kept her in touch with the American household,[1] delaying his letters in order to enclose hers to George when hers was late, writing to her so soon as he had any news worth hearing from him. She might, had she been advanced enough, have learnt much about human relationships from John during this year, his intimate concern in the unchronicled happenings of the lives of his friends, his strong wishes for their happiness, "your content in each other," as he wrote to George and Georgiana, his desire that Bailey should marry, his anxiety about the differences of opinion between Hunt and Haydon, Haydon and Reynolds, always wishing to bind his friends together, to make up quarrels rather than to foster them, yet never forcing an impatient interference, always, in the case of their own family, trying to cement their little group together [2] in defiance of separation. If she read his letters carefully she must have become aware of the values of friendly living, and must have become aware too that her own life, in spite of its trials, was not peculiar. "We all live one day like the other as well as you do," John wrote, and

[1] Just as on holiday he had preserved Georgiana's letters in the bottom of his knapsack to show to Tom.

[2] Georgiana was always "our sister" in Keats' letters to Fanny.

described, as he saw it from the parlour window, the events of his own day, which had in them, as she found, much that resembled her own, and one thing in particular, the double knock from the postman which meant the letter for which she or John waited. But he never burdened her with what she could not carry, George's anxieties, or their family money affairs, of which, as he said, he had all the papers. He might write to Haydon of the money he could not find because of Abbey's behaviour, but to Fanny there is only a passing reference about the Chancery suit and the words "It is better you should not be bothered with the particulars" . . . "It will all come right in a year or two." The fact that he never told her a word about Fanny Brawne before he left for Italy shows that he did not think she would know how to deal with such news if she was told, and that he did not wish to burden the relationship between them by adding to it something new and difficult.[1] But, protecting her thus as a child, he wished her to mature; and in his thoughts about her as in his words to her, he never remained in the present. For himself he did not look forward into the future. "I scarcely remember counting upon any happiness, I look not for it if it be not in the present hour—nothing startles me beyond the moment," but for Fanny

[1] He wrote to George and Georgiana about Fanny Brawne, and spoke to other of his friends of the Brawne family.

he always looked over the head of present events. "You will meet with your share of Pleasure in the world—do not doubt it"—"your situation cannot last for ever," he wrote. He knew her possibilities by this time, and within them had a clear picture of what he wanted her to be, not the vapourish fashionable young lady, not the bluestocking, but a satisfactory blend of intelligence and heart. He was modern, and balanced in his wishes of what she might become.

So much for what he hoped she would be in herself. There was something besides, what he wanted her to be to him. Two thoughts illuminate this wish, and the first was her likeness to Tom. "My sister . . . walks about my imagination like a ghost—she is so like Tom," he wrote to Brown in his last letter from Rome.[1] She had become a ghost to him then, separated from him by illness, by distance, by his knowledge that he was never to see her again. She was almost as far removed from him as Tom, moving in a world which had become to him ghostly because he dared not picture its reality when he felt his own life to be already posthumous.[2] But in England she had not been

[1] Letter of Nov. 30, 1820.

[2] "I have an habitual feeling of my real life having passed, and that I am leading a posthumous existence." Letter to Brown, Nov. 30, 1820.

"How long is this posthumous life of mine to last?" According to Severn's reminiscences from Rome, Keats asked this question of Dr. Clark. *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp, p. 85. London, 1892.

a ghost but a girl with a strong resemblance to Tom, which increased as she grew older. George had said that Tom understood John better than anyone else, it was a fundamental wordless understanding. Fanny and Tom were linked in his mind, and after Tom's death his affection for her was deepened because of the likeness.

That was the first thought but there was a second. In the women he knew Keats asked for the maturity of understanding and values that was in his own mind. He hoped, as he said in his first letter to his sister, to be able one day to confide in her as his " dearest friend " [1]—he wanted her therefore as a companion—a gay reassuring comrade on whom he could rely. He hoped for this in the future rather than expected it at the moment, and he had no reproach for her because he did not receive it, but he had his ideal for what she might become to him and to her friends in general—and it was probably very near to his description of Miss Jane Cox—a woman with whom a man had no " sensations," conscious of herself, devoid of vanity, in fact an equal, merry

[1] cf. *Endymion*, Bk. I, ll. 407–12.

" Who whispers him so pantingly and close ?
Peona, his sweet sister : of all those,
His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,
And breath'd a sister's sorrow to persuade
A yielding up, a cradling on her care.
Her eloquence did breathe away the curse ; "

and serene, poised and wise.[1] He never saw this ideal realised in Fanny. She was too young, and Keats, admitting her inexperience, never expected it. His acceptance of this is illuminated by his use of the word 'identity.'

Writing to Woodhouse on October 27th, 1818, he speaks of the chameleon nature of the poet, and the constant possession of the poet's mind by other creatures. The poet, he says, has no identity, "he is continually informing[2] and filling some other body." The nature of the poet is such that unless he is occupied with creations of his own brain he is so sensitive to existences and personalities around him that he himself ceases to exist, because he becomes merged in them. So, in a room of people, as he explains, the identity of everyone begins so to press upon him that he is "in a very little time annihilated," and it would be the same, he adds, "in a Nursery of children." This is the first point in his argument, the impact of other personalities upon that of the poet; by his sensitiveness to impressions he becomes on such occasions divested of his own personality, he is at their

[1] "She is too fine and too conscious of her Self to repulse any Man who may address her—from habit she thinks that nothing *particular*" . . . "I like her and her like because one has no *sensations*—what we both are is taken for granted." Letter of October 1818, to George and Georgiana.

[2] Reading 'informing' for 'in for ——.'

mercy, unless living in the world of imaginative creation.[1]

The extent of this divesting is not always the same. It is not always a case of complete annihilation, nor is the effect of another personality upon his own always similar; circumstances may alter it. On September 21st, 1818, he wrote to Dilke about Tom, "His identity presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out—I am obliged to write, and plunge myself into abstract images to ease myself of his countenance his voice and feebleness," and the word "press" here carries with it a sense of oppression; because of Tom's illness and feebleness, his personality becomes unbearable. But a week or two later he uses the word in another sense. Writing to George and Georgiana he speaks of the identity of the latter as pressing upon him and here it is obviously not to his 'oppression' but to his content and pleasure, for he wishes someone else [2] to possess an identity as advanced as Georgiana's, and would welcome the impression of such an identity if it should appear.

It is thus clear that by the autumn of 1818 his ideas on the whole question were fully formed, but it was not until seven months later, in the Journal letter of April 1819, to George and

[1] Sept. 22, 1818. Letter to J. H. Reynolds. "This morning Poetry has conquered—I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life."

[2] Fanny, his sister.

Georgiana, that he set out his whole conception of Identity and what it stood for to him. The world, he wrote to them, is not a "vale of tears" as "the misguided and superstitious" call it, but a "vale of soul-making," a place where mind and heart act upon one another for the purpose of forming a soul, . . . which will acquire an Identity. There is thus a process of growth between these three grand materials, "the Intelligence, the human heart . . . and the World," a process in which the heart, as the foundation, draws upon "the wide arable land of events," upon the "Circumstances (which) are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting," [1] and from these very circumstances feels and suffers in a thousand ways. A heart so moulded makes the mind's experience, for it is taught by life itself, by the "medium of a world like this," and the mind sucks its identity from the heart. This cannot and does not come about early or easily, only by slow moulding over "a series of years" is the soul created. "Do you not see," he says, "how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?"

Where in all this is Fanny? Keats does not mention her in this argument of 1819, but he had done so seven months before when comparing her

[1] "Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting—While we are laughing the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events"—Letter to George and Georgiana, March 1819.

with Georgiana, and the later explanation of his conception makes his earlier thought about her plain enough. " You will mention Fanny to me," he had written, " her identity does not press upon me as yours does. I hope from the bottom of my heart that I may one day feel as much for her as I do for you—through you I know not only a Sister but a glorious human being." It is obvious here that identity is the developed character. Through the growth of her identity, Fanny would become what he wanted her to be to him. In 1819 in the Journal letter he had written that in children " the Spark or intelligence " has not yet developed into an identity because it has " had no time to learn of and be altered by the heart," and this is for him the explanation of Fanny's lack of identity in these years. She was still in many respects a child, her heart had not been moulded by circumstance, she had not seized life, dealt with it, or controlled it, she had not experienced suffering like Tom, or joy like Georgiana, she had not as yet faced the world. In Georgiana he saw a woman whose identity, because of her experiences, was fully matured, and a " glorious human being " was for Keats someone who had faced life, drawn upon it, and proved that she could manage it, shewn too through all of it an elasticity of temperament and a merry heart. He hoped to find all this and even more in his own sister. What she was to be in herself was the first stage in his reflections about her. What he hoped she

would become to him was the second. This would develop with the growth of her identity, to that growth he looked forward, and when he saw it he would welcome the impression of her identity upon him, as he had welcomed Georgiana's. Maturity and identity—the two ideas belong to each other. He hoped to find them in his sister, he welcomed them when he found them in Georgiana, he expected them in Fanny Brawne, and when in her he failed to find them and his own standard of perception, he suffered.

It is certain that throughout this year Fanny did not realise that she was the object of so much concern. She kept her garden and did some reading, looked after the chickens and her little cat, played the piano, and made some pretty presents of embroidery for Mrs. Dilke. Save for John's letters and his visits, one day passed for her, as he said, very like another, and she would have been surprised if she had known all he said about her to his friends,[1] and of the thought he spent upon her. She understood it all much later. Probably had he read one of her letters written sixty years after he also would have been surprised: "You can now more than ever understand my devotion to him who was all the world to me."

[1] To Benjamin Bailey, July 18–22, 1818: "My sister's well-fare . . . will make me observe your advice!"

To George and Georgiana Keats, Oct. 14–31, 1818: "I have Fanny and I have you—three people whose Happiness to me is sacred."

Fanny's realisation of the meaning of John's increasing ill health was gradual. The year 1819 closed for her with no special fears, for though he was doubtful of being well enough to visit her before Christmas, fearful, as he said : " lest the weather should affect my throat which on exertion or cold continually threatens me," he was, as he told her, busy over many things, looking after George's affairs, preparing his next volume for the press, and with Brown, ' heightening the interest ' of ' Otho the Great ' which had been accepted at Drury Lane. " My hopes of success in the literary world," he wrote to her on December 20th, " are now better than ever." He had been, as she learnt, invited to dine with the Dilkes on Christmas Day, and after George's unexpected arrival from America early in January there were several small festivities for him and John—a dinner at the Millars', another at Taylors' in Fleet Street, a " pianoforte hop " at Mrs. Dilke's. Meantime by December 22nd the Abbey household had moved to Pancras Lane and there they remained till late in February. Fanny had visits from George, and, as he was prevented from bidding her good-bye, a farewell note from Liverpool before he sailed on January 30th. George was in a complacent frame of mind. He had found Abbey confiding and accommodating, even to the extent of adding £60 as a speculation of his own towards George's future prospects, and he was returning to America with £700 for a

fresh start. No premonition of disaster or anxiety about John's health disturbed his mind, and, "Cheer up and look lively as nature made you" was the conclusion of his note to Fanny, "I shall hear from John from time to time about you as you will of me." Within five days these imaginary prospects of 'liveliness' had proved illusory. John was taken ill on Thursday, February 3rd, with hæmorrhage, and from the first viewed the future undeluded by hope. With a "calmness of countenance" he told Brown what he knew to be the truth. "I cannot be deceived—I must die." But Fanny heard nothing of this. John wrote to her three days after the attack, but gave her no idea of its severity, purposely delayed to write to her again until he was "on the mending hand," and then filled his letter with reassurances. As she knew, by his doctor's advice he had had a great-coat made for him in December, and from leaving this off in a thaw he had caught a cold which had gone to his lungs. Every remedy that had been applied had had the desired effect, "I have now nothing to do but to stay within doors for some time. If I should be confined long I shall write to Mr. Abbey to ask permission for you to visit me." He explained that his case was not peculiar, George had been running a great risk of a similar attack, and Mr. Davenport,[1] a gentleman of Hampstead, had "so bad a cold . . . he could not stir out" to supper. "Everybody," he

[1] See page 117.

told her, "is ill, . . . you see 'tis the weather and I am among a thousand." [1]

She had to make what she could of these assurances. Abbey was always more difficult when there was illness about, and she could not go to Hampstead to find out for herself. Other people could go, and she managed to get some news from Mrs. Dilke, the Wylies, and Mrs. Reynolds, but for the most part, as John knew, she had to rely on what he told her. His illness began on February 3rd. She had six letters between the 6th and the 24th and the little she knew of how he was she learnt from these. He wrote about his surroundings and not much about himself; about what he could see from his "Sopha bed" in the parlour in Wentworth Place, the grass plot and the half-built houses opposite, the vegetable garden dark brown and empty at the end of winter, or the passers-by, the Pot-boy, and the two maiden ladies from Well Walk whose lap-dogs, she heard, had encounters with the dog Carlo belonging to Brown's neighbour Mrs. Brawne. Apparently the Abbeys did not like her own dog about the Marsh Street house. At John's suggestion on April 1st, she sent her spaniel over to Hampstead. "I am not yet able to bear the fatigue of coming to Walthamstow," John wrote on April 12th, but, "the Dog is being attended to like a Prince." He was: Mrs. Dilke's brother had taken him in charge.

Fanny by this time was nearly seventeen, and

[1] Letter of Feb. 6, 1820.

as the weeks went by she must have grasped that this was not like one of John's other illnesses, chills and sore throats which had been shaken off after a short change of air. He might allude to it as nervousness rather than real illness, might tell her of his walks in the garden, of a possible voyage to Scotland, and in May that he was moving to Kentish Town during Brown's absence, " a Mile nearer to you than Hampstead," but if John was recovering, she would ask herself, why had Brown been writing letters for him to George and to Mr. Abbey, why even to her did he find writing the smallest note fatiguing, and above all why had John's notepaper and handwriting altered ? " We judge of people's hearts by their Countenances," he had written to her in the previous December, " may we not judge of Letters in the same way ? . . . Good or bad spirits have an effect on the handwriting." She must surely have remembered this, as, instead of the large sheets of rough cream or thin blue paper covered with small regular writing, she unfastened the small folded pages, blue-grey or white, and saw the large loosely formed characters. " Excuse these shabby scraps of paper I send you," he wrote on April 12th. She put them away, however, with the rest of her letters from him.

It would be pleasant to believe that in these conditions of gathering anxiety, Fanny kept her own troubles from John and spared him unnecessary agitation, but she did not : from one source or another he heard about them all. At the New

Year, Abbey, always sure of George's sympathy, had aired to him his grievances about Fanny's behaviour hoping that they would be handed on to John. To an enraged guardian George's reactions had been most gratifying. " Mr. Abbey behaved very kindly to me before I left," he wrote to Fanny from Liverpool just before embarking, " for which I am sure you will feel grateful. He is attentive in his commerce with his fellows in all essentials. He observes with pleasure the pleasure communicated to others ; he says you sometimes look thin and pale but he thinks you have been better since you ran about a little. . . . A man of coarse feelings would never notice these things. He expressed surprise that neither you nor Miss A. spoke at meals, so you see that it is not his wish that you should be moped or silent." George was evidently willing to believe that Fanny indulged in the sulks, but John, rousing himself in the first few days of his illness, saw it differently : " George mentioned, in his Letters to me something of Mr. Abbey's regret concerning the silence kept up in his house. It is entirely the fault of his Manner. You must be careful always to wear warm cloathing not only in a frost but in a Thaw." Thus at the onset of his illness he was called upon to deal with her problems.

They did not become less acute as months went on. Shut away from the one relation left to her, with far too little to do, insufficient pocket money, Mrs. Abbey's friends her only visitors, she gave

way to depression and ill health, and, unaware, in spite of her unceasing anxiety about John, of the real gravity of his condition, still poured out all her troubles, describing Mrs. Abbey's " reproaches " and begging him to visit her. It was a gossiping household, and as summer approached she probably heard dark hints about John's health, increasing her nervousness. This she inflicted upon the one person on whom she could rely, unconsciously seeking relief from the shadow, as yet only dimly understood, of his approaching departure. Her frettings and complaints added to his anxieties, but they were natural. She was not specially self-denying, she was an ordinary child, rather young for her years, lonely and thoroughly uneasy.

John no doubt understood her state of mind but he did not write of it to her. He was trying to prepare her gradually for a different future from any which he would have planned for her—a future in which she would have to rely on herself and not on him. Slowly she was allowed to realise what was coming. On April 12th he wrote, " You shall hear from me immediately on my moving anywhere," and on May 4th there was a sentence which told her something new which must have surprised her : " You will forgive me I hope when I confess that I endeavour to think of you as little as possible and to let George dwell upon my mind but slightly. The reason being that I am afraid to ruminate on anything which has the shade of difficulty or melancholy in it, as that sort of cogitation is so

pernicious to health, and it is only by health that I can be enabled to alleviate your situation in future." It was the first definite word of the separation which he now knew to be inevitable. Probably she saw him during the next eight weeks and begged to see him again, for his next letter is dated June 23rd and reads : " On receiving your Letter of course I set myself to come to town, but was not able, for just as I was setting out yesterday morning a slight spitting of blood came on which returned rather more copiously at night. I have slept well and they tell me there is nothing material to fear." The letter concluded with the antidote he always produced for her to any unpleasant news : " I will send my Book [1] soon with a Letter I have had from George who is with his family quite well," and in the next letter on July 6th, a copy was to be " bound for " her. She had need of the antidote for in the same letter he told her he was to leave England. " My Physician tells me that I must contrive to pass the Winter in Italy."

How she received this news and to whom she spoke of it, if to anyone, we do not know. Whatever the Abbeys might wish to say to her about it she would not confide in them, and the one person to whom she might have spoken, Mrs. Dilke,[2] was not allowed at Marsh Street. She was

[1] 'Lamia.' cf. Chapter II, p. 56, n. 1.

[2] " I will get her (Mrs. Dilke) to come and see you if I can make up my mind on the propriety of introducing a stranger into Abbey's House." Letter of May 4, 1820.

faced with a problem besides which all her daily annoyances were trifling, for once John had left England she would be absolutely alone, and her imagination though unoriginal was not asleep. Some of the most miserable hours of her life were passed in the next two months at Walthamstow. Her few letters from him carried her through them.

Keats' ideas about himself had shrunk since February. In June 1818 he had written to Bailey, "Now I am never alone without rejoicing that there is such a thing as death—without placing my ultimate in the glory of dying for a great human purpose." He had not then met Fanny Brawne. Nine months after they had become engaged—in October 1819—he had found something to add to this, and wrote to her, "I should like to cast the die for love or death—I have no Patience with anything else." [1] He had not then become aware of fatal illness. Six months later still, on April 12th, he wrote to his sister of patience in another, the positive sense: "Wait patiently and take care of your health being especially careful to keep yourself from low spirits which are great enemies to health. You are young and have only need of a little patience."

Health, hope, patience, these words are the theme of his last letters to Fanny, strange words

[1] cf. Letter to Fanny Brawne, July 25, 1819: "I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death."

for a child of seventeen to receive, strange words for a young man of twenty-five to send her. They were not habitual words to him, not the words of his normal life. Only the year before he had written of patience to Fanny Brawne, " that dull sort of patience that cannot be called life," and his real life as he knew it and described it once even during this last summer was something very different, " the natural activity and impatience of my mind." But since February all his prospects had changed, the world had " taken on a Quakerish look " to him, and health, as he wrote to his sister, was now seen by him to be " the corner stone of all pleasure." Joy and delight, poetic activity and young love could not be had without it. In a grey world patience had been forced upon him. To Fanny Brawne : " I will be as patient in illness and as believing in Love as I am able," to Fanny Keats : " We have no recourse but patience, which I am now practicing better than ever I thought it possible for me." The last five letters are on this low note, reserved and cautious, but not less affectionate, not less interested in her concerns, and, though resigned, deliberately and consistently practical. There is not a single note of sentimental indulgence for herself or for him. He had kept her from knowing about his illness as long as he could, but once she was aware of it and of his decision to go away, she must face both. His recovery as he told her, was bound to be " a tedious affair." His constitution had suffered during the

last two or three years, there were no hopes of a speedy improvement: " in case " his " illness continued an unreasonable time," his " friends would do all in their power to console and amuse " her. For, while he saw his own future shrinking, he saw hers expanding, and bracing her to meet the fact of his illness he encouraged her to look beyond it. " Do not diet your mind with grief. If I return well from Italy I will turn over a new leaf for you." " You may depend upon it that in case my strength returns I will do all in my power to extricate you from the Abbies," " There are enough real distressed and evils in wait for everyone to try the most vigorous health. Not that I would say yours are not real, but they are such as to tempt you to employ your imagination on them rather than endeavour to dismiss them entirely." He did not, however, tell her of his conviction that his own illness was hopeless. " As a soldier marches up to a battery," he wrote to Shelley of the voyage to Italy, " not that I have any great hopes of that," he wrote of it to Brown, but to Fanny, " 'Tis not yet Consumption I believe, but it would be were I to remain in this climate all the Winter," and later, " I have very good hopes of 'turning a Neuk' and cheating the Consumption."

On August 24th Fanny had another letter from John. She had been asking to go to see him, and he replied, " It will give me great Pleasure to see you here if you can contrive it; though I confess I should have written instead of calling upon you

before I set out on my journey, from the wish of avoiding unpleasant partings." She never went. Abbey would not give his permission, and she could not " contrive " a visit without it. She worked a purse for John and sent it during the next fortnight, hoping for another letter before he sailed. It came on Tuesday, September 12th, but it was not in his handwriting. " It is not illness that prevents me from writing," was the characteristic beginning, " but as I am recommended to avoid every sort of fatigue I have accepted the assistance of a friend, who I have desired to write to you when I am gone and to communicate any intelligence she may hear of me " . . . " I have received your parcel," [1] he continued, " and intend to take it with me. You shall hear from me as often as possible, if I feel too tired to write myself I shall have some friend to do it for me." So she was not to see John again, she thought, as she looked at the unfamiliar handwriting.[2] She did not know that she would never

[1] This parcel evidently contained the purse which John directed Severn was to be buried with him, together with an unopened letter from Fanny which reached him in Rome. cf. Letter of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats, March 27, 1821 : " The purse you sent him and your last letter (which he never read for he would never open either your letters or mine after he left England) with some hair, I believe of mine, he desired to be placed in his coffin." Letter of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats, 1937, Oxford University Press, p. 20.

[2] A photostat of this letter is in Keats House. For the history of the original see Chapters VIII, p. 245, and IX, p. 261.

hear from him again. With all her own future obscure, certain only of John's departure, she smothered her questionings and her repinings and settled down to wait for news.

It came sooner than she had expected. John had left Wentworth Place on Wednesday, September 13th, and the *Maria Crowther* sailed for Gravesend on Sunday the 17th. On the following Wednesday she received two letters at Walthamstow, both according to John's directions. One was from Mr. Taylor his publisher, of whom John had often spoken to her. The sheet was covered with a small flowing writing with precise loops and spacings, and she read as follows :

" Mr. Taylor presents his compliments to Miss Keats and by Desire of her Brother communicates the following particulars. On Sunday morning Mr. Keats went on board the *Maria Crowther* for Naples, and about noon reached Gravesend. He did not go ashore, but entered at once on the kind of life which he will have to lead for about a month to come, dining in the Cabin with the Captain, and another Passenger (a lady) besides Severn the friend who is gone with him. The Vessel waited at Gravesend for another lady who was coming on board there. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Haslam and Mr. Woodhouse accompanied Mr. Keats to Gravesend, and left him at 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon—He was then comfortably settled in his new habitation with every prospect of having a pleasant voyage. His health was already much improved by the Air of the River and by the

Exercise and amusement which the sailing afforded. He was provided with everything that could contribute to make the time pass agreeably, and with all that his Health required, and his friends have the satisfaction to think that from the time he leaves England he will probably have to date the commencement of many pleasures, and Benefits not the least of which, they trust, will be his Restoration to perfect health. The Vessel would proceed on her way last night as the wind was favourable." [1]

The vessel was to toss for a fortnight in the English Channel, and John and Severn were to land twice, but Fanny did not know that until the 7th of October. The second letter was one very different from Mr. Taylor's with its neat consolatory phrases, and after reading his she turned to it. It was from the friend whom John had told her would send her news, but it gave her one of the surprises of her life. It was from Fanny Brawne.

[1] The original of this letter is at Keats House. See pp. 233 and 262.

## CHAPTER IV

## WALTHAMSTOW: AND FANNY BRAWNE

"MR. ABBEY would not allow me to form any acquaintances beyond his own circle of friends," wrote Fanny Keats in 1883; "much against his inclination I became acquainted with the Dilkes and the Brawnes." Before he left England Keats had introduced her to Haslam, Brown, and Severn, and she had met Mrs. Dilke at Hampstead more than once,[1] but of the Brawnes she had heard nothing except that on August 14th, 1820, he was "staying a short time with Mrs. Brawne who lives in the House which was Mrs. Dilke's," and there had never been any mention to her of her new correspondent. What she learnt on September 20th was that Fanny Brawne was the friend to whom her brother had dictated his last letter and whom he had charged to send on news of himself. She also learnt that he had been staying with the Brawnes for six weeks before he left and that Fanny Brawne had known him for two years, and knew also many of his

[1] Letter of December 1818. "Mrs. Dilke went with me to see Fanny last week, and Haslam went with me last Sunday."

friends and her brother George, that she had heard so much about her from John that she felt she knew her quite well,[1] and that for more than a year she had been wanting to send her messages and ask her to stay. So Fanny Brawne introduced herself, adding that she was writing in compliance with John's wishes, and sending news of his journey as far as Gravesend where his two friends Taylor and Haslam had left him in better health and spirits than they could have expected. Fanny soon replied for there was a second letter to her from Hampstead on October 6th, thanking her for her readiness in writing, and sending more news, also sending her a message from John that she must be careful to avoid chills and colds and coughs, and a lock of his hair which Fanny Brawne had herself cut off for his sister. Quite early the correspondence seems to have met with the disapproval of Mrs. Abbey and in the third letter Fanny Brawne would, she says, have enclosed a "eulogium on that lady's character" were she not afraid that it might meet the lady's own eye. Already, however, there is the beginning of a friendship which defeated Mrs. Abbey's opposition, and Fanny Brawne signs herself with her most affectionate love.

[1] John wrote as well as spoke about his sister to Fanny Brawne. Looking at his prospects of health after his attack of illness in February 1820 he wrote to her: "My Sister would be glad of my company a little longer." Letter of Feb. 24, 1820.

Keats did not write either to his sister [1] or to Fanny Brawne after he left England, only to Brown and once to Mrs. Brawne, but Severn wrote to Brown and to Haslam and to Mrs. Brawne, and it was from these letters, always between three and four weeks old, that the news from Italy passed through Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats.[2] Fanny Brawne herself did not receive all the news as it came from Severn, as it grew worse some part was kept from her but, "when you hear of his death tell me immediately," she said to her mother in January.[3] "I am not a fool." But though she was not deceived herself, she found it difficult to send on all she knew and thought to John's sister, and the seven letters she wrote to her between September 1820 and February 1821 show a most tender consideration for a girl three years younger than herself, show her delaying the news for a few days, or breaking it up, editing Severn's alternating hopes and fears so that Fanny Keats might have a connected story, and that the final news might not find her unprepared. By the middle of February Fanny Brawne knew that there was no hope. "I felt that you ought no longer to remain in ignorance

[1] Though apparently Keats did not open the letters, both girls wrote to him. cf. Letter from Charles Brown to Keats, Dec. 21, 1820. "She wrote you lately and so did your sister."

[2] In a letter written to England many years afterwards Fanny wrote: "During my brother's residence in Rome I had no direct communication with Mr. Severn." See p. 155, n. 2.

[3] Letter from Brown to Severn.

and the whole of this day I have been thinking how I could tell you." But it was not from her that Fanny heard of John's death. Severn's letter to Brown reached Hampstead on March 18th and Brown wrote at once to Haslam : " It is all over. I had a letter from Severn last night . . . I was about to write to Mr. Abbey to inform him of this sad news, but request you will at once without delay call on him for the sad purpose, I say without delay lest Miss Keats should hear of it by the papers or some other means." Five days later Brown wrote to Severn that if Mr. Abbey would permit, Mrs. Dilke and Mrs. Brawne would call on Miss Keats [1] and of the same visit Fanny Brawne wrote on March 27th that her mother was looking forward to it with alarm but would be supported by Mrs. Dilke's courage. She adds something more. She begs Fanny to go and see her.

The recent publication, at long last,[2] of all the letters written by Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats between 1820 and 1824 show Fanny Brawne to us more clearly and finally than all the references to her by others. Miss Lowell saw these letters, but either because she was allowed to reply to them only under restriction or because her opportunities for reading them were scanty she does not give

[1] Severn's letter to Brown, Dec. 14, 1820, sent a message from John saying that he hoped for this visit, but it was not arranged till three months later.

