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{lh}To David Meldrum

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 58

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

Thursday.

6th July 99.

{lsa}My dear Mr Meldrum.

{lb}Herewith 3 chap:^{rs} 31 pp. of Lord Jim, or to speak correctly two complete chapters and as much of the third as is ready.

Confiding in Your friendly offices I ask you for a typewritten copy of this batch for myself, together with the return of my own type. The text is pretty correct as it stands now and any small changes I may wish to make shall wait till I get the proof from Maga. This is not enough for one instalment but I will be sending you pages (a few at a time) and work at it steadily till the end. I trust the end of the month will come together with the end of the story. Youre* good letter has cheered me. The story will improve as it goes on. You will arrange the time for publication with McClure; I should not like to lose the American serial of this story if it can be avoided.

The story will be fully 40000 words and I shall ask Mr Blackwood for {bp}120 which is a little more than the agreed rate but expect to do more work for Maga before the year is out -- that is if you want me -- and make it right in that way. We must talk this matter over when we meet next as I have had proposals made for a series of short stories (or rather short

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serials)^l and would like to know Mr B'wood's intentions. I may say at once that I would rather work for Maga at a less rate than those people offer me; but some revision of terms must take place. However there is plenty of time for that discussion. The important thing now for me is to get rid of my deplorable Jim with honour and satisfaction to all concerned.

My wife's kind regards. She wants to know whether You would risk a visit here -- and so do I. We could arrange the time. What do You say?

{lc}Very faithfully Yours

{ls}Conrad.

{lh}To H.-D. Davray

Text MS Yale; L.fr. 38

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

10 July 1899.

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Translation

{lsa}Dear Monsieur Davray,

{lb}In reading the last number of the Mercure, I had a moment of very lively pleasure, and I owe it to you. Thanks. You have given your opinion in words that go straight to the heart. The phrase {op'}who is one of ours' touched me, for, truly, I feel bound to France by a deep sympathy, by some old friendships (now vanished, alas), by the lasting charm of memories without bitterness. I like to believe that, the next time you step across the Channel, you will take the road for Pent Farm. This, after all, would only be one step more.

{lc}Believe me, dear Sir, very

{lc}cordially yours,

{ls}Joseph Conrad

{lh}To Neil Munro

Text MS NLS; Unpublished

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

10th July 99

{lsa}My dear Munro.

{lb}Blessings on your head for your good letter. I've been thinking of you I may say daily and watching the B'wood adv^{ts} with the idea of seeing your name and the title of a new book. When are we to have more of you?

I saw the notice in the G[lasgow] E[vening] H[erald]¹ on the occasion of the Ac[adem]y award. No one was more surprised than myself and even yet (when the cash is spent and gone) I feel like an impostor and a thief. I wanted to write to you then; I was immensely touched by what you -- for it was you -- said {op"}coram publico"² about my work. Verily you and two or three others for whose word I care would give me a swelled head if I did not save myself from that disease by suspecting You all of a mysterious insanity. No -- my head is not swelled, but behold! My heart is dilated and my ribs ready to burst with gratitude and joy.

I've seen M^r Hamish Hendy's short things in the Sat: Rev.³ By the .p187

blind stars that in their courses make us what we are the stuff is written! I like it immensely. As to myself I would write for him if I could -- if I could! But you all who have undertaken the task to dilate my heart till it crack my ribs should know I am a dumb dog. Who am I -- I who accidentally write a sentence a day -- to promise books and stand up before publishers. My hands are empty and my tongue is tied from day to day. Now and then for a moment or so the spell is removed from me -- to the end that I might the better taste the despair of thought without expression, of the wandering soul without a body. However please tell him with my thanks that I am very much flattered by what his proposal implies. It's better than all the wealth of Grant Richards.¹ And that's all I can say -- a poor return for his and your kind thought of me.

There! Enough. But I was glad to hear from You. I am now writing for Maga a long short story to complete a vol: of three. I am writing with my teeth set very hard, and yet I will bring shame on all your heads, and my heart will shrivel to the size of a pea.

{lc}Affectionately Yours

{ls}Conrad

{lh}To H. G. Wells

Text MS Illinois; Unpublished

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

Tuesday [July 1899?]²

{lsa}My dear Wells.

{lb}I am confoundedly lame and want wife to stop here and look after me. It may be better to-morrow but I don't reckon on it. It's no use me writing to You to groan and swear.

I feel pretty wretched; Jess on her side has scalded her hand during cooking operations today. We are physically and mentally cripples, and not fit to be let lo[o]se. As soon as I can I shall sail up to Sandgate. I haven't had much