[2] For the history of this collection—*Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats*, Oxford University Press, 1937—see p. 233.

them the significance they deserve. Before they were published there were available references to Fanny Brawne by Brown and by others which were not easily reconciled with the picture of her which became traditional, in general that of a girl flippant and vain and doubtfully sincere. Several writers, Colvin in particular, dissented from this opinion, but there was a good deal on record to support it. Keats himself was partly responsible. A few weeks before the Christmas of 1818 when they became engaged he wrote of her "beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable and strange, we have a little tiff now and then—and she behaves a little better, or I must have sheered off." His later letters to her do little to alter this sketch, and in her behaviour to others he found much that he could not bear should be. It is easy to label this jealousy, but it was bound up with what he wished and hoped she was able to be and would be to him, and he to her. The idea that she was incapable of being what he wishes was confirmed most literally by the account of her written years later for the *New York Herald* by a cousin who professed to have had an intimate acquaintance with her at this time, confirmed at least, in so far as recollections fifty years old are reliable, written by one who saw one side of her unredeemed and plainly derived some pleasure in the opportunity of making his recollections public.[1]

[1] *New York Herald*, April 12, 1889.
"Miss Fanny Brawne was very fond of admiration. I

These letters settle once and for all the question of the sincerity of her affection, and they enable us to judge also the depth of her understanding. It is just to remember that she knew Keats only in physical and in mental strain, for they first met when Tom's illness was far advanced, and when the disease from which John was to suffer had already begun its course. Such conditions do not at least help to unite and bind, not as Keats conceived union and bond, and if there was want of depth in her companionship something of it must be ascribed to them, to his illness and depression

do not think she cared for Keats, although she was engaged to him. She was very much affected when he died, because she had treated him so badly. She was very fond of dancing, and of going to the opera and to balls and parties. Miss Brawne's mother had an extensive acquaintance with gentlemen, and the society in which they mingled was musical and literary. Through the Dilkes, Miss Brawne was invited out a great deal, and as Keats was not in robust health enough to take her out himself (for he never went with her) she used to go with military men to the Woolwich balls and to balls in Hampstead; and she used to dance with these military officers a great deal more than Keats liked. She did not seem to care much for him. Mr. Dilke, the grandfather of the present Sir Charles Dilke, admired her very much in society, and although she was not a great beauty she was very lively and agreeable. I remember that among those frequenting Mrs. Brawne's house in Hampstead were a number of foreign gentlemen. Keats thought that she talked and flirted and danced too much with them, but his remonstrances were all unheeded by Miss Brawne."

Quoted in *Life of John Keats*, Sir Sidney Colvin, 1917, pp. 330–1, n.

and the irritability which sprang from them. The letters which she wrote to Fanny Keats immediately before and immediately after his death set her sincerity beyond question, a sincerity which had gone some ways towards equalling his own, and might, in happier conditions, have gone much further. But even to ask the question whether at this time she was his equal in heart and in intelligence has something of absurdity about it. Wherever he might have led her, everything even in these letters and certainly in the later ones, show that the innate genius of heart and mind was on his side. If there was, however, no miracle of genius in her there is also nothing which need persuade us to alter her own account of herself. "Is it to be borne that he, formed for everything good, and I think I dare to say it, for everything great, is to give up his hope of life and happiness." [1] "I know my Keats is happy, happier a thousand times than he could have been here—so much that I do believe, were it in my power, I would not bring him back. All that grieves me now is that I was not with him." [2] "Dear Fanny, no one but you can feel with me—All his friends have forgotten him, they have got over the first shock and that with them is all. They think I have done the same, which I do not wonder at, for I have taken care never to trouble them with any feelings of mine, but I can tell you who next to me (I must say *next*

[1] Letter to Fanny Keats, dated Feb. 1, 1821.
[2] Letter to Fanny Keats, dated March 27, 1821.

to me) loved him best, that I have not got over it and never shall." [1]

It would be easy to argue from the triviality of her later letters to Fanny Keats, and from some still later events in her life, her parting with Keats' miniature, her marriage, that she falsified her own prophecy of her recollection, yet there must be set against these surface evidences her unwillingness and even her inability to speak of him to anyone, or to bear the thought that others were canvassing and criticising his life and his worth even years later. Read with these letters, the judgment of shallow ineptitude which some have passed on her objection to the writing of his life must surely be reversed. If there is nothing precious, what is there for reticence? She claimed the right of keeping what she remembered to herself, and in making the claim she laid herself open to blame upon her intelligence, but not to doubt of her faithfulness. As to this what judgment can ever claim finality and certitude? Taken all in all something of ungenerosity would have to be put into the scales to maintain this doubt of her. Very faithfully she carried out Keats' wishes, and her letters, and later her companionship, were Fanny Keats' chief and almost only resource during the next three years at Walthamstow. As soon as there was no more news to send, Fanny Brawne arranged that they should meet. She was already certain of Fanny's understanding. "To no one would I

[1] Letter to Fanny Keats, dated May 23, 1821.

mention him. I will suffer no one but you to speak to me of him." But she never wrote of him again. There were no more letters either for her or for his sister after Keats left England.

During the months of anxiety after John's departure Fanny never once wrote to her brother George. In spite of John's efforts and their own intentions they had drifted apart. He was only five years older than she but far more than John he had assumed the airs of an elder grown-up brother, and, in particular, he never lost an opportunity of commending "that excellent man Mr. Abbey," assuming that most of her troubles in his household were imaginary and assuming that feeding the chickens and looking after her little cat were enough occupations to satisfy her. Her annoyance was increased by hearing—as apparently she did from Brown—that George had taken money from John when he should not have done so, for in May 1821, Fanny Brawne wrote that a letter of hers mentioned George "in a manner that made me think you had been misled about him" and defended George—whom she admitted to be selfish—against what she thought an unfair accusation. Her defence did not move Fanny; she did not write to George when John died, nor for a whole year after, and in January 1822, he wrote to her: "I hoped before this to have received from you an answer to my letter to you commiserating with you upon the death of our dear Brother, that dreadful misfortune leaves us more necessary to

each other's happiness, it leaves me your natural guardian, and if circumstances should throw you from under the protection of that good man Mr. Abbey I have a happy and cheerful home to make you comfortable." At the time she was feeling that Abbey's relation to her was something more than protection, and probably felt that the adjective 'good' hardly described him. George repeated his offer, but it was not until 1824, when she was persuaded that the accusations against him were unfounded, that she gave his invitation any serious consideration. In August of that year she wrote from Walthamstow to Mrs. Dilke :

DEAR MRS. DILKE,

Accept my warmest thanks for your kind note and enclosed letter which I am happy to say has quite convinced me that George is still and ever will be an honourable man, and you may believe me when I say that I sincerely hate myself for having for an instant doubted it. I am sure you will be almost as delighted as myself to hear that I have received a letter from America. I am surprised Mr. Briggs did not deliver it before, however I can excuse him for I daresay I should not have been more punctual myself. George appears to live so comfortably that I feel almost inclined to join him, had the climate been good I should not have hesitated. Remember me to Mr. Dilke and your son and believe me to remain

Yours affectionately,

F. M. KEATS.

Climate or no, it is doubtful if she ever thought

seriously of going to America, for by this time other ties which she was, we may suppose, not yet ready to mention to Mrs. Dilke, had formed for her. She and George never met again after 1820.

And in 1821 in spite of their common loss she did not need him. Fanny Brawne had taken her inside the circle of Keats' friends, and she found that they knew all about her and the Abbey imprisonment and had none of George's complacency about her boredom. Fanny Brawne had told them about it, for she knew it from the inside. Brown might express doubts as to whether Mrs. Dilke and Mrs. Brawne would be allowed by Abbey to visit her, but Fanny Brawne saw that they did so, and then went herself. She, more than anyone else, saw the Abbey fortress for what it was, a shallow-walled affair built upon obstinacy and self-importance, and, refusing to count it as anything solid or impregnable, she got inside. More than any of Keats' friends she understood the dreariness of Fanny's surroundings, the pseudo-stateliness, the vacant hours and pompous meals, and, understanding their effect upon her, taught her how to deal with them, not by sulky refusals, not by depression and silence, but by tact, and, if necessary, by guile. "Oh my dear, what a woman for a girl to be brought up with," she wrote, and "If anyone could have told me a year ago that I should ever be angling for Mr. Abbey's good opinion I should have been surprized." She extracted permission for walks together and returned with her to lunch at Wal-

thamstow, she suggested meetings at picture galleries so that they might talk unobserved, and if the intervals between such visits were unusually long they filled them up with letters. They shared all the news which came from Italy after Keats' death, they heard of Keats' Papers sent to Brown by Severn, of his Will confided to Mr. Taylor, of Taylor's wish to write a Memoir and Brown's opposition, of the suggestions and discussions about Keats' grave-stone, and some time in 1821 both of them met Ewing the sculptor, newly arrived in England from Italy and sent to call upon them by Severn, described by him " as the one who except Dr. Clark and myself saw more of Keats than anyone—he will inform you on any points as yet too dreadful for me to write." " He has claims on us both," wrote Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats, " from his great kindness in Italy."

But in the late summer of 1821 there arrived in Hampstead another visitor, who had recently come to England from extensive travels upon the Continent. Very soon he had made the acquaintance of Miss Fanny Brawne, and apparently by the end of September through Miss Brawne's introduction had met her great friend Miss Fanny Keats, while he was paying a convenient visit to his friend Mr. Wigram at Walthamstow.[1] The meeting was arranged unknown to her guardians,

[1] Sir Robert Wigram lived at Walthamstow House, had twenty-three children, and died in 1830. He had twelve sons, several of whom had been much abroad.

for before November, Fanny Brawne, writing of the formal call paid upon the Abbeys by this visitor, says to her friend, "I have informed him your guardian is particular and cautioned him against letting the family see you are acquainted," adding: "You need not be affraid of speaking to him for he is extremely gentlemanly and well behaved." But though throughout the winter this acquaintanceship was kept as a delightful secret from the Abbeys, by Christmas the visitor was paying frequent calls on the Brawne household, and whenever he called Fanny Keats was told of it. He was a Spaniard, young, cultivated and elegant, totally unlike anyone either of the two girls had ever seen before. Both of them found his name delightful, though difficult to pronounce and to spell, and one of them [1] at least found it so long that she was doubtful which part of it to choose for ordinary use. It was in full Señor Valentin Maria Llanos y Gutierrez.

But the engaging attractions of this visitor do not explain his descent upon Wentworth Place, and his swift inclusion within the circle of its intimates. The explanation is to be found in one sentence of a letter written in 1825 to his sister Lucy by Gerald Griffin,[2] who, after alluding to

[1] Fanny Brawne.

[2] Gerald Griffin, one of the lesser playwrights and novelists of the time. 1803–40. Author of *The Collegians*.

*Life of Gerald Griffin*, by his brother, Daniel Griffin, M.D., London, 1843.

Keats, continues : " My Spanish friend Valentin Llanos was intimate with him and spoke with him three days before he died." With this single statement the whole mystery of Fanny's marriage to a Spaniard—until recently the subject of surmise only—is cleared away. Señor Llanos had passed the previous winter in Rome, and had come to know Keats, to know him well enough to be admitted to the house on the Piazza di Spagna, and to speak with him on one of the last days of his life. Whether his later journey to England was at that time already arranged we do not know, there is no doubt however of the deliberate plan of his visit to Hampstead. He wished to see the place where John Keats had lived, and to know his friends and his sister. In the whole affair indeed only one point of question still remains—Severn's silence. Why, when Llanos had known Keats, did Severn not mention him in his letters to Brown, and to Taylor, as he spoke of Ewing ? Again it seems unlikely that as a friend Llanos would not have been present at Keats' funeral, but there is no word of it from Severn. Yet did Señor Llanos arrive at Wentworth Place without an introduction to Brown or to the Brawnes, without some explanation of the special reason for his appearance ? That again was unlikely in 1821, when such points of etiquette were carefully observed. All of this, however, is a matter of conjecture only : one necessary inference really settles the whole

question. Neither Fanny Brawne at the time nor Fanny Keats later discussed or referred to Llanos' acquaintance with John. Why? Because it was a fact too well known to them both to need either comment or explanation.[1]

At the time of his arrival in England in 1821 Valentin Llanos was twenty-six. His father was a wealthy merchant in Valladolid, and Valentin, the youngest of a family of twelve, had grown up surrounded by luxury, and with every chance of exploiting the pleasures of Castilian society. Before he was eighteen however, perhaps partly as the result of his undergraduate studies at the University of Valladolid, he had thrown himself into politics,[2] developed violently liberal views, and when Ferdinand VII entered Spain in 1814 found it wisest to quit the country. For the next six years he wandered about Europe acquiring several languages, besides his own, a definite taste for letters and a sophisticated knowledge of the ways of the world. Having a small capital he contrived to pass the time pleasantly enough, but by 1820, when he was ready to return and take up some definite occupation in Spain, the revolution prevented it, and he remained in Italy, spending the winter of 1820–21 in Rome. From there

[1] Señora Elena Brockmann confirmed this.

[2] The hero of his first novel describes himself: "At the period of this general rising I was just entering my sixteenth year, yet though young I had caught the spark of patriotic enthusiasm." Don Esteban.

for the reasons we have seen he travelled to England, and soon became a figure in at least one of the lesser literary sets in London, provoking interest by his cosmopolitan experiences and his pronounced political opinions. His first literary effort was published in this country a year after his arrival, and was a pamphlet addressed to the Spanish people on the emancipation of the Spanish colonies.[1]

No likeness exists of Valentin Llanos at this time, but a portrait of him painted in Spain about twelve years after he left Italy explains in some degree his standing in the social life of literary London in the early twenties, and his welcome to the circle at Wentworth Place. It shows a man of unusual distinction of feature and carriage, and prepares us for Locker-Lampson's one-line verdict of him twenty years later, "lean, silent, dusky and literary," [2] and Cowden Clarke's typical outburst at an earlier date, "a man of liberal principles, very attractive bearing and more than ordinary accomplishments." [3] At twenty-six with his slim height, his air of leisure, his delight in social gaieties, and his foreign background he was a fascinating figure. There was, in addition, his

[1] "Representacion al Soberano pueblo Español sobre La emancipacion de todas sus colonias en las diversas partes de Globo, po Valent in Llanos. Llondres, Publicado por Baldwin, Cradock y Joy, 1822."

[2] F. Locker-Lampson, *My Confidences*, Smith Elder & Co., 1896, p. 343.

[3] *Recollections of Keats*, Charles Cowden Clarke.

literary bent. "He had been able to settle down and write because he had a little capital to work on," wrote Gerald Griffin. It was true. Valentin Llanos established himself in London and began to write, began, as he hoped, his career as a successful novelist, using, in typical first novel fashion, his own wanderings as the basis for his romance and setting it within the affairs of contemporary Spain. He began upon *Don Esteban*[1] in 1822, though it was not published until three years later.

Fanny Keats meantime was emerging from her chrysalis under the attentive guidance of Fanny Brawne. There was some time to run before she would be twenty-one, and Mrs. Abbey tried to make it longer by miscalculating her age. But even when the two girls had made themselves certain of this through enquiries by Brown and Sam Brawne, there were still more than two years before she would be free. "Oh Fanny I wish to goodness you were two or three years older," lamented Fanny Brawne in May 1822. All her later letters are on trivial everyday affairs, but they show how the one girl helped the other to grow up. She wrote of her visits to friends at Hampton, Windsor and elsewhere, they consulted on pets, on gardening, on basket-making. Fanny Keats confessed that she had read nothing of Shakespeare and clearly she was nervous of

[1] *Don Esteban*, or *Memoirs of a Spaniard*, written by himself. London, Henry Colburn, 1825.

expressing her own opinions, and rated her own powers low. Fanny Brawne, admitting that she was now reading only light stuff, and that she was not a great poetry reader, searched her library for what she had read with Keats and sent it to Walthamstow—Shakespeare, a copy of Spenser marked by John, Byron, a review of 'Endymion,' issues of the *Indicator* containing two of John's poems, and the *London Magazine*. They shared apparently the same music master, and Fanny Keats, doubtful of her own success on the harp, took lessons on the guitar, she began to go to the play and to visit museums, to appreciate pictures, and to copy and learn poetry. By October 1822, both girls were reading Spanish poetry and *Don Quixote* together for reasons which are easy to fathom, and there is a passage in a letter from George to Fanny on April 28th, 1824, which shows that Fanny had asked him if she bore any resemblance to the ladies of Spain! George was clearly puzzled, but replied, "Your face is decidedly not Spanish but English all over. If I fancied you to resemble Don Quixote I should fancy a handsome intelligent melancholy countenance with something wild but benevolent about the eyes." This verdict read over at Wentworth Place must have caused both girls some mirth. Finally, doubtful of her own taste, she consulted Fanny Brawne about her frocks, and received diagrams of sleeves and bodices for a clear muslin or a grey silk suitable for the dances

she might hope to attend. The anxious flutter behind both these requests is easily understood. Mr. Gutierrez [1] would be appearing at the Hampstead dances—Spanish poetry, a Spanish appearance, and charming frocks were on his behalf. But she was not always allowed to accept her dance invitations, and Fanny Brawne had to console her for her absence at the Davenports' [2] party late in 1823. Mr. Gutierrez had been there, "the beau of the room," but with her dress, manner and carriage, Fanny need have no anxiety about the pretty ways of possible rivals. On June 3rd, 1824, Fanny was twenty-one, and free at last of the Abbey control. It looks as if the first thing she did was to learn to dance a quadrille.

She did not leave Walthamstow for some little time, but the fact that her letters from Fanny Brawne cease in the month she came of age shows that they were meeting often enough for letters to be unnecessary. Fanny's first anxiety was to discover what money she possessed and to secure it. She had heard that Mr. Abbey had lately suffered "losses" in the city, she did not know how she might be affected, and the task of finding out was a difficult one for her, but C. W. Dilke came to her help and dealt with Abbey firmly enough to obtain all that belonged to her. At the end of his efforts there was a surprising amount. Abbey had been well-paid

[1] Fanny Brawne always spelt this name Guiterez.

[2] Church Row, Hampstead. See p. 87.

during the ten years she was in his charge, and had drawn for her upkeep and schooling on her share of the £8,000 placed in trust by Mrs. Jennings for her grandchildren in 1810, and probably, as Dilke suggests, he had added to it the amount from the funded property sold by him as soon as his co-guardian and executor Sandell had left for Holland. Whether there was any remaining of this last fund in 1824 is uncertain; it is certain, however, that as well as what remained to Fanny of her share of the Trust Fund there was a special bequest from her grandmother, including all her jewellery and personal possessions, and there was also about £360 which George had assigned to her in 1820 after his division of Tom's estate. Apart from these sums there was money which derived from Mr. Jennings' bequests in 1805 to his four grandchildren and to their mother, the first of which was not to be touched until Fanny, the youngest, came of age.[1] The total amount of

[1] As well as bequests to his wife and surviving son, Mr. Jennings had bequeathed a capital sum sufficient to bring in an income of £50 to his daughter Frances Rawlings, and £1,000 to his four grandchildren to be divided equally between them when Fanny the youngest came of age. This last was invested in Consols and brought £1,550 7*s*. 10*d*. worth of that security, and £1,666 13*s*. 4*d*. worth of Consols was purchased from estate funds to yield £50 income. The interest on these sums was paid to Frances Rawlings during her life, but between her death in 1810 and 1823 both investments were untouched and accumulating interest. In 1823 George, having discovered the existence of these funds, which

these two last sums had by 1823 accumulated to about £4,500. Of this George on application to the Court of Chancery received about £1,147, and in the following year Fanny having come of age received her own share and those of her two other brothers, making in all £3,375.[1] What was left of her share of the Trust Fund controlled by Abbey can hardly have amounted to less than £600 or £700, and there is every reason to believe therefore, that when Dilke had sorted out her affairs she had a fortune of about £4,500. It took some months to settle this, but proceedings in the Court of Chancery were completed by early in 1825 and before that date she was looking into a future that was not without excitements, she might allow herself some frocks, and take her place at last in the doings of Hampstead society.

The member of it in whom she was specially interested had not been idle during the last three years. Valentin Llanos had found his way into a literary circle, and had made some useful friends, Barry Cornwall, Bowring, Editor of the *Westminster Review*, and Gerald Griffin, to whom he had taught Spanish and who had prepared with

had up to this time been unknown to him and his brothers and sister, applied to the Court of Chancery for their distribution. (cf. Sir Sidney Colvin's documents in Keats House.)

[1] There is no reason available as to why Fanny should have been granted so much larger a share than that of her surviving brother.

him some translations of Spanish drama. "We shall make a most lucrative thing of it," wrote Griffin, "if we get a publisher to undertake it readily and of that I do not think there is much doubt." This joint undertaking, however, came to nothing because of Valentin's other preoccupations. In 1825 his first novel was published in three volumes. *Don Esteban* or *Memoirs of a Spaniard*. The author displayed his knowledge of English literature by putting extracts from Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Byron, Dyer, Smollett and Pope, as Chapter headings.

The preface sets out the theme: "Driven from his native country by the late disastrous political events, which still distract unhappy Spain, and severed from all his heart holds dear, the author found in the sad inactivity of an exile's lot, too many inducements to ponder over his misfortunes and disappointments not to seek some occupation which might tend to alleviate the recollection of them." . . . He resolved therefore to trace on paper the events of his life. He also desired to give a correct notion of the living manners of Spain.

Valentin Llanos received £200 from his publisher, with a promise of another £100 if the book reached a second edition. It never did. Possibly the tedious style was greatly responsible, reflecting none of the ardours of its author, more probably the caustic criticism of the *Quarterly Review*, which, while admitting that the author

was not deficient in talent, urged that he should rid himself of the "national defect" of his country, that "spirit of rhodomontade, that absolute inability to draw any object in its natural dimensions to which the Spaniards seem to be more subject in these their days of national wretchedness than even at the period of their dazzling and transient glory." The author was undaunted and unrepentant, sent a spirited reply to the Editor of the *Quarterly*, and the following Spring published his second novel, *Sandoval or the Freemason*,[1] again an account of contemporary Spain, violently anti-clerical and pro-masonic in tone. The close of *Don Esteban* had described the author: "one who, alas, roves lonely and remote from the land of his birth, parted from everything he so deeply loves," tracing "on paper events that led to the complete wreck of his country's happiness and his own." But the picture was the fruit of literary license; the description of the mournful exile had little in common with the elegant Señor Llanos, and it appeared when his lot was the reverse of unhappy: he was on the eve of matrimony.

It is easy for a later reader to understand the fascination Valentin Llanos had for Fanny Keats. What comes as something of a surprise is the attraction which she herself must have possessed, for not even his friendship for John Keats her brother would have drawn a man of Valentin's

[1] *Sandoval or the Freemason*, a Spanish tale by the author of *Don Esteban*, in 3 vols., London, 1826.

tastes and experiences to a girl who was merely affectionate, domestic and pleasant. At the Hampstead gaieties, a Waltz or two, a set of Lancers and a game of cards afterwards, there were various young girls all charming and well turned out, and among them Margaret Brawne, younger and even prettier than her sister. Yet Fanny Keats carried off the prize, and secured it perhaps by the very qualities which she deplored in herself, a shyness and diffidence, and an inexperience of the world, which, combined with her composure, and her grace of manner, made her a bundle of surprises for a sophisticated man. In the midsummer of 1825 she went to Wentworth Place on a long visit, and it must have been soon after this that she became engaged to Valentin, to the immense satisfaction of Fanny Brawne, who, it is certain, had hoped from the beginning for this conclusion, and had aided the whole enterprise with the gentlest and most artful tact. Fanny's choice had taken her outside the surroundings into which, from her secluded upbringing, she might have been expected to marry, and Fanny Brawne approved of it. Perhaps, as they talked it over together they concluded that John would have approved of it too. "You will have your share of Pleasure in the world; do not doubt it," he had written.

There is no record of the nine months which elapsed between her engagement and her marriage, but early in 1826 she went to stay with some

friends, a Mr. and Mrs. Lewis in Beaufort Row, Chelsea, and it seems likely that the ceremony took place from their house.[1] She was married to Valentin Llanos at the Church of St. Luke, Chelsea, on March 30th, 1826.

[1] The Dilkes also were living not far away, at Lower Grosvenor Place (now Grosvenor Gardens).

## CHAPTER V

## VALLADOLID

THERE are no records of Fanny's life for the first two years after her marriage, and a single reference by Gerald Griffin supplies the only clue to what she did and where she went. In a letter to his brother William of July 31st, 1826, he wrote, "My friend Llanos goes to France next week." Valentin of course took his wife with him,[1] and under his accomplished guidance she had her first taste of foreign travel. Apparently they went to Paris,[2] and Fanny may have remembered John's letter to her of nine years before when George and Tom were on holiday in the French capital and she at school in Walthamstow. "Like most Englishmen they feel a mighty preference for everything English—the french Meadows the trees the People the Towns the Churches the Books the everything—although they may be in themselves

[1] "Except for short visits for purposes of business which took Señor Llanos away from home, Señora Llanos was never separated from her husband during the whole of their married life," said her granddaughter, Señora Elena Brockmann, to me, in 1935.

[2] My authority here is Señora Elena Brockmann.

good : yet when put in comparison with our green Island they all vanish like Swallows in October. It seems that the only end to be gained in acquiring french is the immense accomplishment of speaking it—it is none at all." [1] In the Walthamstow schoolroom this criticism had seemed to her like wisdom. In the streets of Paris with her tongue slow, and her ears confused with the rapid harshness of foreign speech, she probably wished she had given the French language more attention. Their stay in France was prolonged for they were still there when her first child, a girl, Irene Louisa, was born on September 5th, 1827, indeed, it seems probable that they stayed a year beyond this, for there is no news of where they lived until September 1828, when Valentin Llanos'[2] name is entered in the rate book as the tenant of that part of Wentworth Place which had belonged to Charles Brown.[3]

Anyone who visits Wentworth Place to-day to see the place where Keats lived with Brown during the early part of 1819 and in the summer

[1] Letter of John Keats to Fanny Keats. Sept. 10, 1817.

[2] There is a passage at the end of *Sandoval*, which hints that even before his marriage Señor Llanos had hopes of living near London. The hero hastens to England . . . where, with his ' aged father,' ' his tenderly attached wife,' and his two children he took up his abode ' at a little cottage a few miles from London which Dona Gabriele's taste for shrubs and flowers has turned into a delightful bower.'

[3] A Miss Steel who had been its tenant since Brown left England in 1822 vacated it at this time.

of 1820 may see the house in which Fanny Llanos began her English housekeeping, like her brother having Fanny Brawne as her next door neighbour. The back sitting-room with its narrow cupboards on either side of the fire-place, its French window opening on to the verandah is the same to-day as it was then, and, standing in the front room, the "parlour," where, in 1820, John wrote from his "sopha bed" his letters and notes to Fanny Brawne, it is easy to imagine the double garden as it was for him and for his sister, "the low fence with hedge of laurestine and China roses" which enclosed it, and the gate opening on to the Heath. Sam Brawne had died in April 1828, and when the Llanos family arrived there were only the two Brawne girls and their mother to share with Valentin, Fanny and the babies the "grass plots" and the mulberry tree. In July 1829, Fanny's second child was born, a boy, and named Louis Mariano. Valentin, having discovered that an income which was sufficient for a man travelling alone was not sufficient for a wife and a growing family, was teaching languages and hopefully completing his third novel *The Spanish Exile*,[1] and his wife began to go about, to visit her friends, and to give some modest dinner parties. There must have been many gatherings at Wentworth Place in the winter evenings of 1828. "Dining the other day at my friend Llanos," wrote Gerald Griffin to his sister Lucy in January

[1] This novel was never published.

1829, "I met that Miss B. of whom I spoke to you sometime since, sadly changed and worn I thought, but still most animated—lively and even witty in conversation. She quite dazzled me in spite of her pale looks." It is significant that Griffin does not speak of his hostess' conversational powers: it is likely that she was content to leave most of the talking to her friend.

Yet, to each other, in this first year after Fanny Keats' return to Hampstead there was more for them to say about Keats than there had been since 1821. In the eight years which had passed since his death, little had been done to raise his fame, very little indeed, since Brown, writing to Severn in 1823 that ten years hence would be time enough for a monument to Keats in his own country, had said, "his name is as yet scarce anything in England," [1] or since Severn himself had recorded that, "there were few Englishmen at Rome who knew Keats' works, and I could scarcely persuade anyone to make the effort to read them, such was the prejudice against him as a poet." [2] Taylor, Brown, Reynolds, Woodhouse, had all intended either to write his life or to publish his poetry, but not one of them had done

[1] The news of Keats' death was hardly noticed in the English press. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1821 records :—

On February 23. At Rome, aged 25.
Mr. John Keats, the poet.

[2] *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, William Sharp, 1892, p. 103.

it, and his name had been at the mercy of the arguments and quarrels of his closest friends, the patronising contempt of Byron, the slighting pity of Haydon, and an uncomprehending general public. Something of all this the two girls had heard. Pity and grief probably summed up their own attitude towards him in 1829. They thought of him still as someone who had been dear to them and to his own group of friends, with talents which were now perished for the world, crushed out by misfortune, by ill-health, by the vindictive tongues of his critics, and in all their thoughts about him what he had been to them overshadowed, and almost eclipsed any thought of him as a poet. Severn and Brown could have taught them something different, but Severn had never returned to England, and Brown, since his departure for Italy in 1822, wrote only infrequently to Fanny Brawne, and never to Fanny Keats. Regretfully, and with a passionate pity, they had kept Keats' personal memory. Eight years had taught them clearly enough what they had lost themselves, they had not shown them what had been lost to the world.

Now in 1829 they were to watch the first awakenings of his fame, partly at home, partly abroad. Through these eight years English men of letters travelling in Italy had met and stayed with Brown, first at Pisa and then at Florence,—Trelawny, Seymour Kirkup, Landor, all devoted admirers of Keats—and in 1829 the first public signs of this recognition appeared. When Tre-

lawny was preparing his *Adventures of a Younger Son*,[1] Brown supplied matter for the chapter headings from unpublished poems of Keats in his possession. During this same year the *Adonais*,[2] of which up to then only a few copies of the edition published at Pisa in 1821 under Shelley's supervision had reached England, was reprinted in London through the efforts of a group of Cambridge undergraduates led by Hallam and Monckton Milnes, and before the year was out the Paris house of Galignani had issued a combined edition of the poems of Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge,[3] and copies of it were being sold in England. Late in December Fanny Brawne received the news of this edition from Brown. Not until 1840 were Keats' poems collected and published by themselves, but the period of neglect and contempt and of pity was done with by the end of the year when Fanny came to live at Wentworth Place.

Brown wrote from Florence on December 17th, and, after explaining about the Galignani edition, continued that he had informed the press of his

[1] *Adventures of a Younger Son.* E. J. Trelawny, 1831.

[2] *Adonais*, by P. B. Shelley. Composed at Pisa in early June 1821, printed at Pisa with the types of Didot by July 13, 1821. Part of the impression was sent to the brothers Ollier for sale in London. An exact reproduction of this Pisa edition was issued in 1829 by Gee and Bridges, Cambridge, at the instance of Arthur Hallam and Richard Monckton Milnes.

[3] *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats*, complete in one volume, Paris, Galignani, 1829.

intention to write Keats' life and " annexe it to a Tragedy " of his " together with some unpublished poems in my possession," " whenever his countrymen should have learnt to value his poetry." " I also told them I believed that time was arrived." He was now asking her permission to include in this intended life two poems by Keats addressed to herself, and two letters in which she was mentioned, though without her name being given; " two of his letters which I wish to give entire; one written when he dispaired of Tom's recovery, the other when he dispaired of his own." It is clear from this letter that Brown had hitherto accepted Fanny Brawne's wish for secrecy about her relations with Keats.[1] He now saw it differently and told her so. " To my mind, you ought to consent, as no greater honour can be paid to a woman than to be beloved by such a man as Keats. I am aware that, at a more recent period, you would have been startled at its being alluded to; but consider that eight years have now passed away; and now, no one, if you do not, can object to it." Thus wrote Brown, and Fanny Brawne sat down at once to answer in a letter of which

[1] As she had made plain to Fanny Keats, writing to her on Feb. 1, 1821, " I know I may trust to you never to mention me either now—or at any future time as connected with your brother—as I know he would dislike that sort of gossiping way in which people not concerned mention these things." (*Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats*, Oxford University Press, 1937.)

the greater part has been preserved in draft form,[1] and which betrays, by its erasings, its alterations, and its uneven sentences the torment and confusion of mind into which the demand had thrown her. For years she had believed that Keats and his personal story had been forgotten, that it had been hers and his sister's to preserve and even to shelter from the eyes of the world. Now she knew that this could not be, and unwillingly and because it is Brown who writes she gives her consent to what he asks. "You can tell better than I and are more impartial on the subject for my wish has long been that his name, his very name could be forgotten by everyone but myself, that I have often wished most intensely." She had believed indeed that the "kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to which unhappy circumstances have condemned him," but now she sees that it may be "the duty of those who loved and valued him to vindicate him also," and, although because of this she grants her permission, she still asks herself to what end? "I have no doubt that his talents would have been great, not the less for their being developed rather late which I believe they were," but, "all I fear is whether he has left enough to make people believe that."

It is impossible to believe that Fanny Llanos did not know of this. She and Fanny Brawne had long shared all their knowledge of Keats:

[1] Now in Keats House.

the events of this year would be known to both of them, she would see Brown's letter and it is likely that she saw also Fanny Brawne's reply. If she did not see it she knew what it contained. Her own attitude to the whole question was the same as her friend's, not a fainter repetition of Fanny Brawne's, but her own, derived from what John had been to her, and she kept it all her life. She had no intellectual pretensions and it was not until many years later that she came to any adequate understanding of Keats' place in the world of letters, but even when she did her attitude to publicity about his life was the same. When, in 1878,[1] she was faced with a somewhat similar request as that with which Fanny Brawne had dealt in 1829, she acted as her friend had done fifty years earlier, as she would have done herself if the request had come to her then. Unwillingly, and at the strong wish of another, whom she knew had a literary judgment that she had not, she agreed to a further step towards giving publicity to Keats' personal story. It was a last stand for the feelings of her girlhood. In December 1829, in spite of what the year had shown them what Keats' fame might be, both she and Fanny Brawne wished to keep for themselves alone what he had been to them. If in that year it had been left to Fanny Brawne or in 1878 to Fanny Keats, his personal story would never have reached the public.

[1] See p. 197.

Brown's letter was not the only important event at Wentworth Place in the autumn of 1829. In the draft of Fanny Brawne's letter there is no mention of her own affairs, but possibly in the final version she included them, or told him that a letter was already on its way to him to let him know, as co-trustee for herself and her sister, Margaret, what had happened, and to ask his advice. At the end of November, Mrs. Brawne had stood one evening on the doorstep lighting some friends across the garden, her dress had caught fire, and she had died a few days later of shock and burns, and had been buried on December 1st. Her two daughters were unable to keep on the house, and by the end of the year they had vacated it. Where Margaret Brawne went is not known, Fanny apparently moved next door to stay with the Llanos family.

Fanny Keats by this time was occupied with what she had hoped for—her house and her babies, but with something else also for which she had not been prepared—financial difficulty. Valentin, anxious to make money quickly, had turned from literature to inventions. He was, as she had soon discovered, sadly deficient in business sense and discretion, but, inexperienced about money herself, and persuaded by his optimism, she had allowed some of her own capital to be used and it was lost. Of the £4,500 which she possessed when she came of age, about £1,893 had been brought into settlement on her marriage. Appar-

ently she lent the greater part of the remainder, nearly £2,000, to her husband, to promote a bridle-bit patent which he had assumed was to make their fortune, but the venture had come to nothing, and it had carried away with it most of her free capital. Llanos appears too to have upset Dilke, Fanny's trustee, by disputing a bill of costs with her solicitors, Rice and Reynolds, the second of whom was a close friend, and Dilke, irritated by this, and by Llanos' commercial folly, had retaliated by placing her marriage settlement funds in the Court of Chancery, and by withdrawing, in some degree, from his position as her confidential adviser. Under these difficult conditions Fanny wrote for advice to her cautious brother George, and George's letters to Dilke between 1829 and 1833 show that he understood. He sent instructions to Rice and Reynolds to make over some odd property to her in part compensation for her loss, reserving for Dilke his private conclusions about his brother-in-law. "I fear," he wrote, "Llanos is doing badly and has been imposed on by some of his Spanish friends. I expected such a result from the extravagant hopes expressed by my sister when writing about the Patent—seeming short roads to wealth most frequently terminate in blind alleys." Fanny seems to have kept her anxieties from her friends, for in 1830 Brown, consulting with Severn about his projected memoir of John and any possible profits from it, wrote, "Should there be any, ought we

not to present them to his sister? It is true she does not *want* them, and therefore we might dispose of them in some other way, something still conducive to his fame, what say you?" The want of money was in fact serious, and a letter from George at this time shows that she and Valentin were already making plans for leaving England: "When I heard from my sister that Mr. Llanos was going to Spain it appeared to me that all the visions of wealth that was to result from the bridle-bit patent had flown. What you say only confirms my suspicions." It was true. Valentin had failed to publish his last novel,[1] he had lost heavily in this speculative venture, and his only resource was to return to his own country and try to find work through family influence. There were, however, difficulties in the way. In 1830 Ferdinand VII was still alive, and among exiled Spanish liberals new attempts were being made to cross the frontier from France and carry revolts against him. Every one of these attempts however had failed, and the last and most tragic of them all, raised by Torrijos, an ex-officer living in London, had ended in the betrayal and execution of the leader. It was no time for a marked Spanish liberal with wife and children to move from England to Spain, and, as George Keats wrote to Dilke, "the author of *Don Esteban* and *Sandoval* could hardly expect a quiet life in the kingdom of the beloved Ferdinand if the bigot

[1] *The Spanish Exile.*

monarch is what he is described in these works." George had exactly described the situation and Valentin was forced to await events.

A few dates and an occasional statement are all that we have on which to build up Fanny's history for the next two years. Her third child, a boy, was born at Hampstead on September 18th, 1831, and was named Juan after his English uncle. With three children and Fanny Brawne as well as herself and Valentin the house at Wentworth Place must have been too crowded for comfort, and they left it during that winter, perhaps by Christmas, 1831, certainly before March, 1832. We do not know where they went in England, nor if Fanny Brawne went with them. In an affidavit signed years later[1] by Valentin and his wife it is stated that they went to Spain in 1833, but her first child Irene Louisa died in England in January of that year and the death of Ferdinand VII, which enabled 20,000 exiled Spanish liberals, Valentin among them, to return to their native country, did not take place until September 29th. Fanny's fourth child, Rosa, was born on November 2nd in Valladolid, and it is not likely that Valentin would have allowed her to make the journey from England between then and the end of September, within, that is, a few weeks of her confinement. We know too that she did not proceed to Spain alone with the children, but that Llanos was with her. The most likely con-

[1] April 17, 1858.

clusion therefore is, that some time during the early summer Valentin moved with her and their two children, Louis, aged four, and Juan, aged two, to France, possibly even to Southern France, and that in October, after Ferdinand's death, they crossed the frontier to Spain. One other event supports this belief. Fanny Brawne was married on June 15th, 1833, in Marylebone Parish Church to Mr. Lindo, a Jewish banker. It was a step which, according to her granddaughter, Elena Brockmann, Fanny Keats neither understood nor excused, and she may have been glad to leave England and London before it took place.[1]

Whichever way they chose to travel to Valladolid there would be a journey of at least three hundred miles from the frontier, and that could not have occupied less than three and a half days —an arduous affair for a woman closed up in the coach all day, keeping two small children fed and quiet, while its eight mules jerked them along the brown dust-caked roads, and at night unpacking for them all in one of the uncomfortable bare 'diligence' inns,[2] at which the length of stay and chances of repose were determined, not by the

[1] Margaret Brawne was also married in the same year, on Nov. 30, 1833, in the Protestant Church, Dieppe, to Chevalier Joao Antonio Pereira da Cunha.

[2] Faithfully described by her husband in his first novel: "A large dark hall, paved with round stones . . . at one extremity a wood fire. Besides the light it diffused, a candle or rude lamp of cast iron hanging from the hook of a cane suspended from the ceiling in the middle of the room scat-

rising and setting of the sun, but by the distance still to be covered if the conductor and the guards were to deliver the mail punctually at the next stop. Had Fanny been of a literary turn she might have put together some diverting stories of her journey, might have described her surprise at watching, after the cosy green English landscape, the bare stretches of the Castilian plain, austere and monotonous, and, on the third day, the distant background of snow-rimmed mountain peaks. But even if she had been less occupied, she would certainly not have considered her own sensations at the sight of these novelties worth setting down, and the only reference we have to this journey was written fifty years later to an English correspondent, and treats, not of natural scenery, but of her luggage. The language is characteristically temperate and impersonal. "I am unable," she wrote in reply to a question put to her, "to fill up the blanks owing to an unfortunate circumstance. When we came to Spain all our boxes were seized as contraband by the Custom House officers and were never returned though there were several Royal Orders to the effect. Among my books was the family Bible [1] in which were

tered a faint light over a long narrow deal dining-table. Some long benches were placed at each side and two broken chairs at each extremity."

[1] "Mr. Brown desired me to give you his compliments and to tell you that he has a large bible and prayer-book which belonged to your grandmother, which, if you like to

registered the births and deaths of all my family from my grandfather downwards." It was indeed an unfortunate circumstance. The Llanos family were victims to one of the nuisances of the time, 'Los Advaneros' or custom-house officers, who were bribed by the *contrabandistes* to act as their confederates, facilitated smuggling on a large scale, and were a torment to the honest traveller. On this occasion they appear to have kept the whole of the Llanos luggage which had not been taken with them on the coach, and as that was limited to twenty-five pounds per person, Fanny and her husband lost most of their possessions before the end of their first journey. What Valentin missed we do not know: some of what Fanny missed we do: Mrs. Jennings' Bible, as she said, and most of her books, among them some first editions of Keats' works [1] with her name inside inscribed in his own hand. In the luggage allowed her on the coach she must have taken some of the books he had given her [2] and her letters.

Many years later she admitted that her letters from John had only once been out of her close

have, he will send by the carrier, he considers them as a sort of family relic." (*Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats*, Aug.–Sept. 1821, undated.)

"I have asked Mr. Brown to look for your age." (*Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats*, Autumn, 1821, Oxford University Press, 1937.)

[1] *Endymion, Lamia, Essays on Rhyme*, 2nd edition, Jane and Ann Taylor.

[2] Goldsmith's *Poems and Essays*. *Poems of* 1817.

possession, for a few days, and that not upon a journey.[1] Her reference makes it clear that when she sorted and packed for her journey to Spain she did not put her letters in her "boxes," and it seems safe to suppose that she conveyed them abroad in one of the large bags known as an indispensable, and carried by every woman in England in the early nineteenth century. The letters had been kept folded as she had received them and they would not take up much room. She was a methodical and a tidy person, and she packed them with other letters she valued, among the number those from Fanny Brawne. She did not leave her bag about on the journey and she reached her final destination with its contents intact. She then put all her letters carefully away.

Valentin took her and the children to his father's house in Valladolid, and they all remained there for about a year, assumed, after the manner of the country, into the patriarchal household, and free to stay for as long as they pleased. Fanny learnt to speak the language, to adjust herself to luxurious surroundings, and to the grave formality of the behaviour of old Castile, and Valentin looked about for work. After about twelve months this appeared. Liberalism had come into power, and two transition ministers of moderate persuasions, Martinez and Conde de Toreno, had prepared the way for a leader of more advanced views, Mendizabel, who arrived from London in

[1] See p. 171.

*Madrid in* 1834

September 1835, to take up office, and to restore, with the agreement of the country, the constitution of 1812. He offered the post of private secretary to Valentin whom he had known in London as a friend of Riego, the Llanos family moved to Madrid, and Fanny began Spanish housekeeping. In February 1836, George Borrow visited the capital in an endeavour to obtain permission from the Government to print the New Testament in the Castilian language, he secured an interview with the Prime Minister, and described Llanos who was in attendance :[1] " His secretary, a fine intellectual-looking man, who, as I was subsequently informed, had acquired a name both in English and Spanish literature, stood at one end of the table with papers in his hands."

Except for a statement of Dilke's made to Monckton Milnes in 1846 this word from Borrow is the only documentary reference to the Llanos and their doings for the next seven years. It would appear that Señor Llanos' first political appointment did not last long, for in May 1836, Mendizabel fell from power, and for the next four years the Carlist wars tore the country, with Espartero in place of Mendizabel as the Cristina leader. Valentin, however, was supplied with money from the family purse, and between Madrid and frequent visits to his father's house managed to keep going. His talents were recognised, and when Espartero became Regent in 1840, Valentin

[1] George Borrow, *The Bible in Spain*, Chap. XII.

was sent as Spanish Consul to Gibraltar, and took a leading part in its cosmopolitan society. Louis Mariano, their first son, had died in 1834 when he was just six, but a second daughter Isabel was born in Madrid in 1839, and in Gibraltar four years later, the last of their children arrived, a son, Luis. When Espartero fled to England in 1843, Llanos lost his position as Consul, and early in 1844 returned with Fanny and his four surviving children, Juan, Rosa, Isabel and Luis, to Castile and the country in which he had been brought up.

Old Señor Llanos had died while he and Fanny were in Gibraltar, leaving substantial bequests to all his children, and Valentin had recently made the one fortunate speculation of his life by investing in some church property which had turned out well. By 1846 he had become, according to Dilke,[1] "an uncommonly prosperous gentleman" affluent enough for him and Fanny to disregard her dividends from England and for nearly five years to leave them untouched in the bank. Through family influence he became Director of Canals in Castile, and with this and other public activities in the province his days were fully occupied. He bought a great house on the outskirts of Valladolid and encouraged his wife to continue there the ways of easy living to which he had been accustomed in his youth. They

[1] C. W. Dilke to R. Monckton Milnes. Letter written in 1846. Crewe-Houghton MSS.

settled down and were there for the next seventeen years.

For Fanny they were the happiest years of her life. She had left few friends in England and had no longing to return : she had found no difficulty in adapting herself to a new country and new ways of living, and she enjoyed bringing up the children surrounded with comforts she had never known in her own childhood—a couple of carriages to take them about, and long holidays at the sea or in the mountains. With these, her large house, and more important still, her large garden where they could play and in which she could work, she was absolutely content, and though there was little society in Valladolid she never missed it, for she did not make friends easily and wanted nothing beyond her family. The children as they developed gave her no anxiety, and grew up a close-knit little group, sufficient to themselves for interests and diversions, certainly rather over-absorbed in each other's affairs, and making little demand upon the outside world. Fanny left the direction of their education entirely to Valentin, who, well satisfied with his estate and his appointments, devoted himself to her and to his family. He was an indulgent father, and allowed the children to grow up unhampered by conventional parental ambitions, but he watched their tastes with an understanding eye, and saw to it that each of them had an occupation. Luis, the youngest, was trained at his own desire for

the Civil Service; Juan, the eldest, wished to be a painter, and Valentin sent him to Madrid to copy the Prado masterpieces, and stabilized his future as an artist by a generous personal allowance when he returned home. He gave Rosa, his little dark-eyed elder daughter, equal chances in the musical world, and, when the time came, produced for Isabel, his second girl, who had no artistic or musical inclinations, a handsome and elegant husband in the person of Leopold Brockmann, a young engineer of brilliant prospects who had been working under him in Castile.

It might appear from all this that Valentin was the sole director of affairs, and Fanny a passive spectator. The opposite was the case: she was the centre of the family, and without ever imposing her own will on any member of it she managed all of them from the beginning. She went out hardly at all, her linen, silver, furniture and her garden kept her busy, and even with a large staff of servants round her she still kept her own household books and did occasional cooking. She was in fact always at hand, shy and reserved in society, alert and capable in her own home, understanding her children's separate interests and never too busy to enter into them. They were completely devoted to her and told her everything. She had only one worry; some day they would marry and go away.

Fortunately for her the two eldest did not wish to do either, and the other two, Isabel and Luis,

were obliging enough, when they did marry to remain near at hand. Indeed, to a mother who cherished every family event with anxious adoration, Isabel's behaviour provided all that could have been asked—a romantic courtship and a satisfactory marriage in 1858, with vast family celebrations and gatherings at the house in Valladolid, and afterwards not the separation Fanny had feared. For though Isabel and her husband went to Paris for a time they soon returned to Spain, and with useful news. Leopold Brockmann had been appointed chief consulting engineer to the Roman Railways which were just then being constructed, and though he and Isabel were to proceed to Rome at once they did not propose to settle there alone. They suggested in fact that as many members of both their families as could do so should follow them, and remain with them as long as they liked.

To both Valentin and his wife a change was welcome, and no prospect could have given more delight to Fanny. She was not, after all, to be parted from her second daughter, and the one place she wished to visit was Rome. To Valentin too, the idea came as a relief, for since Isabel's marriage the house at Valladolid had begun to seem too large, and in spite of Fanny's careful housekeeping it was at last proving too expensive. Anticipations of a journey to Italy revived for him the memories of the continental wanderings of his youth, and reconciled him to sell his house

and lands, to make preparations for the journey. In the spring of 1861 he, Fanny, Juan and Rosa set off.

There is not much doubt as to the route they followed from Valladolid. They must have driven by diligence to Barcelona, and from there, either taken a boat direct to Italy, or sailed to Marseilles, and embarked on one of the mail boats, the *Messageries Impériales*, which, leaving the French port at ten o'clock in the evening, arrived by daybreak of the second morning at the Italian coast. Whichever route they chose the port for Rome was the same, Civita Vecchia, and perhaps, as the boat entered the ugly harbour of the northern town where coal for the gas-works in Rome was being unloaded along the neglected quays, while the French troops filled the air with trumpet-blasts and the rolling of drums, Fanny, with her excellent memory, may have contrasted the scene with what she had heard of Severn's description of the November morning in 1820 as the *Maria Crowther* put into Naples, and have thought how different was her first sight of Italy from John's of forty years before. " The white houses," wrote Severn, " lit up by the rising sun," above the terraced vineyards and olive yards, Vesuvius behind, with " an immense line of smoke clouds built up, which every now and then opened and changed with the sun's golden light " . . . " the mountains of Sorrento . . . like lapis lazuli and gold," the boats piled with fruit, " the mariners in red caps hawking

fish," . . . "the tinkling of the guitars mingling with happy laughter," . . . "Perhaps the novelty alone was an irresistible charm and made our haven seem, to me at least, as though it were the shore of Paradise"—"Keats," Severn had continued, "was simply entranced with the unsurpassable beauty of the panorama." Or did she rather remember her brother's reference [1] to these new sights, sent to Brown? "I cannot say a word about Naples . . . I do not feel at all concerned in the thousand novelties around me." [2]

"Next day," wrote Severn, "we were on the way to Rome." They approached it from the south in a small "vettura," Fanny approached it from the north by train. The Strada ferrata Pio Centrale from Rome to Civita Vecchia had been opened three years earlier, in 1858,[3] and the train,

[1] Keats wrote with entire freedom to Brown. His only other references to Naples are in a letter to Mrs. Brawne of a week earlier, on Oct. 24: "Give my Love to Fanny and tell her, if I were well enough there is enough in this Port of Naples to fill a quire of Paper—but it looks like a dream—every man who can row his boat and walk and talk seems a different being from myself. I do not feel in the world. . . ." "O what an account I could give you of the Bay of Naples if I could once more feel myself a Citizen of this world. I feel a spirit in my Brain would lay it forth pleasantly."

[2] Letter of Nov. 1, 1820.

[3] The first railway in the Stati Pontifici was the Rome-Frascati line, inaugurated 1857. In 1861 there were in the Stati Pontifici 101 km. of railways, besides 149 km. in project.

which ran in conjunction with the mail boats, left the port soon after mid-day for the journey of forty-two miles to the Capital. Fanny, instructed beforehand by her engineer son-in-law, may have felt some pride as she got into it. The railway lines were made of English iron, the railway carriages had been built in England. The line after following the coast for about half the distance, as far as Palo, soon afterwards enters the Campagna, and, after rounding the heights of Il Truglio, discovers the first view of Rome with the Alban hills beyond. "We reached the Campagna," Severn had continued in 1820, "whose vast billowy wastes, Keats said, were like an inland ocean . . . at last we came within view of Rome a memorable sight in its seeming deserted solitariness. As we drew nearer it became evident that we were approaching a great town of the living. We entered by the Lateran Gate." In 1861 the train from Civita Vecchia passed behind the Churches of the Lateran and Santa Croce, entered the city by the opening in the city wall, and stopped in the Central Railway Station in the Piazza dei Termini.

Fanny found Isabel and her husband already in Rome, and, as befitted Leopold's important position, settled in a large house, spacious enough indeed to accommodate the Llanos family as well as themselves and other guests. There were eleven of them living together for the next four

years, with two or three carriages to take them about and one section at least of official Rome on their doorstep, pressing them with invitations.

## CHAPTER VI

## ROME

FANNY had never returned to England even on a visit since she left it for Spain after her marriage, and when she went to Rome in 1861 she had been out of her own country for twenty-eight years. During the whole of this time she had been almost completely isolated from English affairs, and from anyone who might have sent news of them to her. Fanny Brawne had lived much on the continent after she married, but there is no record that she ever visited Madrid, and though she and her family seem to have lived in England for at least the last fifteen years of her life [1] there is every reason to believe that she and Fanny Keats did not correspond after 1833.[2] The group of Keats' friends had long broken up. Brown had been dead nearly twenty years, George had died in 1842, and she had not

[1] Mr. Louis Lindon, her husband, is said to have been one of the secretaries to the Exhibition of 1851. Fanny Lindon died in 1865, her husband seven years later. Both are buried in Brompton Cemetery.

[2] There are no letters from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats after 1824. It has already been remarked that Fanny Keats did not approve of the marriage, but towards the end of her life she sent affectionate messages to Miss Lindon and to "her Aunt Margaret."

kept up with his family, indeed, so absorbed had she been in her life in Spain that she had not known of George's death for at least five years after it took place. Mrs. Dilke had died in 1853. Of all John's friends whom Fanny had known C. W. Dilke was, in 1861, the only one still alive, the only one also who had kept in touch with her during her long absence from England, and it was from Dilke that she had received the only news during the whole period which she had about Keats' history.

Before Brown left England in 1841, he had handed over the material for his projected life of Keats to R. Monckton Milnes, who published his *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats* in 1848. There are two statements about Fanny's connection with this work. Colvin says that the biographer " does not seem to have made any attempt to get into touch with Keats' sister Fanny." [1] William Sharp says that : " consent for it was in due time gained from his (George's) widow and from Fanny Keats, then residing in Madrid as the wife of Señor Llanos." [2] Neither of these biographers produce evidence in support of these statements, but both were probably true. It is hardly likely that Monckton Milnes would have published a book containing details about Fanny without obtaining her personal consent, but it is certain that he did not know her, and

[1] *Life of John Keats*, Sidney Colvin, 1918, p. 536.

[2] *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, William Sharp, p. 196.

it seems likely that he relied on Dilke in 1846 to explain and expand statements touching Fanny in the papers he held, and that he secured through him her approval and permission for his publication. When it appeared in 1848, he sent a copy to Dilke to be forwarded to her. She wrote to the editor two years later explaining, that for "want of opportunity" [1] the book had only just reached her, and for safety sent this letter to London by a friend, who, not finding Monckton Milnes at home, put her letter into the London post. Fanny had no acknowledgment of this letter, and wondered if it had ever arrived, but during the fifties she and Valentin had hopes of going to England, and, with this expectation, and perhaps influenced by the procrastinating ways of Spain, delayed writing again until in 1859 they knew that they could not make the journey. They then wrote a joint letter to Monckton Milnes explaining all the circumstances, and saying that the best they could do was to entrust this second letter to their son-in-law, Leopold Brockmann, who was going to London on business, also sending by him to Monckton Milnes, as a token of gratitude for his book, a copy of a Murillo masterpiece in the Prado which had been painted for him by Juan. From all of this it will be seen that, except for her friendship with Dilke, maintained by a fragmentary correspondence, Fanny's only contact with

[1] Dilke had evidently thought it wiser to wait to send the book until he could do so by hand.

Keats' history between 1833 and 1861 had been this book of Monckton Milnes. Reading it had given her an entirely new view of her brother. For the first time she saw in print an account of his life, with letters from him to George, to Tom, and to his friends, and for the first time saw set out the events by which he had been driven to leave England in the hope of health, and the letters to Brown which marked the stages of his journey. The references to herself in these last letters she can hardly have seen before. All of it had made her long to go to England. That had not been possible, but after reading its final chapters there was only one other country beyond England which she wished to visit—Italy, and at the age of fifty-eight, eleven years after receiving the book, she had her wish, and entered upon a period which, save for the time of her engagement and the early days of her marriage, was the most surprising and exciting of her life.

The year 1861 was certainly an exciting time in which to arrive in Italy. On February 18th, as a result of the Garibaldi campaigns of the previous autumn and the annexation of Naples and Sicily, Vittorio Emanuele had been able to open the first Italian Parliament in Turin. The unity of the nation was, however, still in an uncertain future and the country was divided against itself. Austria still clung to Venetia, and the Pope held temporal power in Rome and its surrounding territory, and was encouraging as well

sedition among Bourbons in the south. In Rome itself there was a general distrust of the Papal government, and constant quarrels within its walls between Napoleon's soldiers and Italian troops. The Italian nation was in the making and it was a stormy process.

But political troubles did not keep the English visitors away from Rome and between January and April the hotels were full. The Llanos were settled down by the middle of March, some two or three weeks before Easter Day which, in 1861, fell on March 31st, and the first thing Fanny noticed, as she wandered about the city in the days after her arrival, was the ubiquitous—but to her the delightful—presence of her countrymen. After nearly thirty years abroad she saw English people again and heard her own language spoken, probably most of all as she stood in the Piazza di Spagna,[1] and looked at the high orange-coloured shuttered house to which she had sent her letters to John forty years before. The person who was the best qualified to introduce her to a conservative English society, of which, during her first weeks in Rome, she was only a spectator, she met in that very house on the morning of the first Saturday after Easter, April 6th.

Joseph Severn had been appointed English Consul to Rome in January 1861, and by the time of

[1] Piale's library and bookshop, the chief meeting-place for the English colony, was in the Piazza di Spagna, and many of the rooms let to English people were close by.

the Llanos-Brockmann arrival was already settled in his official quarters at the Palazzo Pali, sentimentally sunning himself in the good fortune which had returned him to the city, where, as he frequently affirmed, all the foundations of his artistic and social successes had been laid. "Here on my return to Rome," he wrote,[1] "all kinds of happy associations with the poet surround me, but none so touching as my recent meeting with his sister." His encounter with Fanny was, as he explains, accidental. On April 6th he wrote to his brother: "Just now I have had a most affecting meeting with the sister, only sister of Keats: we discovered each other this morning. For a long time we remained without being able to speak. 'Twas like a brother and sister who had parted in early life meeting after forty years.[2] How singular that we should meet in the very place where Keats died."

In his book *My Confidences*,[3] published thirty years later, Frederick Locker-Lampson, who was introduced to Fanny in Rome by Severn, gives the only description of her ever published:[4] "She

[1] *Atlantic Monthly*, "The Vicissitudes of Keats' fame," April 1863.

[2] On April 30 he wrote: "Tis 45 years since I first got a glance of her" (1816). There is no other record of this meeting. Fanny must have been thirteen at the time. (See also p. 101, n. 2.)

[3] *My Confidences*, Frederick Locker-Lampson, Smith Elder & Co., London, 1896.

[4] Save, of course, for the biographical memoranda by

was fat, blonde and lymphatic," he wrote. . . . "I had a good talk with her, or rather *at* her, for she was not very responsive. I was disappointed, for I remember that my sprightliness made her yawn; she seemed inert and had nothing to tell me of her wizard brother, of whom she spoke as of a mystery—with a vague admiration but with genuine affection. She was simple and natural. I believe she is a very worthy woman."

We can imagine the interview between the man who talked of Keats' place among the poets, and the woman who was thinking all the time he talked of the brother as he came last to see her at Walthamstow, and of his voice and of his going away not to be seen again. What could she bring herself to say?

It would be hard to find a more disastrous picture of the sister of a great poet, but these words on which the traditional idea of Fanny have been founded give only a superficial view of the woman Severn met that April morning. Fanny at sixty may have been 'fat and blonde' but the inertia and passivity of which Locker-Lampson complains were probably only self-protection in the presence of a sprightliness to which she could not respond, and there is no sign of lethargy in her management of her family, or in her sensitiveness to the past, nor does the dullness

H. Buxton Forman, which includes the words:—"In middle life and old age she was a tall, erect, and well-developed woman."

*Señora Fanny Keats de Llanos*

(*from a photograph taken in Rome in* **1863**)

he describes appear in the only photograph ever taken of her, which belongs to the year of her meeting with him, and gives the impression that his account of her was careless and incomplete. That she is dressed as an important lady in rich silk, and posed before a photographer's background of the dome of St. Peter's was not her doing : neither were her own choice, nor were the pompous curtain and the spreading *moiré* skirts which disguise her height. But there are qualities shown in this likeness which Locker-Lampson did not perceive, humour, shrewdness, and an air of command : it is the picture of a woman accustomed, within her own world at any rate, to direct and to control. She had no cravings for society, was always diffident of new contacts and acquaintances, and, at a first meeting with a brilliant and distinguished stranger like Locker-Lampson, who moved in a different society from her own, and with whom she may have felt herself to be on show, she probably used her reserve to the point of dullness. Even with Severn, exuberant, easy and uncritical, it took her over two years to drop her gentle constraint.

He was, however, soon an intimate of the Llanos-Brockmann household, and had introduced to them at least two of his children, Arthur, and Eleanor [1] his youngest daughter, with whom Fanny and Rosa became real friends. With Valentin,

[1] Afterwards Mrs. Furneaux. There is at Keats House an affectionate letter written by Rosa Llanos after her

who had the *entrée* to diplomatic circles,[1] he was able to air his literary aspirations, Leopold Brockmann he found " of vast use in the Foreign Office enquiries " he had to make, and before long he had persuaded Isabel to sit as a model for a figure in the picture he was painting in his spare time, " The Marriage of Cana." He was also giving parties for Señora Llanos. Isabel, busy with her first baby, had taken over the housekeeping for the double family, and Fanny, with no meals to order or servants to manage, was free as she had not been since her marriage. Under Severn's enthusiastic guidance she became part of the English colony during her second spring season, and in her shy way thoroughly enjoyed herself. With Valentin she attended all the sights frequented by the English. He took her to the ballet at the Apollo Theatre, the Lent concerts where Liszt gave piano recitations, the Palatine promenade where, every Thursday afternoon, English crowds gathered in the Palace of the Cæsars to pace the terraced walks, and to watch Napoleon's workmen bringing fragments of glass, fresco, and sculpture to light through the crumbling pink soil, to San Clemente, where Father Mullooly, head of the Irish Dominicans, took parties round the

mother's death to Mrs. Furneaux. It was presented by Margaret, her daughter, Countess of Birkenhead. Mrs. Severn had not been well enough to go with Severn to Rome : she died in Marseilles in 1862, too suddenly for him to reach her.

[1] Lord Houghton states that Señor Llanos acted as Spanish representative to the Court at Rome.

lower church of the fourth century which he had discovered three years before, and to San Carlo in the Piazzo del Popolo where she might listen to Cardinal Manning preaching an English sermon. Wherever she went, sitting on the Pincian watching the sunset, walking down the Corso on the fatiguing lava pavement to look at the shops, or driving out to the Campagna in a two-horse *vettura*, she did it all as an Englishwoman. With Severn's instructions she did more. She stepped back into Keats' life where she had lost it forty years before. Keats as a poet had hardly been her affair. What she had found again in Rome was exactly what she could manage best, especially now that she felt herself to be again part of England—Keats as her brother.

A packet of papers until recently preserved by her grandchildren in Madrid shows how she pursued the search. There were of course for her in Rome, two places specially connected with John, the Piazza di Spagna and the Protestant Cemetery. She had met Severn in the first, and, standing with him outside the house on the wide white steps narrowing upwards to the double towers of Santa Trinita dei Monti, he could assure her that it was all hardly changed from the November day in 1821 when he and Keats had arrived. He could describe for her Keats mounting the steps for a short stroll with Lieutenant Elton on the Pincian during the first few weeks of their stay, could show her the exact spot on

the upper terrace where he sat alone when he had persuaded Severn to go off and sketch in the Colosseum; there as she was told, across the square, was the house where Dr. Clark had lived, there again in the house where they had taken rooms, was the window from which Keats had emptied their basketful of dinner sent in from the *trattoria*, as a protest against its bad cooking. Looking from the window across the fountain, the flower-sellers and the beggars he could assure her that only one detail had been added since Keats knew it, a pillar of Cippolino marble erected in front of the Collegio di Propaganda Fidei.[1] Everything else was the same. But when, on another day, she drove out with Severn to the Protestant Cemetery and entered by the juniper trees and the Pyramid of Caius Cestius he must have explained to her that here there was much that was different. "That grave," he wrote two years later,[2] "which I can remember as once the object of ridicule, has now become the poetic shrine of the world's pilgrims who care and strive to live in the happy and imaginative region of poetry. The head-stone having twice sunk, owing to its faulty foundation, has been twice renewed by loving strangers, and each time, I am informed, these strangers were Americans. Here they do not strew flowers, as was the wont of olden times,

[1] Raised by Piux IX, in 1854, to commemorate the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception enunciated in that year.

[2] *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1863.

but they pluck everything that is green and living on the grave of the poet. The custodian tells me, that notwithstanding all his pains in sowing and planting he cannot meet 'the great consumption.' Latterly an English lady, alarmed at the rapid disappearance of the verdure on and around the grave, actually left an annual sum to renew it. When the *Custode* complained to me of the continual thefts and asked what he was to do I replied, 'Sow and plant twice as much; extend the poet's domain; for as it was so scanty during his short life, surely it ought to be yielded to him two-fold in his grave.'" There is no record of Fanny's impressions or of her feelings. One of the first things she did was to plant two bay trees at the grave with her own hands.

It seems likely that she went alone to do this, and if so she had time and quiet to ponder the inscription on the stone. In the light of what she now understood John's fame to be she found it hard to accept, and so, she found, did Severn, indeed, as he explained to her, he had, while still in England, begun to make plans for its alteration. He gave her the story from the beginning.

"Among the many things he has requested me to-night," Severn had written to Mrs. Brawne on February 4th, 1821, "this is the principal, that on his grave shall be this:

'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.'"

Severn's delays and hesitations about the erection

of the stone are well known. The words chosen by Keats himself were probably the only part of the inscription on which his friend had allowed himself no second thoughts, but on February 3rd, 1859, he had written to Dilke about the desirability of erecting another stone, and of introducing upon it words which would cancel the falsity of the description chosen by Keats. He wrote that "it had become a downright anomaly," [1] and that the time had come "to have a true inscription beyond ridicule," and he enclosed a draft showing his proposed alterations:

This grave
contains the Mortal remains of
John Keats
a young English Poet
Who died at Rome, Feb. 20, 1821, aged 23 years.[2]
His short life
was so embittered by discouragement and sickness
that he desired these words to mark his grave
"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."
Time
Having reversed the sentence
His friends and admirers
Now inscribe his name
in Marble
1859.

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[1] This letter was presented to the Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke in 1907. It is reproduced in full in *The Keats Letters, Papers, and Other Relics*, edited by George C. Williamson, Litt.D. London, John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1914. (See also p. 171.)

[2] Severn is incorrect: Keats died on February 23, aged 25.

Dilke's opinions, not so impetuous or so decided as Severn's, were expressed in his letter to Monckton Milnes two days later : " If you are of opinion that a monument should be erected to Keats whether in Rome or in London, I shall be most happy to subscribe, but to destroy the existing monument and erect another on its site, seems to me very like falsifying history. If, as Mr. Severn says, this unseemly stone was erected when Keats' memory was cherished by few and his genius known to fewer ; and if Keats was so embittered by discouragement that he desired these words to mark his grave, then the unseemly stone tells the story of his life. If the fame of Keats be now world-wide the anomaly is another fact, and I for one am willing to join in recording it on another monument. As to the proposed inscription it is certainly not to my taste ; but if you approve I will waive my objections, and I hope you are right." [1]

Nothing had come of these intentions of 1859, and apparently Severn had allowed them to lapse. Now, in Rome once more, and with Fanny beside him, they revived, and in 1864 he put his proposal before her, and she agreed to raise a new stone. With her consent he evolved and copied out the following inscription, the last six lines being a revised edition of his proposal to Dilke :

[1] Quoted from *The Keats Letters, Papers, and Other Relics*, p. 94. In 1826 Dilke had visited Rome with his son, had seen the stone, and had approved of it.

John Keats
A Young English Poet
(whose mortal remains this kindred earth received)
died in Rome on the 24th February 1821 [1]
in his twenty-fifth year.
In his last moments he requested the following words
to mark his grave.
" Here lies one whose name was writ in water."
Time
having reversed this sentence
His only Sister
now inscribes his name
in Marble
1864.

It is easy to picture the discussion, for on the back of the slip are words in Fanny's handwriting showing alternative quotations debated by them. She herself, apparently for the moment uncertain of the date, cautiously left a blank. She wrote: " John Keats died in his 24th year on the of February, 1821, and below, the last line of verse VI of the *Adonais*: " the broken lily lies —the storm is over past," and still lower down the page the words:

" Whose master's hand is cold
Whose silver lyre unstrung."

these being the words sent to Severn by Trelawny [2]

[1] The date is again incorrect.

[2] *Letters of Edward J. Trelawny*, ed. H. Buxton Forman, 1910. Letter XIX, p. 53. To Mary W. Shelley. April 27, 1823:

" I have just compiled an epitaph for Keats and sent it to Severn, who likes it much better than the one he

in April 1823, when suggesting another epitaph for Keats' grave.

Fanny may have thought the matter was settled, may even, in a country where Ferrara marble was easy to obtain, have made tentative arrangements for the new stone since it was to be raised at her expense, but in the end, fortunately for posterity, nothing came of this discussion. She and Severn may have agreed to abandon their joint proposal, she may have discovered that she had not the money to carry it out. Whatever was the reason the new stone was never raised, and when in 1875 the original inscription, then almost illegible, was re-cut and re-leaded and a base added to the original stone, the work was carried out, not by her and Severn,[1] but on the initiative of Sir Vincent Eyre and Miss Sarah Clarke, acting on behalf

had designed. He had already designed a lyre with only two of the strings strung, as indicating the unaccomplished maturity and ripening of his genius. He had intended a long inscription about his deathbed having been caused by the *neglect* of his countrymen . . .

What I wished to substitute is simply this :

Here lie the spoils
of a
Young English Poet
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung
And by whose desire is inscribed
That his name was writ in water."

[1] The family fortunes were at their worst just then, and she wrote to Severn : " I cannot express to you my regret at not being able to send the subscription for the tomb of my dear brother."

of George Keats' daughter, Mrs. Emma Speed. Years later, in 1888, Fanny learnt that an iron railing had been placed round the grave, and that an agreement had been arrived at between the British and German Ambassadors and the Roman municipality by which the tombs of Shelley and Keats, and by that time of Severn also, were made safe for ever. The newspaper cutting describing this event she put away in Madrid with the slip described above, together with leaves of ivy, box and rose which she had cut herself, and which she labelled " From Rome." She had made for her while she was there a steel engraving of the tomb,[1] and had it always in her room in Spain : attached to it were box and violet leaves which she had picked herself.

If we had Severn's Journal we should know much more of the stages of his friendship with Señora Llanos, but even without it the few extracts from it that are available show that whatever he gave her in the way of introduction to Rome and of further knowledge of her brother was equalled by what she did for him. According to Sharp the Journal includes the following sentence dated October 29th, 1863, " Last night she and I talked over all our cares and felicities like brother and sister " and Sharp continues that " from several

[1] Now in the Museum, Keats House, Hampstead. It was given to Mr. F. H. Day (see p. 229 and following pages) by Juan Llanos after his mother's death. The drawing is signed J. Linton Chapman, 1863.

other entries during the next three or four months it is clear that Keats' sister was again and again a useful adviser and mediator in certain difficulties in which Severn was then involved." [1]

But before this time there had been other evidences of the development of their friendship. In the April of 1863 Severn's article, entitled "The Vicissitudes of Keats' Fame," was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Writing to Lord Houghton [2] in the following year, Severn had directed his attention to this article and had suggested something still more ambitious for the future. "You will find some recollections of the Poet from my pen, which have been so well appreciated that I am now calling up everything I can about him, and contemplate a work to be illustrated by my children as well as by myself. Pray tell me if such a work would be to your purpose to combine with yours. I can promise no end of new and interesting matters as my memory presents everything most vividly." No wonder it did, stimulated by his return to Rome and his talks with Keats' sister.

Señora Llanos might inspire Severn's recollections of her brother, and help him with his own

[1] I have not succeeded in tracing Severn's Journal, though several members of his family have given me assistance in my efforts to do so. There is, therefore, as yet, no means of knowing what these difficulties were.

[2] Mr. Monckton Milnes became Baron Houghton in 1863.

affairs, but through all this her characteristic caution and reserve remained; even Severn had to be tested and proved. She had taken her letters to Rome with her and must have told him about them, but not until the last months of her visit did she bring herself to let them out of her possession, and then only at his request and for a special purpose. In 1864 Lord Houghton was preparing the second edition of his *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats*. When she wrote to him in 1859, Fanny had made no mention of her letters, but probably he had heard both of them and of her presence in Rome from Locker-Lampson. In 1864 through his publisher Moxon he wrote to Severn, asking for his opinion of the letters, and on Severn's request Fanny brought herself to allow him to examine them and even to take them away. She described the incident thus in 1881: "The letters have never been out of my possession save once for a few days when I lent them to Severn in Rome." On September 28th, Severn wrote the letter [1] to Lord Houghton which delayed the appearance of these letters for twenty years; "the question asked by Mr. Moxon as to Madame de Llanos (Keats' sister) having letters, etc., I beg to answer that I have well examined them, and cannot find anything for publication as they were all addressed to a little girl, and constrained in style." [2]

[1] Crewe-Houghton MSS.

[2] Thirty years later Robert Bridges wrote of these same

*The Pyramid of Caius Cestius*

This was Severn's verdict after having come to know Fanny well and after having examined the letters in the light of her recollections. Of all the adjectives he might have selected "constrained" was among the least suitable, and to pronounce them unworthy of publication on account of their childishness showed how superficial and unimaginative his own perception of Keats had been. His opinion, however, settled the question, Lord Houghton and Mr. Moxon accepted his decision, and when the second edition of *Life, Letters and Literary Remains* appeared three years later there was no word in it of Fanny's letters.[1] Meantime, Severn had handed her back the "Bundle," and she had put it away without looking at it again.

If she had done so, she would have discovered that it was not quite as she had lent it to him, and she would have settled a question that has teased several of Keats' biographers. In the Spring of 1819 she had asked John for a picture

letters that: "it must be remembered that Keats' behaviour to his own younger sister was a pattern of brotherliness and natural affection, full of sympathy, chivalry, devotion and common sense." "John Keats, A Critical Essay," 1895.

[1] The only reference to Señora Llanos in the edition of 1867 was the same as was made in the 1848 edition: "Miss Keats shortly after married Señor Llanos, a Spanish gentleman of liberal politics and much accomplishment, the author of *Don Esteban, Sandoval the Freemason*, and other spirited illustrations of the modern history of the Peninsula." 1848 Edition, Vol. II, p. 9; 1867 Edition, p. 321.

or drawing of himself, but at the time he could not afford one, being then, as he told her, unable even to travel by coach to Walthamstow. On June 16th, 1819, he had been to Abbey to ask for some money, but could not get any. He therefore proposed to live cheaply in the country: "It will all be well in the course of a year, I hope," he wrote to her. "I am confident of it, so do not let it trouble you at all. . . . The Head[1] Mr. Severn did of me is now too dear but here enclosed is a very capital Profile done by Mr. Brown." He put the "Profile" and letter together in one of his "large thin" sheets of writing-paper, secured it with a red seal, and posted it from South Hampstead on June 18th. Fanny laid the profile away with her letters, and there it still was when she handed the packet to Severn in 1864, and there it was, for all she knew, when he returned the packet to her after his examination. It is not until nearly twenty years later, in 1881, that there is any further reference to it. Her letters from Keats were then being prepared for the press, and their editor wrote to her asking her to look for the profile to which

[1] Charcoal sketch of Keats made by Severn in the winter of 1817–18. In these words Keats could hardly have been referring to Severn's painting of him, which had only just been exhibited, and it therefore appears that the earlier sketch must have been engraved within eighteen months after it was drawn, though, up to now, the only engraving of it known has been that made by Henry Meyer in 1828 for Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries.*

Keats had alluded, and which he had been unable to find among the papers she had sent him. She replied : " The profile by Brown I have not been able to find, and it is the more strange, as the letters have never been out of my posession, except for a few days when I lent them to Severn during my residence in Rome. Perhaps it was then extracted from the letters, certainly without the knowledge of Severn. It was not missed by me, as I have not opened the letters for years."

Her words reveal at last the true history of this silhouette. It is clear that Severn extracted it from the packet when he was going through the letters, and forgot to put it back. It slipped away among his own papers, and was later assumed to be his own work, when his papers passed into the hands of his elder son, Walter. The next news of it is found in the life of Joseph Severn by William Sharp, who had been granted access to the Severn family papers by Mr. Walter Severn. Sharp reproduced the silhouette for the first time with the statement that it had been " made at the end of 1818 or early in 1819," and that " the original, in the possession of Mr. Walter Severn, was discovered only within the last few years, having been accounted lost or destroyed at a period long anterior." In 1914 it was again reproduced in *The Keats Letters, Papers, and Other Relics*, the original being stated to be then " in the possession of Mr. Nigel Severn " and described as having been " only discovered in 1890," and with " the

guarantee of its authenticity in the writing of the late Mr. Walter Severn." No more was heard of it after 1914,[1] until, in 1926, Miss Lowell reproduced it " from the original in the possession of Mrs. Herbert L. Wild, granddaughter of Joseph Severn." [2] Miss Lowell, however, differed from the conclusions of the earlier biographers about its origin, for, as she explains, in 1924 a silhouette had been sent to the Keats Memorial Association at Hampstead from Brown's descendants in New Zealand, a silhouette so like the one attributed to Severn, that, taking it together with Keats' own words, " a very capital Profile done by Mr. Brown," she could do nothing but assume that both were the work of the same hand. Miss Lowell's conjecture was correct, but it is Fanny's letter of 1881 [3] which proves her to have been so.

If, however, Severn by chance had kept her profile, he gave her a present which she valued more—a copy on ivory of his miniature of Keats, which he had painted in the winter of 1818–19 and exhibited in the Academy of the following year. To the end of his life Severn was painting

[1] The editor states : " It has been attributed to August Edouart, the famous French silhouettist ; it does not bear a very striking resemblance to Edouart's usual work, but as he executed the well-known full-length silhouette of Fanny Brawne it is quite possible that the one of the poet is also his work." *The Keats Letters, Papers, and Other Relics.*

[2] *John Keats,* Amy Lowell, Vol. II, pp. 267–8. The silhouette is still in Mrs. Wild's possession.

[3] Extract from which is here published for the first time.

portraits of Keats; he made a number of copies of this one, and several of them on ivory. Dilke possessed two ivory replicas, one of which is in the FitzWilliam Museum, Fanny's, also on ivory, is a third, and George had possessed a copy of the same miniature in America in 1825, either on ivory or canvas. Fanny may have watched Severn making this copy for her,[1] as in 1863 she watched him painting the Roman shepherd sleeping against the headstone of Keats' grave, with the moon rising behind the pyramid of Caius Cestius.[2] She considered the miniature to be "a very good likeness," so good that in 1883 she had a copy made on canvas by her granddaughter and sent it to England.

Leopold Brockmann's Roman appointment came to an end in the autumn of 1864. Pio Nono made him a Count in recognition of his services to the Railways, and he and his family moved to Paris where his next appointment would keep him for a year. The Llanos family meantime packed up for their return to Spain. They had made many interesting friends, and Fanny was reluctant to leave. Severn too was sorry when

[1] Probably copying it from the reproduction in Vol. I of Lord Houghton's edition of *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, 1848. In 1877 Severn had no other copy in Rome of his original painting, and it is possible that he had none in 1863.

[2] cf. Severn's own description in the *Atlantic Monthly* of 1863. The treatment of the subject was, he explains, inspired by *Endymion*.

the time came for her to go, judging by the following characteristic expression of regret : " this very dear lady," he wrote to Lord Houghton [1] in September, " is about to return to Spain to my severe loss, for I have had the happiness of her charming society for three years." The " very dear lady " was, meantime, collecting her possessions and filling her indispensable for the return journey. It was lighter, as we know by two items. One she was aware of,—she had given one of the letters to Locker-Lampson ; [2] the other she did not know of,—" the capital Profile by Mr. Brown." Once she was in her own home she put her " Bundle " in its usual place in her " little cabinet " without examining it. She did not return to Rome after 1865.

A new condition of living awaited them all on their return to Spain. Señor Llanos had sold his estate in Valladolid in 1861, but four years in Rome had been so distracting and entertaining for them all that they had forgotten the breaking-up of the old home in the country. They were soon to realise what it meant. Valentin, who had given up his directorships in Castile four years before, took them all to Madrid, settled them there in a house in Lopa de Vega,[3] and announced that he intended to go into business. Fanny

[1] Letter from Joseph Severn to Lord Houghton, Sept. 28, 1864. Crewe-Houghton MSS.

[2] See p. 228.

[3] A street in the centre of Madrid.

viewed the prospect with dismay. "I am not very fond of living in cities," John had written to her once, and she had shared his aversion all her life. "My grandmother," said her granddaughter,[1] "had only one point of disagreement with my grandfather, and that was on the subject of business. In the end she refused to discuss it with him or with anyone else." Fanny had every reason to be anxious. She could look back to the early days of her marriage when half her small capital had vanished in one of Valentin's commercial ventures, and forty years beside him had not led her to any more confidence in his business foresight. She had no ambition to be rich again, and no belief that a fresh expenditure of capital would result in their becoming so. If it was impossible for her to continue in her great house in Valladolid, she would be, she said, perfectly content with a cottage in the country.

Valentin, however, had his own way, and his wife's fears were soon justified. Leopold Brockmann's work in Paris finished about this time, and he went to Madrid, and after a short period of living in the Atocha,[2] took a large flat in the same house as the Llanos, and went into business with Valentin. This was early in 1868. For a time all went well, then the Revolution and the consequent disturbances in exchange began to affect business, and especially the smaller concerns, and

[1] Señora Elena Brockmann, in 1935.

[2] One of the main streets in the centre of Madrid.

within three years the greater part of the Llanos-Brockmann enterprise had failed, and Count Brockmann, having abandoned his own profession for commerce on the advice of his father-in-law, found himself out of work and with no other course open to him than to accept capital from Valentin and Fanny in order to support Isabel and his young family. Apparently he had not learnt his lesson,[1] and with this money he speculated, with disastrous results. "Unfortunately," as Fanny wrote to Severn in her usual temperate way, "we lent our capital to Leopold and all has disappeared." After a year or so Count Brockmann obtained the post of Director of the Railroads of Jerez and Sanlucar, and with his wife and family left for Andalusia. But his health was not proof against prolonged overwork and worry, and in 1878 he died, leaving Isabel with six children to bring up, without a penny of private means to do it on. Rosa Llanos had gone to Andalusia so soon as Leopold became ill, and she carried the children off to another part of the province, leaving Isabel alone to look after her husband. After he died Rosa took them back to Madrid, and all seven were received at once into their grandfather's house.

Meanwhile, Fanny, deprived of both her daughters for the first time since they had grown up, had been fully occupied. She had soon persuaded

[1] "He could never say 'No'," said his daughter Elena when speaking of her father to me in 1935.

Valentin to take her away from the business quarter of Madrid, and with Juan they had moved into a flat in a large building in Calle de Serrano, one of the wide streets on the north-eastern district of the city, just then being opened up and developed on the American plan of blocks and straight lines. Luis, her younger son, with his wife and child went with them and for a time shared their flat. Then the child died and Luis and his wife found for themselves a flat in Calle de Lista, at a house, No. 5, just then being erected only a few yards from the one in Calle de Serrano. They moved in and settled down. Meantime catastrophe had overtaken the Brockmann family, and Rosa was on her way back from Andalusia with Isabel and the children, of whom the eldest boy Ernesto was sixteen, and the youngest girl Marguerite, only three. Fanny took everything in hand. She found a large flat at 5, Calle de Lista, on the floor above Luis', and moved her own family there, and at the same time took for the Brockmanns a smaller flat on the same floor which had a communicating door with her own, and arranged for a joint dining-room for the two families for the sake of economy. Perhaps, as she made these preparations for her grandchildren, she may have reflected that the position was not unlike that of her own grandmother seventy years before, as, at Ponders End, she and Mr. Jennings prepared to take in Frances Keats and her four children.

Such was the history of the twelve years be-

tween 1865 and 1877, a period for which there are no documents, and for which all the information has come from Isabel's eldest daughter [1] who was eleven years old when her family went to live with their grandmother. The history of the next twelve years is, in some ways, easier to trace, for much of it is to be read in Fanny's correspondence with her English friends, which began in July 1877, with a letter to Severn.[2] She had not heard from him for some time, but evidently she still relied on his friendship, and when, during this summer, she received two letters which she found disturbing, and which had relation to her brother, she wrote to him for advice. The first letter was dated July 27th: in it she told him that she had received a letter from Mr. H. Buxton Forman about a work on which he was occupied in connection with Keats' life and poetry, and that he had asked her for information. Her second letter was dated from Madrid on September 3rd. A nephew in America, John Gilmer Speed,[3] up to this time unknown to her, had written sending her some account of "Haydon's Autobiography" [4] with its scurrilous references to

[1] Señora Elena Brockmann.

[2] In a letter written after Fanny's death, Rosa remarks that Fanny's correspondence with Severn began in 1867, but no letter of this date is in existence to-day.

[3] Son of Philip Speed and Emma Frances Keats, third daughter of George Keats.

[4] Thus described by Speed. Haydon's history is recorded in his journals. These are represented in print by (i) *Life*

Keats' habits and behaviour. He told her also that in America " an unusual interest was excited " regarding Keats' history, and he enclosed newspaper articles which gave highly coloured and false accounts of the poet's origin, of John's relations with George on the question of money, and mistaken references to " Keats's ' Chariman '." [1] " My excuse for calling your attention to these matters is," Mr. Speed had written, " that I intend writing a biography of John Keats, and would be glad to get your testimony in regard to the subjects herein mentioned, and also any other information you might kindly suggest." Fanny, somewhat bewildered at the enclosures and the request, wrote to Severn.[2]

MY DEAR MR. SEVERN,

I enclose to you a letter which I have received from the grandson of my brother George, which is anything but pleasant to me. I have not seen the Autobiography of Haydon; but from what my nephew says it contains a shameful calumny against my dear brother. Though perfectly persuaded of its falsity I have not the means of answering it in such a manner as to prove it a

*of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, in 3 vols., edited by Tom Taylor, 1853, and (ii) *Benjamin Robert Haydon, Correspondence and Table Talk*, edited by his son, Frederick Wordsworth Haydon, in 2 vols., 1876. It is to this second publication that Speed is referring.

[1] The name Keats gave to an acquaintance, Miss Jane Cox, mistaken by some for Fanny Brawne.

[2] Both these letters are included in William Sharp's *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*.

falsehood. Tell me, can an answer be given strong enough to remove the only stain [1] upon a character so pure and noble, or must we bear it with patience?

It seems my nephew intends writing another biography.[2] I am sorry for it.

There is no record of Severn's advice, or of the letters she subsequently sent to America to Mr. Speed.

But the most important sentence in the two letters she despatched to Rome during this summer was not in this letter of September, but in the earlier one of July 27th, where she alluded to her letter from England and the projected work on Keats. Harry Buxton Forman had first met Severn in Rome in 1872, had corresponded with him during the following years, and in the summer of 1877 he wrote to him and to Fanny for information on points of detail in connection with Keats, his first letter to her being dated July 6th, a similar request to Severn being sent some time in August. They received his requests differently, Severn professing himself ready to give any information

[1] Mr. Speed had written to her: "In Haydon's Autobiography he says that during Keats' last year he was nearly always under the influence of strong drink, and that his spirits rose and sank according to his potations."

[2] *Letters and Poems of John Keats*, in 3 vols., edited by J. Gilmer Speed, Dodd Mead & Co., 1883. The book was dedicated to his mother, "Emma Keats Speed, whose pious care preserved the most valuable of the MSS. used herein."

in his power, Fanny confiding to Severn that she "did not consider the information at all necessary," after having sent a typically reserved and rather chilling reply to the editor on July 25th:

SIR,

In answer to your letter of the 6th, I am sorry to say I cannot give you any information respecting the names of the persons mentioned in my dear Brother's letter; but I am quite convinced that the lady alluded to there was not Miss Brawne, she not being an East Indian, nor having a Grandfather living at that time.[1]

Though the information was useful the way in which it was given was hardly a promising beginning to a correspondence with the woman who was Keats' only living relative and who had been the great friend of Fanny Brawne, but Buxton Forman was not daunted, and in November he wrote again putting further questions. But his second letter brought no immediate reply: it found Fanny absorbed in the Brockmann tragedy, and she set his letter aside.

[1] The enquiry relates to the description of a lady in the letter from John to George Keats of Oct. 29, 1818. She is now known to have been Miss Jane Cox, was born in India, and was a cousin of the Reynolds who introduced her to Keats. Buxton Forman disposed of the supposition that Keats' reference to her was a reference to Miss Brawne. See his introduction to *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, p. xxxi. "Keats' sister," he wrote in concluding his argument, "who is still happily alive, assures me positively that the reference is not to Miss Brawne."

By 1877 Buxton Forman was collecting and preparing material for his library edition of Keats' works,[1] but the point on which he questioned her makes it clear that it was not for this but for another smaller book that he wanted her help. Throughout its preparation the utmost secrecy was preserved about it. "A work in connection with the life and poetry of my dear brother," Fanny had written to Severn, and she had described it thus because she had not been told its title;[2] Mary Cowden Clarke, hearing from Buxton Forman within a few weeks of its appearance, only knew from him that he was about to issue "a little volume of Keats' letters," and even Severn repeatedly consulted, had to ask its nature, and when told was apparently given to understand that it must not be disclosed, for he wrote promising to maintain the secret. Some of the reasons for this secrecy were evident when the book appeared early in the New Year of 1878. It was: *The Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*,[3] dedicated

[1] Published in 1883.

[2] After its publication the editor told her that Miss Lindon, with whom he had put her in touch, would give her the reasons for this secrecy if she wished to know them. He assured her that they were not connected with her own family.

[3] *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, written in the years MDCCCXIX and MDCCCXX and now given from the original manuscripts with introduction and notes, by Harry Buxton Forman. London, Reeves and Turner, MDCCCLXXVIII.

to Severn, and with a long introduction by the Editor, H. Buxton Forman.

The surprise which greeted the book was only equalled by the disapproval and indignation it aroused. As literature the letters were pronounced by many as unworthy to set beside other letters of Keats which had been published, and some of Keats' most fervent admirers were furious that his private life should thus be spied upon and revealed. Nor was this feeling soon over. In literary circles it persisted for the next forty years. Matthew Arnold [1] was among the first to express his disgust. "Character and self-control," he wrote, "are wanting to the Keats of the Letters to Fanny Brawne. These letters make as unpleasing an impression as Haydon's anecdotes. Their publication appears to me, I confess, inexcusable," and his further criticisms set the tone of much which followed from later critics, Swinburne, Patmore, and others. Sir Sidney Colvin, after having decided that however much the letters might be regretted they could not be ignored, would not include them in his own collection. "In this, which I hope may become the standard edition of his correspondence they shall find no place," he wrote in 1918.[2]

[1] "John Keats," by Matthew Arnold, an essay prefixed to the selections from Keats in *Ward's English Poets*, Vol. IV, 1880.

[2] *Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends*, edited by Sidney Colvin, London, 1918.

But none of these critics had known Keats, and when the book appeared there was only one personal friend of his alive. Severn's reactions to the publication were vacillating. Told beforehand about it by the editor, he had expressed his delight that the letters were to be given to the world, flattered by the dedication of the volume to himself and by the use of his last drawing of Keats for its frontispiece, he concealed any misgivings he had while the book was in preparation, and, when he received a copy from Buxton Forman, wrote in reply that he had read the letters with pain for what they disclosed of the poet's sufferings of mind, and that he was uncertain of their reception by the public. This view, however, gives no hint of what he must have written to America, where, his correspondent told him, "you can have no idea of the interest there is . . . touching everything that concerns Keats." "Yes, dear friend," wrote Mr. James T. Fields of Boston[1] to Severn on February 3rd, 1879, "I think with you that the publication of those letters to Fanny Brawne is an outrage on the poet's memory, and I say so in my lecture every time

[1] James T. Fields, an American author, for many years an active partner in the publishing house of Ticknor & Fields, Boston. He paid many visits to Europe, and in America gave lectures about his intercourse with literary men in England, and wrote a series of papers in the *Atlantic Monthly* (1871) on the same subject which were reprinted by himself under the title *Yesterdays with Authors*, Boston, 1872.

I read it. To tear his heart out in this way, and exhibit it to the gaping crowd is pitiful indeed."

This verdict of the critics when the book appeared will be considered by most Keats scholars to-day as morbidly sentimental and unsound. Most will agree with the editor's opinion that if anything was to be said about Keats' love-story nothing less than the whole should be told.[1]

This general criticism was the background to Fanny Keats' reception of the book, but we are concerned here not with its effect on the world of letters, which is well known, but with its effect on her. Severn evidently wrote freely what he felt to America, we do not know what, if anything, he wrote to Madrid. News of the volume to the only other person living besides himself who had known Keats—his sister—came, not through Severn, but through Sir Charles Dilke,[2] who, with none of Severn's hesitations, denounced the book publicly and at once. Within a few weeks of its appearance he published in the

[1] The letters were purchased from Mr. Herbert Brawne Lindon for £100, by F. Ellis (bookseller), three of them having been given to H. Buxton Forman in recognition of his work as editor. The remainder were sold by auction at Sotheby's on March 2, 1885, the prices obtained ranging from £6 10*s*. to £39. They thus became generally dispersed and the present ownership of less than half is now known.

[2] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, 1843–1911. In 1869 he succeeded to the proprietorship of the *Athenæum* and *Notes and Queries*.

*Athenæum*[1] a long article deploring the publication, and pouring scorn upon the motives and efforts of its editor. It must be judged that he sent this article to Fanny, or that he wrote to her in similar terms telling her of the nature of the publication, for, before she had seen the book, she wrote to Dilke agreeing with his opinion and expressing her dismay. On March 23rd the following paragraph appeared in the *Athenæum*: "Madame Llanos, the sister of John Keats, has written to her friends in England expressing strong disapproval of the publication of her brother's love-letters."

On March 26th Fanny received a copy of the book from Dilke. She has left no record of what she thought as she turned its pages, but it is not perhaps an idle speculation that she would be even more disturbed by what she read than she had been when she made her protest to Dilke. Some of the points mentioned by the editor as justification for the production were the very ones which would have decided her against it. "The present volume," she read, "portrays the 'one profound passion' as perfectly as it is possible for such a passion to be portrayed without the revelation of things too sacred for even the most reverent and worshipful public gaze, while it gives considerable insight into the refinements of a nature only too keenly sensitive to pain and injury, and the inherent hardness of things mundane."

[1] See Appendix I, p. 269.

With the book beside her she was prompted to reply at last to Buxton Forman's letter of four months before, which, either deliberately or through family preoccupations, she had neglected to answer, but she gave him no clue to her feelings, and her letter dated March 27th is entirely negative and colourless. After a line or two about family troubles being in some part responsible for her delay she continued :

" I am sorry that the little information I might have given you is now quite useless, as your work has already been published, and yesterday I received a copy from my friend Sir Charles Dilke."

Buxton Forman, who had been puzzled by the *Athenæum* paragraph and also by another about her which had appeared in the same issue, replied on April 4th, sending her copies of these paragraphs asking for explanation, and forwarding another copy of the book.[1] This letter, the third only which she had received from him, must have given her a new view of his attitude and motives, for the letter she sent him on May 6th was in a very different tone, but even so it shows how deep and how passionate her distress had been. Fifty years after Brown's demand of Fanny Brawne, and her anguished assent to his request,

[1] It is evident that Fanny possessed two copies of this book, one sent her by Dilke, the other sent her by Buxton Forman. Neither of these were in the possession of her grandchildren in Madrid in 1935, nor did they know anything about them.

Fanny Keats made the same ineffectual protest against sharing with the world the knowledge of her brother's private griefs :

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your kind letter and the book, for which I sincerely thank you.

To be frank with you, I must own that my first impression on hearing of the publication of the Letters was most painful and in the heat of the moment I thus expressed myself to Sir Charles Dilke, but without the slightest idea of my opinion being made public. In my letter to you I made no observation upon the publication, for I had then had time for reflection, that, as the Letters did not belong to me, the owner of them was at liberty to publish them, under the condition of their being true and faithful copies, which I plainly see that they are. My enthusiasm and adoration of my dear brother are as strong in me at this moment as when the blood of youth flowed in my veins. Is it strange then, that knowing his excessive sensitiveness, I should shrink at the idea that his most sacred feelings should be conned over by persons indifferent to his merit? Have the kindness to answer this and let me know if I have lost your esteem by my hastiness. If this should unfortunately be the case I assure you I shall be most deeply grieved.

This letter reached London on May 9th, and Buxton Forman, now enlightened, answered immediately. He explained at length his motive in advising the publication, and told her of his con-

viction, reached after long debate with himself, that only the complete story of Keats' life should be given to the public, and that only by giving every fact known could justice be done to his memory. He believed, so he told her, that if Keats himself had had the choice, he would have decided that, rather than imperfect and inaccurate versions, the whole story should be given. He assured her of his own refusal to be disturbed by any criticisms in the press from whichever side of the Atlantic they might come, and he added his regret that the publication should have caused her pain.

As her letter of May 6th shows, Fanny had realised during the weeks which had passed since the arrival of the book in March, that whatever her feelings about it might be, she had not the right of protest, and this fourth letter from the editor told her much of which she was unaware, and convinced her particularly of Buxton Forman's sincerity of purpose and goodwill. She believed, from what she read, that his motive in publishing was founded on affection for the memory of her brother, and she never lost this belief. Yet, though she never allowed her feelings about the book to affect her friendship with Buxton Forman which dated from this letter of May 14th, it is certain that his arguments did not reconcile her to its publication. She shows herself dignified, courteous, and fair in judgment, but her few loyalties were passionate, and this one to her

brother was living, sensitive and unchangeable. She never referred to the book again in her letters to England.

The letter of May 14th had been occupied, however, with another matter than the book, and it was concerning this second point that her correspondence with Buxton Forman was to become active. She had told Severn of her financial anxieties when she was in Rome, and Severn when writing to Lord Houghton in 1864, had put forward the suggestion that with his help she might be granted a British pension. "It occurs to me," he wrote to Lord Houghton, "that through your great kindness (which I know so well) a pension might be obtained for her as the Sister of the illustrious Poet, and also as the only remaining member of his family. Lord Palmerston would certainly incline to any such request from you as you are the elegant biographer of the Poet, and a distinguished Poet yourself." [1] Nothing came of this proposal. In July 1877, faced with the Brockmann tragedy as well as with Valentin's misfortunes, Fanny raised the question again with Severn, wondering if a pension could be obtained through Mr. Gladstone, believing (erroneously) that he was in office. "If it is not unpleasant to you, you might make the request to him," she wrote, "but on no account if you feel the least dislike to ask him a favour." Severn replied evidently promising to take the matter up,

[1] Letter of Sept. 28, 1864. Crewe-Houghton MSS.

for on September 3rd she wrote again : " I return you my warmest thanks for your sincere interest in my welfare." Severn had retired from his Consulship five years before this, in 1877 his energies were failing,[1] and perhaps he felt unable to pursue his intentions and promises. But though once more nothing came of the suggestion with Severn, some word of it had reached England, for Buxton Forman concluded his letter of May 9th, 1878, with a request for some explanation of the second paragraph in the *Athenæum* of March 23rd which ran as follows :

" Madame Llanos, who has long lived in Madrid, is the only surviving sister of Keats. At an advanced age, and when her health is impaired, she finds herself reduced to poverty by unexpected circumstances. Under such circumstances it would be a graceful act on the part of the Prime Minister to grant a pension from the Civil List to the sister of the great poet, whose fame as an English classic is so securely established." [2]

On May 14th she replied :

" I have received your kind and friendly letter of the 9th, and beg to express to you my warmest gratitude for the interest you manifest for me and mine. May heaven reward you for your affection towards the memory of my poor brother. I now proceed to explain to you the second paragraph.

[1] He died on August 3, 1879.

[2] The *Athenæum*, March 23, 1878, No. 2630, p. 383. Literary Gossip.

This was published by Sir Charles Dilke with the kindest intentions though without my knowledge. The word 'poverty' was a little strong . . . my poverty is comparative not positive. I am in what is considered reduced circumstances . . . some five years hence we had heavy and unmerited losses. . . . I don't remember whether I informed you of the death of my son-in-law, an eminent engineer leaving my daughter a widow with scanty means and a family of 6 children. This heavy misfortune gave me the idea of endeavouring to procure a pension as a means of educating these fine talented children as mine have been educated. Having been a friend of the Dilkes from my childhood I thought no person was more likely to serve me than the grandson of my guardian, and consequently I wrote to Sir Charles explaining my wishes. He answered me very kindly, but from his political position was unable to serve me, he however recommended me to write to Lord Houghton . . . hitherto I have received no answer . . . I give you these details that you may know my true situation, and my motives for acting as I have done."

These letters show the basis on which her friendship with Buxton Forman was founded. Through his practical kindness he soon became her confidential friend and adviser, " the last link," as she said, " which binds me to England." For him she was the last living link with Keats.

## CHAPTER VII

## MADRID

SEÑORA LLANOS made no secret to Buxton Forman of her financial worries and he took up her problem where Severn had left it. During the summer and autumn of 1878 he succeeded in securing distinguished support for a memorial soliciting a Civil List Pension for her, and this was presented to the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield, in January 1879, by Tennyson, the names attached to the memorial including all the best known poets of the day. Meanwhile he suggested to her two other possible sources of help but found her reluctant to accept from either, "especially," she wrote, "as I have no personal merit to adduce." "I thank you very sincerely for your idea of the Royal Literary Fund, but I am of opinion that the application ought not to be made, and with respect to the private subscription I must beg of you to return my warmest thanks to your friends for their sympathy and their desire to honour the name of Keats in my insignificant person. I think you will be of opinion that if I receive the pension I ought not to receive any other assistance, it would be a want of delicacy."

In the early spring the pension was refused for a reason which she found difficult to understand. "I am naturally *very sorry* for our failure," she wrote on April 4th, "and greatly surprised that being married to a foreigner should have influenced the decision of the Minister. Am I not still the only sister of Keats?" A grant of £150 was made to her, however, from the Queen's Bounty Fund, and though she would have been content with this, Buxton Forman persuaded her to allow him to proceed with his second idea for additional help. "My duty to my poor widowed daughter and her children," she wrote, "obliges me to sacrifice all personal feelings upon the subject of the subscription, and I therefore throw myself entirely upon your goodness to act as you think best under the circumstances." Buxton Forman treated the grant as a nucleus for raising an adequate fund for her provision, and, having secured donations from the signatories to the Pension Memorial, he, together with Richard Garnett and W. M. Rossetti, issued a public appeal for subscriptions and sent it to the Libraries and the Press.[1] "It is thought," stated *The Times* of June 11th, 1879, "that the public will not grudge its support when solicited in Keats' name." Buxton Forman had no easy task, for the appeal

[1] The first list of subscribers was headed by Lord Rosebery, and included many eminent poets and authors—D. G. Rossetti, Alfred Austin, Austin Dobson, F. T. Palgrave, Matthew Arnold, Leslie Stephen, Coventry Patmore.

was an unusual one in some respects and Señora Llanos was beset with scruples and hesitations, and sent him frequent instructions with Victorian underlinings : " the *very necessary* paragraph in the papers I own makes me tremble a little, but I am convinced that *it is necessary* and that I must sacrifice my private feelings for the benefit of my family. In this paragraph you will touch family matters as lightly as possible, and I think you might found your appeal upon my not being fortunate enough to obtain a pension, which will prove sufficiently that I am in need of assistance, for no one would willingly ask a favour of this kind from mere interested motives. Perhaps I am presuming too much upon your goodness, but I think you will pardon me. Please to give my most sincere thanks to the two gentlemen who are associated with you for the receipt of the subscription." The fund did not reach the dimensions which Mr. Buxton Forman had hoped, but it realised over £300 by the autumn of 1880 [1] and he only closed it in November when the earlier decision about the pension was reversed. Acting on his information Lord Houghton and Sir Charles Dilke (then Under-Secretary of State) had used their influence, and, most important of all, Mr. Gladstone had become Prime Minister. In laying the petition before the Queen he was setting a seal upon his life-long admiration for Keats which had begun when, with Hallam, Monckton Milnes

[1] The actual total was £302 14*s*. 6*d*.

and Tennyson, he had, in 1829, first helped to waken the English public to Keats' poetry; perhaps also he derived some small satisfaction from reversing the decision of Lord Beaconsfield. The main conspirators to this happy conclusion might well be pleased with the result of their persistence; Buxton Forman and Sir Charles Dilke became trustees for the pension, and Señora Llanos, distrustful of her "own tact in letter writing," sent messages through the former to Lord Houghton and other English supporters. To the originator of the scheme she wrote on September 20th, 1880, "I am sure you will be very glad to hear the good news. Believe me I am most sincerely grateful to you for having brought the affair to a favourable issue, for I am certain that without your assistance I should never have had the courage to persevere when the case appeared so hopeless."

The pension scheme was not, however, the only subject of her correspondence with Buxton Forman during the year 1879. Perhaps he had already heard, either from Locker-Lampson or from Severn, of the letters she possessed and of the recollections she cherished. With the Fanny Brawne publication out of the way he was concentrating on his larger work on Keats, and in the spring of 1879 he began to put questions to her about the Keats family history, and received from her through the summer detailed and careful replies. But when he introduced the subject of

her letters he met for the first time her gentle obduracy. Her answer repeated almost word for word Severn's judgment to Lord Houghton of sixteen years before. On September 1st she wrote : " I have several letters of my dear brother John, but they were written to a mere child, and of no public interest ; had I been some years older at the time they were written they would have been invaluable."

She had not looked at these letters for years, perhaps not since she had been in Rome, and in the light of what she wrote to England at this time and later, it is not difficult to guess her thoughts, as, prompted by Buxton Forman's repeated enquiries, she looked them through in her hot sitting-room on the fourth floor in Madrid. She recognised their simplicity, she remembered the questions in her own letters, trivial now, but important then, which had provoked John's replies, the small personal concerns and affairs they described. What interest could there be in them she asked herself, to Mr. Buxton Forman, and to the world ? For these very reasons Severn had judged them unsuitable for publication, and by 1880 she knew much more than she had done in Rome of Keats' fame. She could understand why Lord Houghton had published the letters Keats had written to his friends, they dealt with literary and general questions ; Fanny Brawne, so she now knew, had told her children to keep his letters to her, as one day they would be con-

sidered to be of value; but, so far as she could see, there were no similar reasons for publishing these letters of hers. She had not been grown-up when John wrote them as his friends and Fanny Brawne had been. She did not wish her own letters different for what they were, but equally she did not wish that any letters should appear which would not enhance his reputation. Besides all this, she was making her last bid for reticence about her brother. She sent off her answer to Buxton Forman probably hoping the matter was closed.

She was to discover that she had underestimated two things—the value of her possessions, and the pertinacity of her English correspondent. Buxton Forman refused to be dismissed, but he began his campaign gradually. In April 1881, Señora Llanos received a letter of requests which she could not evade, and put with such persuasion that she was obliged to relent in some degree. "Your first three questions I am sorry to say I am quite unable to answer," she wrote on May 2nd, "for I was very young when the first volume of poems was written. . . . I have no letters of my brother Tom, but have many of George. If they are of any service to you I will forward them with the greatest pleasure." She received the obvious reply, despatched these during the same month to England, and they were sent back to her by the end of June. Encouraged perhaps by their speedy return she wrote, on July 1st, 1881, the letter which

at last, after a year's questionings, gave Buxton Forman the promise of what he wanted. "I have received the letters," she wrote of George's, "and am very glad they produced so favourable an impression on you. If ever you require them they will always be at your disposal as well as many others I possess of both my brothers. I don't think it is easy to meet with a family more devoted to each other than we were. Perhaps it was owing in part to our being left orphans at an early age, and thus we clung closer to each other."

"As well as many others I possess of both my brothers." This was an enlarged version of what she had told him ten months before, when she had written of "several letters" from John, and Buxton Forman's reply may be imagined. Under his enthusiasm and tact her last reluctance disappeared. On October 2nd she wrote, "On the 27th of last month I sent you by the messenger a small case containing my Brother's letters. Many of them were mere notes, but I have included them, as they will show you the sincere affection which united us all, and my great unhappiness in being separated from them from my childhood." The letters arrived safely at Marlborough Hill. On December 3rd, in reply to Mr. Forman's acknowledgments, she wrote, "I am glad you like the letters, and can so fully estimate their value," and her next letter shows the extent of her concessions. He may "copy the letters,"

" select such as may seem best," and " return the originals months hence if it suits you."

It was not until two months after her offer, that she was able to send the letters to him and in those two months she had time for reflection. She realised that they were to pass out of her care, for she had told him to do with them as he thought best. It seemed certain that some of them, at any rate, would be printed, and, if so, they would be hers alone no longer. It seemed too that it would be some time before the book would be published and she must not be in a hurry to retrieve the originals. Turning over the letters she found that the problem resolved itself into two questions : was she prepared after all these years to be without any of John's letters, was she willing to see all of them in print ? She had promised to send them to England, but she was unable to say " yes " in her own mind to either of these questions. She saw at last that there was a simple way out : she would not send them all. She need not disclose this to Mr. Forman ; the letters were hers to do with as she would. She went through the bundle again, extracted from it the two [1] which she valued most and put them away in her cabinet, saying nothing to anyone. The remainder she packed up, and when Luis returned to Madrid in September, he despatched them for her by the British Embassy

[1] The ' Confirmation ' Letter, dated March 31, 1819, and the last letter of all, dated Sept. 11, 1820.

Messenger to Hampstead. In the whole of her later correspondence with Buxton Forman there is no reference to the two letters she kept.[1]

It here becomes necessary to see exactly what was in the case which Señora Llanos had sent to England. Mr. Buxton Forman, on opening it, found forty-four letters in Keats' handwriting, the first of which was dated from Oxford on September 10th, 1817, and the last from Hampstead on August 23rd, 1820. He knew also of one other in Mr. F. Locker-Lampson's possession, and of this he obtained a copy. All forty-five appeared in *The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats*,[2] twenty-four of the forty-five being in Volume III, and the remaining twenty-one in Volume IV. Señora Llanos received a copy of the work as a present from the editor, and must have been instructed and surprised as she read his preface. In spite of her advice to him "to select such as may produce the most favourable impression" he had printed them all. She turned again and again to page xiii and read: "The letters of Keats to his sister, which form so large a proportion of the letters now first published, throw a flood of new light on his character. We knew him in nearly all relations except that of a protecting brother to a younger sister; and it is this hiatus in his delightful personality that these charming letters fill." Yet, as on January 10th,

[1] See p. 248, n. 1.

[2] By H. Buxton Forman, London, 1883.

1884, she sat down to write her acknowledgments, excitement and surprise did not deprive her of her usual reserve. "I beg to return you my warmest thanks for your invaluable present. It will be an heirloom in my family and the most precious I could possibly leave them. I have not yet looked through the whole, for I am somewhat nervous at present, and it requires courage to reflect upon past times, and scenes still so fresh in my memory." She was not eighteen when she received Keats' last letter, she was over eighty when she wrote these words, but though the books lay beside her for nine years longer, after this brief survey she looked at them no further; she never brought herself to read her own letters in print and only once referred to them again in writing to England.[1] Her correspondence with Buxton Forman after 1883 was chiefly occupied with her money affairs and with the doings of her large household.

These two topics were bound together. From the time when Isabel arrived from Andalusia early in 1878, her mother regarded herself as equally responsible with her for the welfare of the six children, and at the age of seventy-four threw herself into plans for their future as if she were back again in her early life at Valladolid. By this time Valentin was eighty-three and rather

[1] Jan. 30, 1884: "A friend sent me the *Pall Mall Budget* that I might see the observations on your Work. I am happy to see that my letters produced a good effect which I have no doubt will be general."

frail; since the failure of his last business venture he had been content to sit at home writing innumerable letters and translating Spanish drama for a problematical English market, relying on Luis to carry through outside affairs, and content to leave everything in his wife's hands including the education of their grandchildren. With memories of the training he had planned for their own children she was determined that her grandchildren should have equal chances, but for this money was needed, the family resources were low, and there were now seven additional people to provide for. "I don't understand a word about business," she once wrote, but in this she was hardly fair to herself. She may have known little about stocks and shares and investments but she knew how to economise, and even before outside help arrived she was adjusting the family budget to meet the new demands. But the unexpected funds from England, the grant from the Queen's Bounty, the Pension, and the subscription, and the advice given to her by Buxton Forman [1] made all the difference to her plans. News of the family achievements was faithfully sent to England.

[1] He invested the amount publicly subscribed in Queensland Stock for her. "I beg to thank you for the trouble you have taken in making out my accounts. This is another of the many proofs of your brotherly interest in me for which I can never be sufficiently grateful. If it had not been for your friendship in the midst of my many difficulties I should never have been able to attend to the maintenance and education of my grandchildren."

" You will be glad to hear," she wrote in June 1879, " that my eldest grandson [1] has passed his first examination with great brilliancy. He is studying for the profession of Engineer of which his father was an eminent member." Again, in 1882, " The girls are educated at home and we manage to teach them English, French, Spanish, Music, Painting. Helena,[2] the eldest, evinces great talent for painting. Juan of course is her master." And again two years later, " One of her younger sisters is studying music under my daughter Rosa, who is quite a professor. I don't know whether I have told you this before. If so, excuse a Mother's vanity. Our house is a complete Academy and we have no need of Professors except for the two boys, the eldest of whom will next year be accepted as a Civil Engineer, and his younger brother [3] is studying in the same profession. Thank God all the children have natural talent which I trust will enable them to make a respectable appearance in the world."

The last three words show Señora Llanos' natural ambitions for her grandchildren, but in fact, except for their professions, they seem to have found few interests in the outside world. During her life-time and afterwards they repeated the behaviour of her own family in Valladolid, suffi-

[1] Ernesto.

[2] Her name was almost always spelt thus by her grandmother.

[3] Enrique. Alive in Madrid in 1937, aged 71.

cient to themselves, and concentrating to an extraordinary degree upon each other's achievements, successes and disappointments, and upon the family life together. No doubt the customs of the country and period contributed to this behaviour, no doubt they were influenced by their Mother. Isabel Brockmann, handsome, dark and tall, considering the gaieties she had enjoyed during her married life, might have been expected to have some liking for society, but after 1878 she seems to have chosen deliberately the seclusion of her family. She never attended a single function after Leopold's death, though she survived him fifty years,[1] and the painted fans and amethyst necklace which she had worn at official receptions in Rome, Paris and Lisbon hung in a glass case on the wall and remained there. Only two of Fanny's four children [2] had married, and only two of Isabel's children brought up at Calle de Lista did so, Marguerite, and another daughter, a second Isabel. " Always," the only one of her four daughters living to-day, says with emphasis, " always, always together." Señor Llanos, spare, distinguished and a little bent, sitting among papers and books in his study, may have compared with some astonishment the staid routine which satisfied his grandchildren and the exciting adventures of his own youth.

[1] She died in 1926.

[2] It will be remembered that Señora Llanos had six children and lost two in infancy. Isabel, Countess Brockmann, also lost two in infancy, Adrian and Fanny.

With an atmosphere so concentrated and so enclosed the house in Calle de Lista might have become a domestic prison. Señora Llanos at its centre kept it from being anything of the kind. Energetic and strong willed, she had more vitality even in old age than anyone in the house, save her granddaughter Elena, and all of them drew upon it. She knew each one of her grandchildren individually as she had known well the characters of her own children, realising their limitations and penetrating their possibilities, and dealing with both with discretion and intuitive affection. "He is so shy and serious that he does not manage to introduce himself among people who might be of service to him," she had written of her son Juan to Severn in 1877, and later to England, "as a copyist he is admirable," five of her grandchildren she found to be "good looking and not wanting in talent," but in her young and beautiful granddaughter Elena Brockmann she recognised original ability: "I think she may one day be an eminent artist," and again when these hopes were coming true: "She is a real artist, and an honour to the family."[1]

The woman, white-haired, tall and still erect, whom her grandchildren saw when they were old

[1] It is of interest to compare here Fanny's judgment of Severn's artistic efforts. She wrote to him in 1877, "do you still amuse yourself with your painting?" This looks as if she had hardly taken all of it seriously, much as she prized his portrait of her brother.

enough to know her well is pictured in two portraits now hung at Keats House. Judging from these she kept in some degree, even in old age, the likeness to her brother Tom which had sent her, ghostlike, wandering through John's imagination in Rome. For years she had evaded the photographer, convinced that the making of any representation of herself would be a waste of time, and she had firmly refused Juan's and Elena's requests to paint her. She only consented to photograph and portrait after long entreaty and to please her English correspondent, and even then regarded the whole matter with detachment, sending humorous and cynical apologies to London. "I have no photograph of myself, but I will send you one when the weather will permit me to mount a hundred stairs.[1] I only hope it may not produce an unpleasant impression." But though she had no interest in her own appearance, once she had made up her mind she did not wish the reality disguised, and Juan, who painted the first of her two portraits,[2] did not find her an easy subject. She was willing to sit still but took an unusual view of his efforts, and held arguments with him while he worked because she thought he did not

[1] Señora Brockmann believes that this photograph was never taken. There is no trace of it.

[2] This one, painted by Juan for H. Buxton Forman, now hangs in Keats House, a second painted by Elena became later the property of Mr. F. H. Day and is in the same collection.

bring out the lines of age sufficiently. Characteristically she refused to pose in anything but an everyday garment. All her dresses were simply made in black, all according to an English pattern, with a plain skirt and a folded bodice with a touch of real lace at the neck held by a single jewel. In Juan's portrait this was a brooch, a large oval gold affair enclosing a single amethyst, in her granddaughter's, a design of three feathers in diamonds.[1] "Few ladies venture to have their portrait taken at my age," she wrote, as she packed up the first picture to go to London, "therefore it is rather a curiosity and something of a ruin." Her anxiety not to disguise her age prevented the artist from achieving his best, and in reality her children did not agree with her own views about her appearance. After her death her elder daughter, sending a photograph of her picture to her great-nephew in America, wrote, "I was afraid it would lose in likeness, this has been preserved, though there is something severe in the expression which she had not."

For, though Señora Llanos ruled her household, it was not by severity, and she would have been surprised if she had known what she stood for to every member of it. What she was to them arose from two things, the vigour of her personality and the fact that she remained all her life an

[1] Señora Brockmann believes this brooch to have come from, or been given to her grandmother in England, and by her grandfather.

Englishwoman, while they, despite their share of English blood and despite her training, were all of them Spanish in outlook and in tastes. Though she had spent fifty years in Spain she never read or spoke the language easily, and she had kept her own and John's early antipathy to French. She had insisted that her own children should learn her language, and Juan, Rosa, and Luis all spoke and wrote it, Juan in particular being a fluent linguist. Isabel had been her only disappointment, for having left home early she had lost the English she had learnt there, and she had never achieved more than a smattering of French. Now when the grandchildren made little progress in English Señora Llanos allowed them no concessions; she always spoke to them in her own language, and those who did not make efforts to learn it had to get on with her as best they could. But they did not find her difficult to understand and the effort was always worth while; the longer they lived beside her the more fascinating and unusual their English grandmother became to them all.

She had become by this time, though she was entirely unaware of it, something of a figure to the American relatives. George had been dead for forty years, and Georgiana, whom she had only met once or twice in England, had married again, and had died in 1879. But in 1865 after her return from Rome Fanny had put herself in touch with two of George's married daughters, Emma and Ella, and with the former, described

afterwards as her favourite niece, she kept up a steady correspondence until her death in 1883. She was always a little in awe of her capable American relations and their prosperous families, though such timidity did not prevent her from being sceptical about the biography of Keats produced by Emma's son.[1] But her tact kept her from sending her views on it to America, and she and the author exchanged letters, and later she even sent him her portrait. In 1887 she received with great satisfaction a letter from the fourth generation : Emma's grandson Philip Speed Tuley [2] wrote to her at his father's suggestion for news of his Spanish connections. She promptly replied asking him to tell her the extent of the Keats branch in America. The response sent her by her great-nephew must have surprised her : he copied out for her the George Keats family tree to date, and in the summer of 1887, as she sat at Escorial and looked out across the dry brown plains, Fanny spread out the sheet in front of her, and counted up her American relatives. There were fifty-two.

Her interest in America, however, was not confined to her family, nor to her correspondence from across the Atlantic. In the fourteen years which had elapsed since her return from Rome her

[1] John Gilmer Speed.

[2] Son of Eliza Speed and Enos Seth Tuley. Eliza Speed was the eldest daughter of Emma Frances Keats and Philip Speed.

worries about Valentin's business, and their frequent changes of house had kept her too busy to allow her to take up any outside interests. Now, as she realised, they had settled down, and once she had seen what the Brockmann tragedy meant to them all, and had established her double household, she had, in spite of these domestic preoccupations, more leisure of mind for other things. She was never too old to make new friends, she made several during these next few years, and all of them were Americans. The first and most important was James Russell Lowell who had arrived in Madrid as United States Minister to the Court of Spain in August, 1877, and was introduced to Señora Llanos shortly afterwards. She soon came to know both him and his wife intimately, and, "there scarcely passed one day without seeing each other" her daughter Rosa wrote some years later. Mr. Lowell was only in Madrid about three years, for he was transferred to the London Mission early in 1880 and Señora Llanos had to content herself with his letters and speeches, —"I never fail to read Mr. Lowell's discourses," as she put it,—but before he left he had introduced her to another American, a Mr. James T. Fields,[1] "a most agreeable man from Philadelphia" then wintering in Madrid, and it was from him and his wife that she obtained most of her news relating to Keats, from America and from Italy during the remainder of her life. As a friend of Severn's

[1] See p. 184, n. 1.

Mr. Fields had bought the last portrait he had painted of Keats completed shortly before his death, and this he showed Señora Llanos on one of their earliest meetings. He took a lively and practical interest in the pension application, and secured help from America for the subscription fund, and she in her turn asked him on one of his visits to London to call upon Buxton Forman, "to give him some idea of his Anglo-Spanish friends." When the Fields left Madrid for further wanderings in Europe she had frequent letters from them both, and the accounts they sent her from Italy supplemented what Luis had written of her friends there,[1] and in particular of the occasion on which the body of Severn was laid beside that of Keats. She wrote to England: "I have received from my friend an Italian paper giving a description of the ceremony in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome," a little further down in the same connection she wrote: "I have also received *The Times*."

The significance of these last six words seems small. To Señora Llanos they meant much. It was only after she secured the pension that she was able to take in English papers again. "I seldom see an English paper," she had written in July 1878, "formerly I used to subscribe to one or two, but that is one of the luxuries I have been obliged to resign." Now, with her increased

[1] Mary Cowden Clarke, living partly in Rome, and partly at Genoa with her sister Countess Gigliucci (Clara Novello).

income this need for economy was over. She became a subscriber to the *Weekly Times*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the *Queen*, and had copies sent her of the *Illustrated London News*. She became again a spectator of the current events of her own country, and her letters reflect this knowledge which now came to her easily by every week's post, indeed, so occupied is she with English affairs that she hardly mentions Spain. There is an occasional word of the great outbreak of cholera in August 1884, of earthquake shocks in Andalusia in 1885, "of the day of the Republic being," in her opinion, "not far distant," but the stirring events which her friend Mr. Lowell had described in his small book, *Impressions of Spain*, every one of which were well known to Señora Llanos, do not occupy a line in her letters, and evidently she gave them little attention. Her political interest was reserved for Mr. Gladstone, whose activities she followed and recounted,—as she put it—"reading all respecting this extraordinary man with the greatest enthusiasm," her admiration for Queen Victoria, who, once her portrait had reached Calle de Lista in an illustrated paper, ceased to be for Señora Llanos a legendary figure and came to be a symbol of her own standards of English life as she had preserved them. With *The Times* beside her Westminster became familiar, and Hampstead did not seem far away.

For, as she was well aware, all her fresh knowledge of England had come to her because

she was Keats' sister, and it reinforced the little she had been able to obtain in all the forty years before. Almost every letter she wrote between 1878 and 1885 has in it some question about her brother or her English forbears. She had heard, for instance, that the Dean of St. Margaret's, Westminster, was a certain Dr. Jennings, and would now like to know if he was the brother of her cousin, "daughter of my Uncle, Captain Jennings, an officer in Duncan's ship [1] in the action off Camperdown where he greatly distinguished himself, as you will see in my brother's memoirs." The first request she ever sent to Buxton Forman was that he would procure for her a copy of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1874,[2] which, as she had discovered, contained Charles Cowden Clarke's "Recollections of Keats," and which Luis had been unable to secure, and her next that she might have details of the placing of the inscription on the house where Keats had lived in the Piazza di Spagna, a ceremony described, she had heard, in the English press. Later she writes that she has read in the *Academy* the notice of Mrs. Owen's life of Keats,[3] and, knowing nothing of the author, "wonders if it is worth anything": she sees in the "list of publications for the week" some letters of John Keats and

[1] See p. 27.

[2] "Recollections of John Keats," *Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series, Vol. XII, 1874, p. 177.

[3] *John Keats*, a Study by F. M. Owen, London, 1880.

Charles Lamb advertised for sale and is anxious to know to whom they belong, she receives and comments on Sidney Colvin's latest volume,[1] and, hearing of another edition of Keats' Works by William T. Arnold,[2] asks if it holds anything new and specially desires to be told if it reproduces any portraits of her brother. She had much to say on this last point, and sent demands for every portrait she heard about in England or elsewhere, writing in 1885 that she had for years been trying to obtain photographs of portraits used in the American edition and asking " is there any means of obtaining them in London ? " But she kept through all these enquiries her independent judgment, and about any representation of her brother she was difficult to satisfy. She received a copy of the portrait by Hilton and set it down as " not at all favourable," " Miss Whitney's bust," [3] she found, " very correct but copied from a bad likeness," she was " sorry that Severn's last portrait of Keats had ever been painted," and " the only real likeness in existence " was, she wrote, Severn's well-known original miniature, adding, " very badly

[1] *Keats*, by Sidney Colvin, " English Men of Letters " Series, 1887.

[2] *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, edited by William T. Arnold, London, 1883.

[3] A marble bust of Keats by Anne Whitney, Boston, Mass., U.S.A., 1873, the life-mask having been used as a basis for the work. A replica of the work was presented to Hampstead Parish Church in 1894 by American admirers of Keats.

copied in the Memoir by Lord Houghton." Severn's picture was, in fact, the only portrait on which she had no reservations, and in 1883 she sent to England a copy made by Elena Brockmann of the ivory miniature Severn had painted for her—itself a copy of his original work—and wrote of it " I consider this to be a very good likeness."

This was not, however, the only picture of Keats which she sent to England. For many years she had possessed a copy of the life-mask which Haydon had made in 1816,[1] and in 1881 she wrote that she intended to forward a sketch of it. The comments which accompanied this gift [2] are, with one exception,[3] the only references to

[1] Another bust was made in September 1828 by P. Macdowell, and is now at Keats House as part of the Dilke bequest. In *The Keats Letters, Papers, and Other Relics*, p. 110, the editor says that " a replica of it is in the possession of the family who now reside in Spain." In 1935 there was no other bust than the Haydon one among Fanny Keats' possessions in Madrid, and I was told that there had never been any other. The editor also says that the Macdowell bust " was made under the supervision of the poet's sister Fanny, afterwards Señora Keats y Llanos, and Fanny Brawne, afterwards Mrs. Lindon." Fanny Keats was living next door to Fanny Brawne in September 1828, but I have been unable to find any evidence for this statement about their collaboration on this matter.

[2] Described by H. Buxton Forman as " a delicate oil miniature in *grisaille*."

[3] In a letter in 1884 she wrote of the miniature, " I consider the likeness the best I have seen, though I feel there is something wanting in the sweet and intellectual expression of the eyes."

Keats' appearance she ever allowed herself in this correspondence. "You will see," she wrote, in offering it, "a perfect copy of the features of my dear brother. The expression of course is wanting as the eyes are closed, and perhaps the mouth is a little compressed which is but natural, as the mask could not have been taken with the lips unclosed"—and a fortnight later when enclosing it she wrote, "It is perfect, except for the mouth, the lips being rather thicker and somewhat compressed which renders the expression more severe than the sweet and mild original." It was thus that looking back Señora Llanos remembered her brother, thus through all his reserve and fiery strength he had been to her. Edward Holmes, his school-companion, after describing the "generosity and daring of his character" had continued: "His *penchant* was for fighting. He would fight anyone—morning, noon, and night, his brother among the rest. It was meat and drink to him," but, "John always spoke very tenderly of his sister" wrote Bailey in 1879, and Fanny, who had heard all about the skirmishes and adventures at Enfield, in looking at her own copy of what she considered to be the most perfect likeness of John, described it with the words quoted above. She had no perception of dramatic contrast: she simply set down what she remembered—what her own experience of Keats had been.

For in these years surrounded though she was with the evidence of Keats' fame—a fame which

she followed—she thought less of that than of the companion she had known as a child. As the letters, packets and enquiries from and to England passed through the double flat in Calle de Lista Fanny re-created for her family the places, the events of her youth and the figure of her brother. Edmonton Village became familiar ground to the Llanos-Brockmann household, Hampstead too, with its poplars, farms, and green copses, and the dome of St. Paul's in the distance across the fields, and the low white house in John Street with its tree-shadowed lawn. And against this background moved the figure of their uncle, not so much a great poet as a young man, jumping down from the coach, or hurrying up Church Street, Edmonton, with his arms full of books, or sitting, as their grandmother told them she knew he had done, one knee crossed over the other, while he read Shakespeare by the French window in the back sitting-room of the house where she and their grandfather had lived after his death. The Brockmann grandchildren came to know him quite well, the young man with the large eyes, his chin propped on his hand, whose picture hung in the thick gold frame above their heavy Spanish furniture. In spite of his incongruous surroundings he did not seem a stranger, for so constantly did their grandmother speak of him and of the ordinary things he and she had done together that it seemed as if he had become part of their daily lives. In the evening their grandmother always wore a ring

with twelve pearls in it; she told them that the twisted hair inside it had been his. The young man in the miniature had bright hair as they saw, of a colour different from any of their own.

Valentin Llanos died in his sleep on August 14th, 1885. He had become increasingly delicate during the spring and summer of that year but the doctors' verdicts had given Fanny reason to believe that he would live for some time and she was not prepared for his going. She consented to go to Escorial for a change, and from there, in October, sent to England a calm statement about what had come to her before returning to her flat to Juan and Rosa. Fortunately she returned to no further anxiety, for the Brockmann affairs were straightening themselves out. Ernesto had begun to give lessons and classes in engineering, and Elena, besides sending original work to the Madrid exhibitions, had more artistic commissions than she could easily manage; she was busy on a large order of pictures for Montevideo, and was painting the Queen of Spain and the little King. She was doing so well that Isabel had begun to think about leaving the tiny flat on her Mother's landing in which they had lived for the past seven years. There was only one difficulty; none of them wanted to leave Fanny. Fortunately for them all they were not asked to do so. In 1886 Luis was appointed to the Spanish Legation in Rome, and his spacious flat on the third floor fell vacant. With Isabel's economies and Elena's and Ernesto's

earnings there was by that time sufficient income for a larger rent, and in the same year they, with the other Brockmann children, moved in. Elena and Enrique are still living there in 1937.[1]

Fanny had hardly been away from Valentin during the whole of her married life, and during his lifetime she had never once spoken about him to her children. She did not do so now that he was dead, and, save for the fact that she went out even less than before, she did not alter her way of living, occupying herself in the house, and only occasionally being persuaded to visit Escorial to escape the ravages of the Madrid summers. She still managed her family and directed its finances, producing £100 when needed for some special enterprise for Luis, or £80 to redeem her grandson Enrique from serving his conscription overseas, and the only noticeable change in her after her Spanish husband's death was that she became, if possible, more English than ever. She came to feel that the best of everything could be found only in her own country. Buxton Forman had visited her in the February before Valentin died, and in the following years, having answered all his questions about her brother and being

[1] Rosa and Juan continued to live in the Llanos flat on the 4th floor till 1905. Juan died on Sept. 21, and Rosa then arranged to move downstairs to live with Isabel. But on the day, six weeks later, when her furniture was being moved in she died, Nov. 11. Isabel, Countess Brockmann died only in 1926, and Ernesto, her eldest son, in 1928.

assured of his friendly interest in all her concerns, she sent him many curious requests—rhubarb seed for a friend's garden, an ear trumpet for her increasing deafness, lilac-tinted spectacles with which she might read the *Weekly Times* by candlelight on winter evenings.[1] In 1886 a more exacting demand reached her English friends—a request which must have shown one of them at least the extent of her confidence. Would Mrs. Buxton Forman send her a widow's bonnet to be used as a pattern? It could be despatched through the Spanish Embassy. The bonnet arrived in Calle de Lista and a comprehensive acknowledgment soon reached Marlborough Hill. "It delights everyone," wrote Señora Llanos, "by its neatness and taste. So great a contrast to that worn by the elderly ladies here, who fancy that to be in the fashion is all that is required." Three years later, encouraged by this success she received on her request, a white muslin widow's cap with two streamers at the back, exactly like that worn by Queen Victoria, and, unpacking it from its small, white moiré bandbox which bore the name of a famous Oxford Street house [2] in purple letters

[1] "Have the goodness," one of her letters reads, "to deduct from my account the subscription for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the bonnet, the rhubarb, and any other thing else that I may have forgotten."

[2] Jay's Mourning Warehouse, Oxford Street, W.1. By some chance the box and cap had been kept, and in 1935 Señora Elena Brockmann showed me both—as fresh as if they had only just left London.

on its cover, she was so delighted that she decided that, while keeping the white model for evenings she would have a black one made to the same pattern for morning use. The copy had not arrived before she died, but it is certain that she found satisfaction from the assurance the original gave her that in outward appearance as well as in everything else she was English to the end of her life.

In the autumn when this last parcel arrived in Spain Fanny was eighty-six. Eight years had passed since she had sent her bundle of letters to England, and during all this time she had allowed them to remain in Buxton Forman's charge, never writing to him, either of them, or of the two others she had by her in Madrid. Until she had sent the original forty-four she had regarded them as valuable only to herself. She had been converted to a knowledge of what they meant to the world by Buxton Forman's enthusiasm and eagerness to see them, and by his and other notices of them when they were in print. But though she had been thus made aware of their value, though she knew that she could dispose of them if she wished, and even had an offer made to her for them, she refused. She had needed money often and badly in these years, " the heavy taxes, the bad administration of my landed property " as she described it, compelled her to sell some of her vineyards, to realise the capital of the English Memorial Fund, even to wonder if she could

realise the £1,893 capital in her marriage settlement. But whatever her difficulties and her economies were she never once admitted the idea of selling her letters, and they had been allowed to remain at Marlborough Hill. She liked to think of them in England, and had been content that they should be there, for since their publication she had decided and had told her children that she wished that they "should remain in her native country." And if, with this decision established in her mind, it might seem surprising that she had not already given them herself to some institution of learning, it was not procrastination which kept her from doing so. For she realised that once she had given them thus they would be hers no longer, while, left as they were on loan to a friend in England, she knew that they were still hers, and that, as she told her children, she could ask to look at them whenever she liked. So she did not write of them to Buxton Forman; she simply left them where they were.

"After a short but painful illness," wrote Rosa Llanos on January 17th, 1890, to her nephew Philip Tuley in America, "our beloved Mother died the 16th of December[1] at 8 o'clock in the afternoon. Her malady began by a cold, to which we did not give any importance at the beginning, it was followed by a congestion of the lungs, and at the same time the heart was interested, and this was the cause of her death. It has been a

[1] 1889.

terrible blow to me as I had never been separated from my dear Mother. She was very much beloved by all her friends."

She was buried in the Cemetery of San Isidoro in the same grave with her husband. The flat grey stone which marks the spot is in a row with many others, has no pretension of size or position, and is happily removed from the hideous white marble erections chosen by the wealthy. As her name followed that of her husband her married name is not given, and set in a line by itself, is the name she had known in her English childhood. There is a strange similarity between the place where she is buried and that where her brother's body lies, for the cemetery of San Isidoro has the appearance of being outside the city of Madrid, and from its gate, and from the Llanos grave one looks across a deep cutting to the city and the hill on which the Palacio National stands, and to the west one sees only the plain rolling in brown waves to the mountains. Just as, standing below the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, one may look through the juniper trees to the Aventine with the white buildings of San Anselmo on its edge, and southwards as one turns there is only the Campagna extending to the Alban hills. Fanny had walked often to the Protestant cemetery in Rome, climbing the twisting path below the yellow wall, passing Santa Sabina on the right and at last descending to the Pyramid; she knew the place quite well. But though later she jour-

neyed often by the tumbling yellow road to San Isidoro and looked from her husband's grave to the hill and the city it is unlikely that she ever saw any resemblance between the two places. She was a practical person and did not give in to fancies.

## CHAPTER VIII

## POSSESSIONS

"YOU can imagine the state of desolation in which we all are," wrote Dona Rosa Llanos to Mr. Forman on Christmas Day. Her mother had left no will, but by her express wish her elder daughter took charge of all her possessions. Juan, Isabel and Luis were content that this should be so, they discussed with Rosa what should be done, and she carried out the family decisions. She was methodical and precise, she took up the task of sorting her mother's letters and treasures, and we can ourselves make a list of many that she must have found.

When Fanny went to Spain in 1833 she took with her many mementos of her early life and of her brother John. They included the following :

1. Forty-eight letters from John to herself (1817–20).
2. Thirty-one letters from Fanny Brawne to herself (1820–4).
3. Miscellaneous correspondence including letters from George Keats, Mrs. Dilke, John Taylor and probably others.

4. Various relics: A lock of John's hair sent her by Fanny Brawne on October 6th, 1820. Editions of John's works given to her by himself and inscribed. A copy of Goldsmith's *Poems and Essays, Essays in Rhyme*, by Jane and Ann Taylor, also given to her by John, and inscribed.

During her fifty-six years in Spain she had added to and changed her collection and at the time of her death it contained the following:

1. (*a*) Forty-four letters from John to herself, lent to Mr. Buxton Forman and still on loan to him.
   (*b*) Three letters from John which she kept when she sent the remainder to Mr. Forman. (She had given one of the original forty-eight to Mr. Locker-Lampson in Rome not later than 1862.[1])
2. Thirty-one letters from Fanny Brawne to herself.
3. Miscellaneous correspondence as above, with the addition of letters from Joseph Severn (from 1867 onwards), from Mr. Buxton Forman, and from American and other friends.
4. The relics on the list above with the addition of:

A copy of Haydon's life-mask of Keats.

A miniature on ivory of John Keats, painted by Severn.

[1] See p. 174.

Another lock of his hair.

A sketch of his tombstone with a suggested new inscription.

(The last three given or sent to her by Severn.)

A copy of Severn's charcoal sketch of Keats, sent to her by Mr. Forman.[1]

Editions of *Keats' Life and Works*, sent to her by Mr. Forman and Sir Charles Dilke.

*Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, 1878, two copies.

I have already mentioned some of these possessions incidentally, I propose to describe their later history and ultimate fate, as far as possible in chronological narrative.

The first change in her collection was by her gift to Mr. F. Locker-Lampson of the letter from John dated April 17th, 1820. In it there are the nonsense verses written to her about the Abbey household. It is now in Harvard College Library. Mr. Locker-Lampson writes of it, "She most kindly gave me one of her brother's letters addressed to herself which I now have, and which I believe may be found in Mr. Buxton Forman's Life of the Poet." [2]

As already related she lent a collection of

[1] The original is in the Forster Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, see n. 1, p. 170.

[2] *My Confidences*, F. Locker-Lampson, Smith Elder & Co., 1896, p. 343.

According to his own account the Locker-Lampsons spent three winters in Rome, arriving there on Dec. 29, 1861; on Dec. 17, 1862, and on Nov. 17, 1866. The

forty-four of her letters from John to Mr. H. Buxton Forman in 1881 and they were still in his charge at her death. When she sent these she retained three which came into Rosa's hands. The further history of these three is of particular interest. They were—

1. A letter dealing with her approaching Confirmation, dated March 31st, 1819.
2. The last letter of all, dictated by John to Fanny Brawne, dated September 11th, 1820.
3. A short note written by John on the back of a letter from Mrs. Dilke. Postmark December 18th, 1818.

It is not difficult to understand the reasons for Fanny's selection of the first two of these, and it seems likely that her retention of the third was accidental and that Mrs. Dilke's letter on which it was written was among her miscellaneous collection.[1]

In the Autumn of 1889, three months before her death, Señora Llanos made a new acquaintance by correspondence. She received a letter from an

gift must have taken place on one of the earlier visits as Fanny left Rome in September 1864.

The letter is noted in *A Catalogue of the Printed Books, Manuscripts, Autograph Letters, Drawings and Pictures*, collected by F. Locker-Lampson, Bernard Quaritch, London, 1886.

Locker-Lampson possessed then seven other letters from Keats, three of which had been written to Severn.

[1] See pp. 61 and 200.

American gentleman, a Mr. Frederick Holland Day, to which she replied on September 26th.[1] Mr. Holland Day had secured Señora Llanos' address from a mutual friend in England, and he wrote to her that he wished to send her photographs he had taken of the grave of her brother George in the cemetery at Louisville, of George's house in Kentucky, of Severn's portrait of Keats taken to America by George (in 1818), and of the school-house at Enfield. He was, it seemed, an ardent admirer of her brother and was anxious to have a photograph of herself. In her reply Fanny expressed gratitude for his interest and for his promised gifts. She replied again to his enquiries on October 30th and November 12th, giving him information about her early life in Edmonton and Walthamstow. In thanking him for the gift of photographs she told him that her son "John" would copy for him a portrait of herself painted some eight years before and also make a drawing of the life-mask of her brother. In one letter she sent greetings to Mrs. Charles Cowden Clarke then living in Rome, and in her last made enquiries regarding her friend Mrs. James T. Fields of whom she had not heard for

[1] Her answer, two later letters written on her behalf and in her name, and eleven written by Rosa Llanos, all to Mr. F. H. Day, are in the Library of Harvard College. It is to this collection of letters that reference is made in the following remarks on the correspondence between Señora Rosa Llanos and Mr. F. H. Day.

a long time.[1] She died about five weeks after the despatch of this letter.

Early in 1890 Mr. Holland Day wrote a letter of condolence to the eldest son, Juan, but Juan was not expert in English, and Rosa, the eldest daughter, replied thanking him for his sentiments and his obituary notice of her mother in the *Critic*,[2] and saying that she had sent him drawings by her brother of the life-mask of her uncle. She enclosed some mementos of her mother which she asked Mr. Day to accept—a piece of the gown which she had worn at her death, a letter to her from Severn, a specimen of her handwriting in 1864,[3] and a photograph of her portrait. She accepted with pleasure a copy of his article in the *Critic* and his promise of a photograph of Haydon's picture of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem. She wrote however, that as to letters written to her mother about the editions of her uncle's biographies, as the greater part had been written by their friend, Mr. Buxton Forman, they would not think of disposing of them. "Of cause (sic), nothing

[1] None of the three letters from Señora Llanos to Mr. Day are in her handwriting; they were probably dictated to one of her children or grandchildren. They are not in Rosa Llanos' hand.

[2] A short unsigned memoir had appeared in the *Athenæum*, January 4, 1890: Mr. Day's, in the *Critic*, New York, appeared on January 25, 1890.

[3] On the back of Severn's suggested inscription for the grave made after consultation with Fanny in Rome. See p. 164.

that has belonged to our dear Mother do we think of parting from." She replied further to Mr. Day's question in letters of May 20th, and August 31st, 1890, regretting that she could not answer his questions regarding letters from her uncle, or find among her mother's correspondence the profile of him which had been drawn by his friend Brown.

Mr. Holland Day visited Madrid towards the end of this year and on December 1st met Rosa Llanos and the rest of the family at No. 5, Calle de Lista. On subsequent days they visited together the Museum and the cemetery, where Mr. Day photographed Fanny's grave. He also photographed a family group, Rosa, Juan and Isabel and Isabel's four daughters, the portraits of Count Brockmann and those of Fanny at the ages of forty-seven and sixty, and Rosa and Juan alone in the flat where their mother had lived, posed in front of portraits of their mother and Uncle John, Rosa white-haired, in a black dress, and with her hands folded in her lap. The photographer had difficulties with his exposures, it was not his fault, Rosa wrote to him afterwards, that except for the portraits the photographs had not come out well.

Letters which Rosa Llanos wrote to Mr. Holland Day after his visit and other letters of hers reveal the transactions which were made between them in Madrid. It is plain that she showed him generally her mother's letters and other possessions connected with her uncle. In regard to the most treasured of these, then in her hands, the three

letters of her uncle remaining in Madrid, she allowed him to take copies of the two in Keats' own handwriting, namely, the "Confirmation" letter, and that written on the back of Mrs. Dilke's letter, and either at this time or later she made over to him, whether as gift or for payment we do not know, the last letter from Keats to her mother in the handwriting of Fanny Brawne. The evidence for this last is (1) Mr. Maurice Buxton Forman's citation in his edition of the letters of John Keats in 1935, of Mr. F. Holland Day as the 'source or owner' of the original.[1] (2) The Presentation by Mr. Louis A. Holman, a friend and literary associate of Mr. Day, of a photostat copy of the original to Keats House in 1934.

Either at this time or later Mr. Holland Day obtained copies of (*a*) a letter written by John Taylor to Fanny Keats regarding the start of her brother's journey from the Thames, dated August 20th, 1820, and of (*b*) a Testimonial written by her guardian Mr. Sandell on January 14th, 1816, testifying to her good behaviour.[2]

The most important, however, of Mr. Holland Day's dealings with Rosa at this time, is his taking with him when he left Madrid, and to America, the collection of thirty-one letters from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats. His original

[1] Mr. M. Buxton Forman states, however, in his Preface that he has no definite information of the "fate" of this letter. P. xii.

[2] The originals are now in Keats House. See pp. 46, n. 2, and 97.

intention in regard to this collection is shown in two letters written to him by Rosa Llanos in the months of January and February 1891. On his return from Madrid to England he endeavoured to interview Mr. Herbert Brawne Lindon and Miss Margaret Lindon, who were the owners of the copyright. His approach to Mr. Lindon seems to have met with no encouragement, for Rosa writes to him that she regrets Mr. Lindon's discourtesy. Margaret Lindon's address he was unable to find and Rosa was unable to supply it.

The first of these two letters reveals the curious fact that Mr. Day had engendered in Rosa's mind a distrust of Mr. Buxton Forman's intentions and motives, which is the more remarkable in view of the entirely cordial and open relations which had existed between him and herself and others of her family up to this time, and particularly when it is remembered that for the period from her mother's death to this date Mr. Forman had been endeavouring to secure for Rosa the reversion of the Civil List Pension which he had been largely responsible for securing for her mother. It is surprising, therefore, to find her writing to Mr. Holland Day in January 1891, expressing doubts as to whether, if she asked Mr. Forman to return the letters lent to him by her mother, he will accede to her request, accepting Mr. Day's advice that if Mr. Forman should not answer she should write to Sir Charles Dilke, and agreeing with Mr. Day that Mr. Forman had schemed to prevent

his knowing that these letters were in his charge. There is also a secret to be kept from Mr. Forman, if Mr. Day should ask Mr. Forman for Margaret Lindon's address it will be difficult to keep from him the motive Mr. Day has in wishing to see her. She is sorry later that Margaret Lindon was not in London as this will prevent the letters from being published.

It is strange that Rosa Llanos should have been brought so suddenly to this frame of mind towards one who had been trying to serve her and had been her mother's " one friend in England " for twelve years. From this time the existence of the Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats letters and of the various memorials of Keats in the possession of his sister at her death became a closely-guarded secret.

On March 4th, 1891, Señora Rosa Llanos wrote to Mr. Forman on behalf of herself, her sister and her two brothers, that, in view of their mother's wishes that the letters of her brother should remain in England, they had " decided to make a present of them to the British Museum," and she continued that she intended to write speedily to Sir Charles Dilke asking him to insert a paragraph in the *Athenæum* explaining what they had done. Some further correspondence passed between her and Mr. Forman in which Rosa explained their wishes more fully, but by March 18th [1] the matter was finally settled, and Rosa

[1] The date written on the first page of the collection in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum, is May 5, 1891.

wrote accepting Mr. Forman's offer to write a notice of the bequest in the *Athenæum*. She explained the matter a week later to her cousin, Mr. Philip Speed Tuley in America :

" I don't know if you have read Keats' works edited by H. Buxton Forman. In these works were published the letters of our Uncle John to our dear Mother which had never before been published. These letters had remained till now in the hands of Mr. Forman, but now we have decided to make a present of them to the British Museum. I can assure you it is a great sacrifice for us to part with the letters that belonged to our dear Mother, and, moreover, were written by our Uncle John. What has influenced our decision is, that in that Institution they would at least be for ever safe from auction, and if they were in our possession at our death the letters might be lost or sold."

Part of the anxiety of Fanny Keats' children was lest anything they did should countenance the idea that they had sold these letters, and in one of her letters Rosa writes—" by no means would we accept any remuneration from the authorities." By May 24th she had received a receipt from the British Museum and a little later a translation in Spanish of Mr. Forman's notice in the *Athenæum*.[1] She put the translation away in a packet which contained also what other papers of her mother's

[1] See Appendix II, p. 272.

relating to her Uncle John she still had. Mr. Forman wrote to her :

" I cannot close this subject without telling you how entirely I sympathise with you in the decision you have come to. The Museum is the right place for the letters ; and in no other way could you have been perfectly certain of their coming there."

The question, therefore, of the disposal of the collection of letters which Fanny Keats had sent to England on loan in 1881 was decided by Rosa's letter of March 18th, 1891. There had been forty-four of them as we know, all published along with Mr. Locker-Lampson's letter by Mr. Forman in his 1883 Library Edition. How is it then, the student may ask, that there are only forty-two in the British Museum ? The answer to this question is found in the second half of Rosa's letter to Mr. Forman on March 18th. She wrote—" We have two letters of my Uncle John which we mean to keep : if you like you also may remain with two." Judging by his own statements, Mr. Forman thus learnt for the first time that when Fanny Keats sent him the collection in 1881, she had not sent him all she possessed.

From what has been said already, it is obvious to which letters Rosa refers when she says—" We have two . . . which we mean to keep." They are the " Confirmation " letter and the one written on the back of Mrs. Dilke's. She says nothing to him about the last letter dictated to Fanny Brawne, whether because she had already

parted with it or for some other reason is uncertain. Of the two of whose existence she now told him he did not at this time ask for copies, but when he was preparing his 1895 Edition during 1894, he wrote to her asking for these. Her reply is surprising, that the two "had been copied by Mr. Holland Day and would be published in his life of Keats" and that she was therefore unable to send him copies. Apparently she had given Mr. Day a promise not to supply copies even to Mr. Forman and the 1895 Edition appeared without them. Meanwhile, he availed himself of Rosa's permission to keep two of the forty-four of which he had charge and chose the following:—

(*a*) The letter containing the Meg Merrilies Ballad and the verses beginning "There was a naughty boy," dated July 2nd, 1818. (Now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.)

(*b*) The letter of February 8th, 1820, in which Keats described, for Fanny's entertainment, the people he watched from his window at Hampstead—"the old french emigrant," the coal men, "the Brickmakers," the "Gipseys after hareskins and silver spoons"—one of the most lively of all his letters to her. (Now in the collection of the late Mr. T. J. Wise.)

We now return to consider the fate of the collection of thirty-one letters written by Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats. (No. 2 on the list,

p. 226.) We have seen that Mr. Holland Day took these with him to America in 1891. From America he wrote to Rosa asking her various questions. On June 9th, 1891, she wrote asking him to return the collection to her, " as everything that belonged to my dear Mother is of so great a value to me, and as it will be some time before you return to Europe, I should be very much obliged if you would send me the letters of Fanny Brawne." She then discusses the safest method of sending them and concludes—" When you return to London we shall see what is to be done respecting the letters."

The collection of letters in the Library of Harvard College from Rosa to Mr. Holland Day ends with this letter of June, 1891.[1] The evidence points to the collection having remained in Mr. Day's possession under what conditions can only be surmised. Their existence remained unknown to the public and to Keats scholars for thirty-three years; it is first revealed by Miss Amy Lowell in 1924 (*John Keats*, Vol. II, p. 133). Miss Lowell writes :

" It has been my good fortune to have come upon a number of Fanny Brawne's letters, mostly written after Keats' death to Fanny Keats. They

[1] What answer Mr. Holland Day gave to Rosa's request for the return of the letters is therefore unrevealed as far as this collection is concerned. That the correspondence continued seems likely, for Rosa lived for fourteen years after.

are the property of a gentleman who does not wish his name to be disclosed. But this anonymity need alarm nobody : there is no doubt as to the authenticity of the letters, as I, who have seen a couple of the originals, can testify."

It is strange that a student so enthusiastic and pertinacious as Miss Lowell should be able to contrive to see only two of the thirty-one and to make so scanty a use of the whole. In spite of her statement, doubts as to the authenticity of the letters she quoted were publicly expressed [1] and no further statement was forthcoming to allay them. Nothing more is heard of them in fact until 1934, when a typed copy of the whole was presented to Harvard College Library by an anonymous donor and the collection of originals was presented to Keats House also anonymously. To both of these gifts unusual conditions were attached ; their publication was prohibited until 1961, and though students might read them, and might publish conclusions based upon what they read, they must make no reference to the source from which they had derived their conclusions, nor say anything detrimental to the characters of the persons mentioned in the letters. The condition governing the date of their publication was

[1] *Keats*, by H. W. Garrod, Clarendon Press, 1926, p. 14. " Sir Edmund Gosse, who is a cautious scholar, has recently expressed himself as not convinced about the genuineness of these. He thinks it possible that someone may have imposed upon Miss Lowell."

relaxed later, and they were published by the Oxford University Press in January, 1937, edited by Mr. Fred Edgcumbe, Curator of the Keats Memorial House, Hampstead.

Mr. M. Buxton Forman in a foreword to the volume remarks upon the "long journey" and "circuitous route" by which the letters had come to "their final resting place," "the details of which" journey "may not be disclosed." Mr. Edgcumbe in his introduction says—"a condition of acceptance was that the gift should be regarded as anonymous." It may come as a surprise to many students that the "long journey" began as we have seen, by their passing into the charge of Mr. F. Holland Day in 1891. From that time onwards their existence was hidden, and as far as it has been possible to contrive secrecy their ownership has remained a mystery throughout.

Meanwhile, views which were ill-informed and which these letters now show to have been often erroneous regarding the character of Fanny Brawne were held by many and expressed by several, and by implication the judgment of Keats himself in her regard suffered criticism and sometimes undisguised condemnation. Some have taken their cue from the freely expressed disapproval of the Reynolds family. "That poor idle thing of womankind to whom he has so unaccountably attached himself," wrote J. H. Reynolds to Taylor, and we know from these letters themselves that the women of the Reynolds family held similar senti-

ments. Others have suspended judgment, because, as Sir Sidney Colvin says, " of her character we have scant means of judging." [1] On the whole those who have so suspended judgment have been in a minority, and the general verdict may be said to have been adverse both in regard to Fanny Brawne herself and to Keats' ' unaccountable attachment.' Had these letters not been hidden as they were, a matter which intimately concerned the life of Keats would not have so tantalised those who have kept his memory.

Of Fanny Keats' possessions which came into her daughter Rosa's charge we have still to consider the fate of 3 and 4 on the list on p. 227, namely her miscellaneous letters and various documents and relics. The letters began with some of her childhood, some from George when she was eleven and twelve and later, and others from Mrs. Dilke, and from friends in London before she left it. There were also, a letter from John Taylor, many from Joseph Severn after 1867, and others from James Russell Lowell, J. T. Fields, Lord Houghton, Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Forman. We have seen that letters from George were lent to Mr. Forman in 1881,[2] he returned

[1] Colvin quotes an account contributed by a cousin seventy years after his visits to Mrs. Brawne's house, to the *New York Herald* of April 12, 1889. In this Fanny Brawne is described as entirely heartless and frivolous. (*John Keats*, London, 1918, p. 330, n.) See p. 104.

[2] See p. 198.

these to Fanny the same year; others lent to him later were returned by him to Rosa in 1891. When I visited Madrid in November 1935, all that remained of her correspondence and mementos of her brother was enclosed in a small packet. On asking her granddaughter, Señora Elena Brockmann, about the remainder, she told me that when Rosa Llanos died in 1905 all her papers and those of her mother were taken over by her sister, Isabel Brockmann, and that, as Señora Isabel did not read English, she destroyed the greater part of these papers and disposed of what remained of Fanny Keats' English books. Some of the books, namely, the copies of his works which John had given to her himself, had apparently found a new destination before this. The evidence as to this destination is as follows :

In the preface to his work on John Keats published in 1917, Sir Sidney Colvin wrote—"For other illustrative documents existing in America, I believe of value, I should like to be able to thank their owners, Mr. Day and Mr. Louis Holman of Boston : but these gentlemen made a condition of their help the issue of a limited edition de luxe of the book specially illustrated from their material, a condition the publishers judged it impossible to carry out, at any rate in war-time."

Sir Sidney Colvin bequeathed to Keats House for the use of students much of the material which he had gathered in preparation for his work, and

amongst it letters from Mr. Louis Holman which throw light upon this reference in the preface. Mr. Holman explained in one of his letters that if the proposed two volume edition was undertaken, a friend of his, Mr. Holland Day, might be persuaded to produce unpublished and unknown material, and he enclosed in his letter a list of the more important of Mr. Day's possessions. We are interested here only in some of the items given by Mr. Holman namely: (1) the original (sic) of a letter to Fanny Keats; [1] (2) a copy of a note to Fanny on the back of a letter from Mrs. Dilke; (3) an original (sic) letter from John Taylor to Fanny; [2] and (4) autographed presentation copies of Keats' first volumes.

From Mr. Holman's description we are able to identify (1) and (2) on this shortened list as the "Confirmation" letter and the note of December 18th, 1818, which, as we have already seen, Mr. Day was allowed by Rosa Llanos to *copy* in 1890, the *originals* of which were entrusted to me by Señora Elena Brockmann in 1935. The original of No. 3 was also handed to me by Señora Elena as told in the following chapter. What is new

[1] This statement as to Mr. Day's possession of the originals of (1) and (3) has to be reconciled with the fact that it was the originals of these letters which Señora Elena handed to me in 1935 and her statement that they had "always" been in the possession of the family and in Madrid.

[2] I am unable to obtain information as to the present ownership of these volumes.

to us in this list is Mr. Day's possession of original autographed editions of Keats' works, presumably those copies which Fanny Keats took with her to Spain and which came into her daughter Rosa's possession on her death.

There is no mention in Mr. Holman's list of the 'Last letter,' but he was able to present a photostat copy of this letter to Keats House in 1934; nor is there any specific mention of the collection of thirty-one letters from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats.

This completes our review of the fate of Fanny Keats' possessions. Some of those which have recently come to light are among the most interesting. Unable to read the Confirmation letter as an exposition of John Keats' theological views as some have done, we see it rather as an example of the lengths to which he was willing to go to help her in a child's tasks and difficulties. The last letter shows us his anxiety that she should not be cast down by his departure. The letters from Fanny Brawne have been generally welcomed as settling once for all the question of the sincerity of the woman whom Keats loved, and there is an interest, if a minor one, in John Taylor's letter, which gives the fullest account of Keats leaving the Thames, and in the sketch of his tombstone in Rome which tells of Fanny's and Severn's concern in the unhappiness of the inscription which had been chosen for it.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE SPANISH GRANDCHILDREN

IN 1932 I first began to consider writing the life of Fanny Keats, and in the autumn of 1933 I wrote to Mr. M. Buxton Forman asking for an interview, since in the memoranda prefixed to his two-volume edition of Keats' letters published in 1931 there was the only biographical account of her which I had been able to find. He at once generously placed at my disposal a collection of one hundred and fifty letters written by Fanny Keats to his father between the years 1877 and 1889, and a little later he added to this first loan some letters from her daughter Rosa which had been written to Mr. H. Buxton Forman after her mother's death. His offer included permission to take the letters away for study and to make any use of them I wished.

It was immediately clear to me upon reading these letters that they were of the first importance for the study of Fanny Keats' life, and, as will have been apparent to the student, much of what has been written in the preceding chapters of this book has been drawn from this source. Most important of all was the story told in these letters

of how Fanny Keats had kept together all those written to her by her brother, and her daughter Rosa's letters showed how the next generation had preserved the trust and carried out their mother's wishes. But Rosa's letters showed something further—that in 1891, at any rate, there had still been in Madrid two letters from John to his sister, and, after counting and re-counting all the letters from Keats to Fanny which had been published, I found it impossible to place these two within their number. "We have two letters of my Uncle John which we mean to keep," Rosa had written to Mr. Buxton Forman in 1891. Where were these letters in 1933? No one knew. My enquiries failed to elicit any information about them, and I satisfied myself that they were additional to those which had been published. Were they still in existence, I asked myself, and, if so, where were they, and in whose keeping? Rosa had been fifty-eight when she wrote of them, so it was hardly likely she would be alive to-day, but, remembering the precision of her instructions for the gift to England in 1891, was it not possible that she had handed on what family papers were still left to her to a younger generation, and that they, if any of them were alive, might hold them still? Such considerations led me to the opinion that the letters were probably in Spain.

While I was considering this point, Mr. Buxton Forman told me that he had obtained copies of

the two letters and of one other, and he published these in *The Times Literary Supplement* of October 4th, 1934.[1] Meanwhile I had put together a short account of Fanny Keats' life so far as I then knew

[1] Mr. M. Buxton Forman, in publishing copies of these letters, writes: "When Fanny Keats de Llanos sent to H. Buxton Forman in the early eighties the collection of her brother's letters now safely housed in the British Museum she withheld two letters which she regarded as of too sacred and personal a nature for publication during her lifetime. Whether she showed these letters to my Father when he visited her in Madrid I do not know, but he knew of their existence." There are several comments to be made on this statement. In the first place, Fanny Keats did not inform Buxton Forman that she was retaining any of her brother's letters at the time when she sent him the collection, nor is there any mention by her of those which she kept in any of her own later letters to him. In the second place there is positive evidence on the question in Buxton Forman's own writings. In his 1901 edition of the *Complete Works of John Keats* (Gowans and Gray) he included a "List of principal works consulted." In a note here appended to the notice of his 1883 edition he states specifically that it contained "all the writings of John Keats known at that time." By the word "known" we must understand "known to me," and the 1883 edition did not include the letters which Fanny Keats withdrew from the collection when she sent it to Buxton Forman. Regarding the 1895 edition published after Buxton Forman had been informed by Señora Rosa Llanos of the existence of two additional letters, he varies his statement by saying that it "contains every letter of Keats known to be extant at the time . . ." It may also be proved from Buxton Forman's own words that he did not see these additional letters when he visited Fanny Keats in Madrid in 1885, for he says in the "Editor's preface" to his 1901 edition,

it, including in it the fact that two letters had been retained by her in Spain, and I completed this article in the autumn of 1934.[1]

Obviously the first thing to do was, if possible, to find some member of the later generation. Among Keats' students in England nothing had been heard of any member of Fanny's family since 1894, and nothing was known of them among their American relations, for when in 1934 her grand-nephew, Mr. P. S. Tuley, made enquiries about them through the American Ambassador in Madrid, he received the report that none of her descendants could be traced. Fortunately I did not learn this from Mr. Tuley until 1936.

One difficulty which I met at the beginning concerned the spelling of the name of Señora Llanos' grandchildren. In the biographical memoranda first published by Mr. H. Buxton Forman in his 1901 edition of the *Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats* (Gowans and Gray) the name was spelt Blockman, and this was also the spelling in Mr. M. Buxton Forman's edition of 1931. But in these letters of Señora Llanos' which I had

" at all events there is no letter of Keats ever seen by me which is not included in this edition." All the available evidence points therefore to the fact that Buxton Forman " knew of their existence " first when Rosa Llanos told him of them in her letter of March 18, 1891. See p. 237, and Appendix III, p. 274.

[1] The *Cornhill Magazine*, October 1935. A second article describing my visit to Spain appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, February 1936.

been reading the spelling was Brockmann.[1] It seemed to me more than likely that the latter was correct, though the only other authority I could find for it was in William Sharp's *Life of Joseph Severn*.[2] I was unable to go to Spain myself at this time, but I enlisted the help of a friend travelling there in 1934, giving him the names Llanos, Blockman and Brockmann, and asked him to find out what he could about residents of these names in Madrid. His only discovery was that there were between thirty and forty persons in Madrid named Llanos. Meantime I searched the Spanish telephone [3] directories at the London General Post Office but found only one Brockmann in Madrid whose second name excluded him from relationship with the Llanos family. But I made one interesting discovery in these directories, No. 5, Calle de Lista, the address from which Fanny and Rosa had written, was still in existence, and, as in their

[1] As far as I am aware it was my reading of the letters of Fanny Keats which first made clear the error in the spelling of the name Brockmann. The first mention of the name which I have been able to find in print is in the *Athenæum* of April 14, 1888, where it is spelt Blockmann. It is so spelt again in the *New York Critic* of April 28, 1888, in the *Athenæum* of January 4, 1890, and in the *New York Critic* of Jan. 25, 1896. By an error in the correction of proofs the name appeared in my first article without the final n, i.e. Brockman.

[2] Spelt there, however, with only one n. The word appears once.

[3] There were then no Madrid Street directories giving the names of residents in the London General Post Office.

day, it was apparently divided into four floors with a flat or flats on each floor. The names of four occupants were given for No. 5, none of them, to my disappointment, being Brockmann.[1]

At this stage I was obliged, by other matters, to drop any enquiry for some months. The article I had put together was not to appear until the following autumn, but in March 1935 I took a copy of it to Mr. Edgcumbe, Curator of Keats House, telling him all I knew, and leaving the article with him for his interest and information, explaining to him also that I had by that time satisfied myself that the name of Fanny's descendants was not Blockman, but Brockmann. Mr. Edgcumbe began enquiries himself, and on my return to London early in July he told me that through a friend of his own travelling in Spain he had learnt that at No. 5, Calle de Lista, two people of the name of Brockmann were still living. He had written to them introducing himself, telling them about Keats House, and sending them photographs and papers relating to it, and he gave me a copy of the reply he had received. In it they told him that they were Señor Enrique and Señora Elena Brockmann, the last surviving children of Isabel, Countess Brockmann, second daughter of Valentin and Fanny Llanos, that they had in their keeping two letters written by John Keats to their grandmother, which they were now desirous of

[1] This was explained later. The Brockmann flat on the third floor was not on the telephone.

giving to Keats House, and that they now intended to leave as legacies to the same place a miniature and a life-mask of Keats, which they had.

Thus by July 1935, it was clear that the two questions I had been asking myself were answered. There were two original letters from Keats in Madrid and two of Fanny's descendants were alive, one of them being her favourite granddaughter Elena, who had been thirty-three when Fanny died, and had lived with her for many years before. I wrote at once to Señora Brockmann, explaining my interest in her grandmother, and proposing that I should visit her and her brother. She replied begging me to do so, so soon as she and Señor Brockmann should have returned from their autumn holiday in the country, and on November 14th, 1935, I left for Madrid. I carried with me a personal letter to the Brockmanns from the Curator of Keats House, and a packet of photographs for identification, and I had also been asked to act on behalf of Keats House in any matter that should arise. Señora Brockmann had written that she knew no English, and that, though her brother read it, he did not speak it. As I could not speak Spanish, I secured an interpreter, Señorita Nieves de Mayo, and, at Señora Brockmann's invitation, on Saturday afternoon, November 16th, after evading by lift the stairs which Señora Llanos had climbed so often, we presented ourselves at the heavy double door on the third floor of 5, Calle de Lista.

Through a small hall hung with shadowy russet tapestry, and set about with some oak pieces elaborately carved, we were taken into a large room, obviously used only for the reception of guests, which, though without any air of disused stateliness, looked as if it had not been re-arranged for years. Two couches and half a dozen chairs placed for conversation were covered in crimson plush and lace, marquetry tables set with vases of cloisonné and silver stood between flowering plants and palms, thick rose velvet curtains were looped at both the tall windows, and two of the walls were entirely hidden under life-size copies of masterpieces from the Prado. The Señorita and I looked about in all this splendour for something I might recognise. We soon found it. On one side of the fire-place there hung the familiar portrait of Fanny in old age, on the other that of Valentin Llanos. And, close by, in a thick gold frame above a buhl china cabinet, a Virgin and Child above and below, small portraits of Charles V and Count Brockmann on one side, and of Philip II and Countess Brockmann on the other, was Severn's miniature of John Keats.[1] I was reminded of

[1] Keats also, it may be remembered, liked to arrange his pictures in groups, and in his rooms at Carisbrooke in April 1817 a curious assortment hung together. He described it to Reynolds: "I have unpacked my books, put them in a snug corner—pinned up Haydon—Mary Queen (of) Scotts and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakespeare which I had not before seen . . . this head I have hung over my

George Keats' words to Fanny from Louisville in 1825 : " His (John's) miniature over our mantelpiece is partly hidden by a hyacinth in bloom ; Shakespeare is next above him, Tom at the top, Beaumont and Fletcher on either side," and of the letter from Keats to George in America in January 1819, in which he copied out ' Bards of Passion and of Mirth,' originally written by him in his own edition of Beaumont and Fletcher : " Now I will copy the other poem," he wrote, " it is on the double immortality of poets. . . ." One of the tapestry curtains was pushed aside and our hostess came into the room.

Doña Elena Brockmann, tall, and, in spite of her age,[1] bright-eyed and dark-haired, has still the charm Señora Llanos had described : she greeted me as if she had known me for years, and, after seating herself beside me, began at once to talk about her grandmother, explaining that her brother had read and translated my article, and that both were anxious to tell me all they knew about its subject, " if," as she said laughing, " I can make myself understood." There was, however, no difficulty about that. Occasionally, for my benefit, Señora Brockmann dropped into French or Italian, occasionally she asked me to speak to her very slowly in English, assuring me that she could then

Books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a french Ambassador—now this alone is a good morning's work."

[1] In 1935 Señora Brockmann was 69 and her brother 68.

*Señora Elena Brockmann*

*(from a photograph taken by the author in Madrid, November,* 1935)

understand, but for the most part she talked fast and vivaciously in her own language to the Señorita, who, after each few moments' conversation, translated for me, usually word for word, so that I might take it all down.

Señora Brockmann had known her grandmother peculiarly well, and had a memory stored with family detail. Thus far, as I explained to her, Fanny's letters, written during the last twelve years of her life to an English correspondent, had been almost the only source of information about her after she left England. Señora Brockmann confirmed the records of these letters, but added a great deal more, and gradually, on this and on subsequent meetings with her, the whole story emerged, and I was able to put together all that is now to be known by word of mouth of Fanny's life, of her memories of England, and of her relations with her brother John. I was able also to trace the history of the two letters. I learnt in outline the story of her married life in Spain, its successes, disappointments and varying fortunes, and later still the doings of her grandchildren. Through it all, by means of question and answer, Fanny herself appeared, as her favourite granddaughter had known her, capable, strong-willed, severe on herself but never severe on others, passionately affectionate, deeply reserved. "Nuestra inolvidable abuela," repeated Doña Elena, "our unforgetable grandmother."

She went on to show me the mementoes of

Fanny which she still possessed. They were few, and she explained that her grandmother had always a frugal taste in her personal appearance and belongings, a taste which her granddaughter has inherited. Two brooches, one a design of three feathers in diamonds, the other an amethyst surrounded by pearls, a plain gold cross on a long chain with a turquoise clasp, a flat Victorian pincushion, and a white book needle-case painted with forget-me-nots and violets—these were put in front of us. "But then," said Señora Brockmann, "there were the things to do with my Uncle John, those were different." She took down from a glass case on the wall the medallion, a picture of which forms the frontispiece to this volume. In it a twist of hair is tied across a background of pale blue enamel, and the initials J.K. are in seed pearls. She brought out for me also a gold ring in which twelve pearls enclose in a rectangular design a piece of glass through which the hair can be seen. "My grandmother had these two jewels specially made," said Doña Elena, "the medallion hung always as you see it now, but the ring she wore constantly, though only when her housework was complete, for it was too delicate for ordinary use. She spoke so often to us of our Uncle John that we felt we knew him quite well. But the only picture of him she possessed was Severn's miniature, and one other thing which she told us was exactly like him." Señora Brockmann took me into her bedroom.

Standing high on an immense mahogany wardrobe was a copy of the life-mask by Haydon. Fanny, so her granddaughter explained, had brought it with her to Spain in 1833, and wherever she lived it had occupied the same position in her room, opposite her bed. After her death it remained in the same position for Rosa, after Rosa's death for Isabel, and now Elena Brockmann keeps it there. "Always we have guarded it," she said, "the women of my family." Then, leading the way back to the sitting-room: "Since hearing from England, my brother and I have decided to leave both the miniature and the mask to Keats House, but how can that be arranged?" I did not meet Señor Brockmann that day, but in a conversation with both of them two days later it was settled that, after the death of either, the survivor should arrange for the immediate transfer of both miniature and life-mask to the British Embassy for transmission to England. Both the Brockmanns laughed: "Enrique has decided that he is to die first," said the Señora, "I wish to live only one hour after that: it will be a busy hour for me."

Señora Brockmann wished to take me to the Prado, and at eleven o'clock on the Sunday morning after this first interview, we found her waiting for us in the entrance hall. I was given my choice as to what we should view first and suggested the Raphael room, asking my interpreter, when we arrived there, to put into Spanish for the

Señora Keats' comparison of Guido Reni and Raphael,[1] a comparison with which she, as an artist, agreed with delighted surprise. In a corner of the room, however, she drew me aside and put something into my hand, saying in French, "That is for you, from Enrique and myself." It was Fanny's wedding-ring. She then told me in French and again in Spanish that she and her brother had decided to ask me to take the two letters to England, and that she proposed to get them out of the bank next day and to hand them to me on the day after. The ring, as I turned it over, was pale, worn and narrow, and had evidently been chosen for a slender finger. One side of it was slightly indented. Señora Brockmann explained to me later that the ring had never been off her grandmother's hand from her marriage in 1826 until her death, and that the indentation had been caused by another ring which she always wore above it—the same ring which Mrs. Jennings had worn at Edmonton [2]—a circle of black and silver with an enamelled bezel. Fanny, like her own grandmother, had baked her cakes with it on her

[1] Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, November 1818: "A year ago I could not understand in the slightest degree Raphael's cartoons—now I begin to read them a little—and how did I learn to do so? By seeing something done in quite an opposite spirit—I mean a picture of Guido's in which all the Saints, instead of that heroic simplicity and unaffected grandeur which they inherit from Raphael," etc., etc.

[2] See p. 29.

finger, and to-day Señora Brockmann who wears it does the same.

On the Sunday afternoon, under a sparkling November sky, the Señorita and I drove out to the Cemetery of San Isidoro. Señora Brockmann had tried to dissuade me from a drive which, she said, would shake us to pieces, so stony and rutted were the roads beyond the edge of the city, but the Señorita chose her taxi and driver with care, and soon we were inside the Cemetery gates and had found the section we wanted—Partio de Sante Mario. We should soon have found the grave for ourselves but, before we had done so, one of the custodians appeared and asked to look it up in his guide. I gave him the names of Llanos and Fanny. "You mean the English one—Fanny Keats, so it is written, not Fanny Llanos," he said, and he took us to the plain grey slab and waited while I copied its inscription.

Next day, with Señora Brockmann's introduction, I went to Avila and called upon Dr. Ernesto Paradinas y Brockmann, the only surviving son of Marguerite Brockmann, Isabel's youngest daughter. He is just over thirty and a dental surgeon, is married and had one baby son,[1] whom I was taken to see as being the latest relative of Keats in Spain. Dr. Paradinas had more work than he could easily manage: "the Avilians," he said, "have always had bad teeth," and he

[1] Ernesto. There is now a second son, Miguel, born in 1937.

showed me his room, filled with the latest contrivances for dental surgery from England, Germany and America, but, as he pointed out to me, "scarcely one from my own country." He then took me to the sitting-room and showed me his portrait of his great-grandmother, another copy by Señora Brockmann, not, as in Madrid, hung in a late Victorian setting, but between brilliantly coloured examples of modern Spanish art. After dinner he and his wife drove me round the city to see the walls of Avila by moonlight.

On the following afternoon at 5, Calle de Lista, Señora Brockmann came into the room with a small packet and handed it to me. It was loosely folded in a covering paper of pale grey, and was without superscription or address. She told me to open it while she watched. I did so and drew out first, a large sheet of faded cream paper covered with Keats' handwriting—the Confirmation letter —and next, the short note written by him on the back of a letter from Mrs. Dilke. The Señora explained that they had been in the bank for many years, that she had never read them, and that she was anxious to know what they contained. I did my best to tell her, my interpreter for once somewhat distracted at having to put Protestant religious information into her own language, Señora Brockmann gently amused at John's efforts to instruct Fanny for her Confirmation. "Your affectionate Parson John," read out Señorita de Mayo in Spanish. The shorter letter was a

simpler affair, and she faithfully conveyed the meaning of " I will endeavour to be up early and cut across the fields," Señora Brockmann trying, without much success, to say " cut across " in English. I turned back the page : Mrs. Dilke had written from Wentworth Place on December 18th, 1818 : " I know not how to express my thanks, my dear Miss Keats, for your very kind present." " What was the present ? " asked Señora Brockmann. I explained that on the Sunday previous to the writing of this letter John had taken back with him to Wentworth Place from Walthamstow a present of face screens and a workbag from Fanny, which she had worked herself for Mrs. Dilke. The Señora perfectly understood : " Until the last year or two of her life, when her hand became shaky, my grandmother sewed and embroidered beautifully, she always told us that she had learnt it at Edmonton."

I had expected on opening the packet to find two letters, the Confirmation letter and the last letter dictated by Keats to Fanny Brawne, dated September 11th, 1820. I had not expected that the second letter would be this note written on the back of the letter from Mrs. Dilke.[1] Nor had I expected to find the small collection of other documents and papers which, having set the two letters aside, I then unpacked, and I asked Señora Brockmann how they came to be there. She said that she knew nothing about them as all save one [2]

[1] See pp. 200 and 229. [2] See p. 263.

were in English, but that they related, she knew, to her Uncle, and that for years they had been in the packet at the bank. She said "They are for you to do with as you think best." They included the following:

(1) Holograph letter from George Keats to John Keats, January 30th, 1820.

(2) Letter from John Taylor to Fanny Keats, September 19th, 1820.

(3) Mr. J. S. Sandell's certificate for Fanny Keats' good behaviour, January 1816.

(4) Print of Joseph Severn's charcoal sketch of head of John Keats, made in Shelley's presence in the winter of 1817–18.

(5) Lines in the handwriting of Joseph Severn and of Fanny Keats describing their proposed alteration of Keats' tombstone in 1864.

(6) Newspaper extract in English, describing the safeguarding of the tombs of Shelley and Keats and Severn in 1888.

(7) A black bordered envelope, directed in Senora Llanos' handwriting "From Rome" and containing an ivy leaf, rose leaves and box leaves.

(8) A small white envelope, directed in the same handwriting "Violets from Rome, March 6th, 1882,"[1] containing four violets and a lock of Keats' hair tied with red silk.

[1] The violets were brought back from Rome for her grandmother by Señora Elena Brockmann.

(9) Translation into Spanish of Mr. H. Buxton Forman's notice in the *Athenæum* of Rosa Llanos' gift of her uncle's letters to the British Museum.

After going over this collection of papers and relics, I proposed that they should go to Keats' House, and she agreed, " Just as you think." She said to me as I closed the packet, " My brother is delicate and cannot talk for long, but in all that I say I speak for him as well as for myself." After tea I was taken to his study. Don Enrique Brockmann, straight, white-haired and courtly, has a strong likeness to his grandfather, Valentin Llanos, as he is shown in his portrait painted in old age. He did not speak to me about the miscellaneous documents, but after standing for a moment or two in silence with the two letters in his hand, gave them to me with a bow, saying slowly, " We give these two letters to England."

In the course of my conversations with the Señora, I discovered two things : first, that it had been a tradition in the family for two generations that these two letters should join the others already in England after the death of Señora Llanos' grandchildren, this having been her express wish ; and secondly, that Señor and Señora Brockmann were under the impression that if they sent these letters to Keats' House, they would there be, as Señora Brockmann expressed it, " with the others." When I explained that this would not be so, Señora Brockmann decided that the two

letters should be added to the collection of the other forty-two in the British Museum.[1] At this interview, I took the opportunity of asking Señora Brockmann's permission to use and quote any letters and documents written by members of the family—" Anything you may find," she said to me, and, with a characteristic gesture, " Tutto, tutto," in one of her languages.

The letters were thus disposed of, and, in the last few days of my stay in Madrid, Señora Brockmann set herself to answer all my other questions about her grandmother. When I asked if I might see any books owned by Señora Llanos still at Calle de Lista, she replied that she knew of only one,[2] and brought into the room Mr. H. Buxton Forman's four-volume edition of 1883. Was there nothing more, I asked. Nothing more of her

[1] I took the packet to the British Embassy next day, and through the kindness of His Excellency, the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Chilton, I was allowed to send it to England in the Embassy bag. On my return to London, I retrieved the packet at the Foreign Office, took the two letters to the British Museum, and the remainder of the documents which had been in the packet, together with the photograph of her grandmother which Señora Brockmann had given me, to Keats House (see p. 157). Shortly afterwards Señora Brockmann altered her decision about the two letters and they were handed over to Keats House. Their arrival there and that of the other documents was announced in *The Times Literary Supplement* of Dec. 21, 1935.

[2] In 1905 all that then remained of Señora Llanos' small collection of books had been disposed of by Countess Brockmann. (See p. 243.)

grandmother's, Señora Brockmann told me, but two more in the English language which had belonged to her aunt. They were illustrated American editions of some of Keats' Poems, and, as their inscriptions showed, had been given to "Miss Rosa Llanos y Keats in gratitude for her kindness, by her friend Mr. F. Holland Day."

On my next visit to Calle de Lista, Señora Brockmann went round her drawing-room searching for what would interest me. She took down from the wall a portrait of her grandfather, Don Valentin Llanos, painted early in life. Looking at him as he had been then, dark, proud and distinguished, I was not surprised that Fanny Brawne had described him as the "beau of the room" at the Hampstead dances, or that she had thought it necessary to reassure Fanny Keats, who was absent from one of them, concerning the appearance and charms of a possible rival—Miss Lancaster. But there was no photograph of Señora Llanos herself at this date, and only after long search did Señora Brockmann come upon the one which is reproduced facing page 156 and which she gave to me.[1] "It was taken in 1861 or 1862," she said, "to satisfy her many friends in Rome, and she was persuaded, much against her will, to wear her best frock, she was never photographed again. Years later my Uncle Juan and I had great difficulty in getting her to let us paint portraits of her, but they were fair likenesses, and afterwards

[1] See pp. 157 and 264, n. 1.

I was able to make copies of them for the family." Señora Brockmann has inherited her grandmother's dislike of the camera, but I persuaded her one morning, and after many groans and objections that it was raining, and that the background was far too grand for so ordinary a person as herself, I took the photograph facing page 254 which she gave me permission to use. "You have done well," she wrote when she acknowledged the print of it I sent her, "to make such a good photograph out of an old lady."

It does not do her justice, and this protestation belies her welcome, her gaiety, and her energy. As I discovered before I left Madrid, she went out very little, preferring to spend most of her days with Señor Brockmann, yet she never saw me down the stairs without having suggested some place of interest to which she would take me next day, a visit to the Gallery of Modern Art, a special permit for the National Palace. She never owned to fatigue. And in the afternoons she would sit beside me for two hours or more, searching her memory for points of family interest, verifying and expanding statements in her grandmother's letters, tracing the history of portraits, jewels and papers, the Señorita on the other side giving me a pitying look as the English tea-hour went by, and the Señora was still unexhausted. But at 6.15 or 6.30, with a remark of repentance, she would pull the tapestry curtain aside and lead the way into her dining-room, where a table was

spread with all the Spanish biscuits and sweets, and there, taking nothing herself, she made tea, a maid always in attendance behind her, in white gloves and apron and high goffered bonnet. On my last afternoon, there stood in the centre of the table a cake which might have come direct from Buzzards. She cut it and offered me a piece dark with cherries and raisins. "I made it this morning," she said, "from the recipe my grandmother used and which she taught me, the recipe for the cake she had watched Mrs. Jennings bake at Edmonton."

Half an hour later I had to say good-bye as I was leaving Madrid that night. I asked her if she could not see her way to pay me a visit in England, but she said no, the journey from central Spain was long, and she could never leave her brother. I saw her last as I went down the stairs, standing by the open door, tall, smiling, and waving her hand.

*August*, 1937.

Señora Elena Brockmann writes to me that she and her brother Señor Enrique are "alive and well," still living in Madrid, and that they intend to remain there.

## APPENDIX I

(The *Athenæum*, No. 2625, February 16th, 1878, page 217.)

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE

WE have received the letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne, written in the years 1819–20, "now given from the Original Manuscripts with Introduction and Notes," by Mr. H. Buxton Forman (Reeves & Turner). It will be remembered that Miss Brawne, ten years after Keats' death, when the first memoir was proposed, had so little belief in his poetic reputation that she wrote to Mr. Dilke, "The kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to which circumstances have condemned him." "The whirligig of Time," however, "brings in his revenges." Mr. Forman tells us that "when the world had decided that Keats was *not* to be left in that obscurity she said more than once that the letters of the poet which form the present volume, and about which she was otherwise most uncommunicative, should be carefully guarded, 'as they would some day be considered of value.'" And now her representatives seem to have decided that the "some day" has come. The announcement, indeed, that "the *owners* of these letters reserve to themselves all rights of reproduction and translation" is a proof that the value of love-letters, like other literary property, has been enhanced by the provisions of the

International Copyright Acts. If their publication under the circumstances alleged is the greatest impeachment of a woman's sense of womanly delicacy to be found in the history of literature, Mr. Forman's extraordinary preface is no less notable as a sign of the degradation to which the bookmaker has sunk. How is it that the literary class is so often obtuse where less intelligent classes are commonly so delicate? To publish the love-letters of a dead man who, if he were living, would cry out from the depths of his soul against it, seems to the common understanding of those to whom the affections are more than fame a heinous offence. Distressing to most of us as is the thought of the fragility of human life, and its complicated consequences, we have still this great comfort that, thanks to the high sanctions of the laws of honour, a veil will certainly be drawn by our friends between the outside world and those most sacred threads linking heart to heart which "the abhorred shears" have sundered. We know that in life's battle an English gentleman would as soon think of picking the pocket of a dead comrade as of making public his love-letters. With regard to poets, however, men like Mr. Forman seem to reason in this way: Poets having elected to move for sympathy out of the circle of their private friends have thereby sold themselves to the mob of quidnuncs, curiosity-hunters and "poetical students" —have made themselves public property in short— and have, in consequence, lost that right of privacy which, to an Englishman not vulgarised by "fame-worship," is so dear. We are not going to say that there is not a certain kind of cogency in such reasoning as this, though whether the biographer shall consider it to warrant the publication of a man's love-letters must depend upon the biographer's own sense of good-

breeding. But what are we to say if this hideous breach of the sanctities of life is done with the implied warranty of the woman to whom they were addressed? —of her who should, indeed, have "carefully guarded" them—not because "they would some day be considered of value," but because she could not part with such sacred things till her death approached—and then have burnt them or ordered them to be buried with her. Such a woman was Fanny Brawne, if we are to accept Mr. Forman's portrait of her; which, however, we refuse to do. Mr. Forman gives us a long appendix, in which is discussed with a whimsical display of detail the locality of Wentworth Place, Hampstead, where the love passages between Keats and Fanny Brawne took place. Among the persons now living who could have spared Mr. Forman and his readers all this trouble is Mr. Dilke's own brother, who could have settled the matter in a dozen words.

## APPENDIX II

# KEATS'S LETTERS TO HIS SISTER: A GIFT TO THE NATION

*Athenæum*, May 16th, 1891.

THE Trustees of the British Museum have just received a gift of unusual value and interest. The letters which John Keats addressed to his only sister from the time of his sojourn with his friend Bailey at Oxford in 1817 until his departure in 1820 were carefully preserved by their recipient during a long life—one of them, however, having been presented to Mr. Locker-Lampson many years ago. The series was entrusted to Mr. Buxton Forman for publication in his collected edition of Keats's writings; and it forms one of the most interesting portions of that book; for these are among the brightest and pleasantest of all Keats's letters. That the holographs should be in National keeping was greatly to be wished; and the children of the late Señora Llanos (Fanny Keats) have merited well of the Nation in deciding to present a collection of this priceless character to the British Museum. Two of their Uncle's letters are retained as an heirloom in the hands of the family; two have been presented as a memento to Mr. Buxton Forman; and the one already referred to remains in the Locker-Lampson collection. The number given to the Museum is forty-two. The known value of these holograph letters are not by any means a matter of

indifference to the family of Mrs. Llanos, who could ill-afford the loss of the Civil List pension which died with the poet's sister. But they were determined that, so far as they could provide against it, there should be no traffic in letters which they had been taught to regard as sacred. They have adopted the right means to that excellent end; and their high-spirited rectitude should be held in respectful memory.

## APPENDIX III

(*The Times Literary Supplement*, October 4, 1934.)

# NEW KEATS LETTERS

By Maurice Buxton Forman

WHEN Fanny Keats de Llanos sent to H. Buxton Forman in the early eighties the collection of her brother's letters now safely housed in the British Museum she withheld two letters which she regarded as of too sacred and personal a nature for publication during her lifetime. Whether she showed these letters to my father when he visited her in Madrid I do not know, but he knew of their existence; and in due time, when she had been dead for some years and he was about to publish his centenary edition of Keats's letters in one volume (Reeves and Turner, 1895), he applied to her daughter, Rosa Llanos y Keats, for copies of them and was told regretfully that they had already been copied by a friend of his who intended to include them in a life of her uncle. A few years later, hoping to print them in his Gowans and Gray "Keats," he wrote to the friend who had secured the copies and had not published the projected "Life," but failed to elicit a reply. These facts are mentioned that it may not be thought that my father neglected his duty to Keats and to the public who bought his books. Fortune has been kinder to me, and I am now able to publish not only the two letters referred to above but also an earlier note written on the back of a letter from Mrs. Dilke to Fanny Keats.

Until now we have had no letter from Keats to his sister between the one telling of Tom Keats' dangerous condition on the morning of Tuesday, December 1st (Tom died on the night of December 1st–2nd) and that of Wednesday, December 30th, reporting his own sore throat. It is known that he had seen Fanny between those dates, for in his second journal letter to America, in the part that we can now safely date December 16th, he says : " Mrs. Dilke went with me to see Fanny last week, and Haslam went with me last Sunday. . . . On Sunday I brought from her a present of face-screens and a work bag for Mrs. D.—they were (both) very pretty." That Sunday visit with Haslam was made on December 13th ; when the present was delivered is not disclosed, but here is Mrs. Dilke's acknowledgement, dated from Wentworth Place on December 18th :

I know not how to express my thanks my dear Miss Keats for your very kind present, and fear much I am depriving some other Friend of them, they are very beautiful, and I shall value them much, do you think I may hope for the pleasure of your Company ? Your Brother is staying with Mr. Brown and our next door Neighbour so that he would be with us constantly. Pray do give my Compliments to Mrs. Abbey and ask her to allow you to come, say that both myself and Mr. Dilke will take the greatest care of you, and do everything in our power to make you comfortable. Your Brother has just been with us, and is very well, he got home very well the other Evening, but not till past 10 o'clock, very cold and very hungry both. I must now conclude and should like to hear from you much, believing me to be

Yours most sincerely,

MARIA DILKE.

Please to present my Compts to Miss Tuckey.

On the second page of this letter Keats wrote :

MY DEAR FANNY,

So much time has passed with me this last year, without my having had power to employ it—which is absolutely necessary—that I am glad to take advantage of the present time to study and write a little, that is the reason I have not been to see you—However if Monday the frost continue I will endeavour to be up early and cut across the fields.

Your ever affectionate Brother

JOHN.

Continuing his journal letter to George and Georgiana on the same day, Keats tells them of his intention : " I shall dine with Haydon on Sunday and go over to Walthamstow on Monday if the frost hold," and on the following Tuesday he records that he " dined at Haslam's on Sunday—with Haydon yesterday and saw Fanny in the morning—she was well." If he cut across the fields from Hampstead to Walthamstow on these occasions—as, money being scarce, he probably did—he had plenty of exercise, but his devotion to his sister was at all times pronounced, and just now he was doing what he could to get the Abbeys to allow Fanny to remain at school, which she preferred to the gloom and restraint of her guardian's home.

Correspondence a little later discloses the poet interesting himself in his sister's spiritual welfare. In a published letter of April 13th, 1819, he writes : " I have been expecting a Letter from you about what the Parson said to your answers." Probably we shall never know what the parson said, but the answers Keats suggested are contained in the second of the new letters, which was written on March 31st and addressed to " Miss Keats, R$^{d}$ Abbey's Esq$^{r}$, Walthamstow " :

Wednesday.

MY DEAR FANNY,

I shall be going to town tomorrow and will call at the Nursery on the road for those roots and seeds you want, which I will send by the Walthamstow stage. The best way, I thought, for you to learn to answer these questions, is to read over the little book, which I sent from the Booksellers in town, or you should have had a letter with it—Tell me whether it will do: if not I will put down the answers for you. I have not yet heard from George—Perhaps if I just give you the heads of the answers it may be better—though I think you will find them all in that little book.

Ans[r] 1—It was instituted by John the Baptist when he baptised those people in the river Jordan who believed through him in the coming of Christ—and more particularly when he baptised Christ himself.

2 It corresponds to the Jewish Circumscision.

3 The meaning is we are confirmed members of Christ. It is not administered till 14 years of age because before that age the mind (is) not judged to be sufficiently mature and capable. The act of confirmation imposes on the Christian self circumspection; as by that ceremony the Christian duties of God fathers and godmothers is annulled and put an end to—as you see in the catechism—"they promise and vow these things in my name"—Confirmation absolves this obligation.

4 There are two Sacraments of our Church—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Church of Rome has seven Sacraments. The Church of Rome includes several ceremonies (I forget what they are) and the civil rite of marriage—I believe Confirmation is a sacrament with them—extreme unction, or the annointing the extremities of dying persons with holy water.

The reason why we have but the two Sacraments is —that it is proved from the Scriptures by the great protestant reformers—that only two are commanded by God—the rest adopted by the Church of Rome are human institutions.

5 You must here repeat your belief—and say the question is to(o) hard for you.

6 Look in Isaia(h) for "*A virgin shall conceive*" & Look in the Psalms for "*The Kings of the Earth set themselves and the Princes take Counsel together*" and "*They parted my Garments among them* etc." and "*My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me* etc." In Jeremia(h) "*Comfort ye, comfort ye* etc." In Daniel. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands that breaks the image in pieces is a type of the Kingdom of Christ. Look at the 2nd Chap Isaiah—Chap 7–9 "*For unto us a Child is born.*" 11 Jeremiah Chap xxxi Micah Chap 5—Zechariah Chap 6 and Chap 13 *verse* 6. Those I have marked will be sufficient. You will remember their completion in the new testament.

7th The communion of Saints is the fruition they enjoy in heaven among one another and in the Divinity, of Christ.

8th It was instituted on the night of the feast of the Passover at the Last Supper with the Twelve; the night Judas betrayed Christ—and you may see in the 26 Mathew—It corresponds to the Feast of the Passover in the Jewish Ritual.

9 They expected Christ to be a temporal Prince and being disappointed rejected him—

10 Look to the Cathechism—"What is your duty towards God?"

11th The Prophecy to our first parents is this—Genesis 3 chapter, verse "and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; *it shall bruize thy head* and thou shall bruize his heel—Christ the Son of David by dying on the Cross triumphed over death and the grave

from which he saved mankind; and in that way did he bruize the serpent's head"—

Your affectionate Parson,
JOHN.

In the latest of his published letters to his sister Keats said: "It will give me great Pleasure to see you here, if you can contrive it; though I confess I should have written instead of calling upon you before I set out on my journey, from the wish of avoiding unpleasant partings." That was written on August 23rd. I have often wondered whether Fanny "contrived it," or whether John wrote a letter of farewell before he left England. It now appears that Fanny did not "contrive it," nor did John himself write, but he "accepted the assistance of a friend," to whom he dictated a letter on Monday, September 11th, 1820, the said letter being posted, according to the postmark, before noon on the 12th:

Monday Morn.

MY DEAR FANNY

In the hope of entirely re-establishing my health I shall leave England for Italy this week and, of course I shall not be able to see you before my departure. It is not illness that prevents me from writing but as I am recommended to avoid every sort of fatigue I have accepted the assistance of a friend, who I have desired to write to you when I am gone and to communicate any intelligence she may hear of me. I am as well as I can expect and feel very impatient to get on board as the sea air is expected to be of great benefit to me. My present intention is to stay some time at Naples and then to proceed to Rome, where I shall find several friends or at least several acquaintances. At any rate it will be a relief to quit this cold, wet, uncertain climate. I am not very fond of living in cities but there will be too much to amuse me, as

soon as I am well enough to go out, to make me feel dull. I have received your parcel and intend to take it with me. You shall hear from me as often as possible, if I feel too tired to write myself I shall have some friend to do it for me. I have not yet heard from George nor can I expect to receive any letter from him before I leave.

Your affectionate Brother,
JOHN.

It was, of course, Fanny Brawne who wrote and signed this letter; the day after it was posted Keats left her and Hampstead for the last time. She had not then met Fanny Keats, but she carried out John's wishes, corresponded with her, and it was not long before the two young women became close friends. The affection of Fanny Keats for the Brawnes lasted throughout her life, and within two years of her death in 1889 she was still sending messages from Madrid to members of the family in England.

## APPENDIX IV

(*The Times Literary Supplement*, December 21, 1935.)

# KEATS AND CHRISTIANITY

*To the Editor of "The Times"*

SIR,—By a happy chance the letter from John Keats to his sister Fanny, answering her questions concerning the catechism (quoted in the review in your issue of December 14th of Mr. Maurice Buxton Forman's new edition of the *Letters of John Keats*) has this week returned to the house in which it was written—now the Keats House and Museum, Hampstead. When Fanny Keats, who lived in Madrid, sent the collection of letters addressed to her to the late Mr. H. Buxton Forman in order that he might prepare his edition of Keats' letters (in 1881), she retained this and another letter. The former collection was presented to the British Museum in 1890 by Fanny Keats' daughter, Rosa, but the latter two letters passed eventually to Fanny Keats' grandson and granddaughter, Señor and Señorita Brockmann.

For some years the Resident Curator of Keats House (Mr. Fred Edgcumbe) has sought to establish contacts with the descendants of Keats' brother and sister—who are all living abroad, the descendants of George being in America, and of Fanny in Spain—and early this year he had the privilege of corresponding, on behalf of the Hampstead Public Libraries Committee, with Señor and Señorita Brockmann. The latter are keenly interested in the work of the Hampstead memorial to the poet, and have most generously expressed the

wish that these two letters should be preserved there for all time. The second letter (also included in Mr. Maurice Buxton Forman's new edition) is a brief note written on the back of a letter to Fanny from Mrs. Dilke.

The committee is also indebted to Señor and Señorita Brockmann for the gift of several other valuable items relating to Keats. Chief among them are unpublished letters from John Taylor, Keats' publisher, and from Keats' brother George. The letter from Taylor is most interesting. Addressed to Fanny Keats and dated September 19th, 1820, it describes how, when Keats sailed for Naples, Taylor, with Haslam and Woodhouse, accompanied him on the *Maria Crowther* as far as Gravesend, where the poet was joined by Severn. Keats, says Taylor, " was then comfortably settled in his new habitation with every prospect of having a pleasant voyage. His health was already much improved by the air of the river, and by the exercise and amusement which the sailing afforded."

The letter from George Keats was written to John Keats from Liverpool immediately prior to his embarking for the second and last time for New York (dated January 30th, 1820—though George falls victim to a common error and writes " 30 Jan., 1819 "). It tells of an unfortunate if amusing experience. " I awoke (in lodgings) at about two this morning and found myself nearly afloat in my bed, the cock of cistern on the floor above was accidentally left running and the water had dripped thro' the ceiling. I got up and called for lights, and found it had found its way through feather bed and mattress and made a great pool on the ground. At first I was alarmed, having taken calomel, but I am quite well this morning."

Thirdly, there is a very charming relic of Fanny Keats' childhood. Fanny, then in her thirteenth year, and under the guardianship of Richard Abbey, had been visiting Mr. J. Sandell. The latter writes, " This

is to certify to whom it may concern that Frances Mary Keats, during the time she was on a visit to Mrs. Sandell, was a very good girl.—J. S., 14 Jan., 1816."

Yours,

LIONEL R. MCCOLVIN, Chief Librarian and Curator.

Central Public Library, Hampstead.

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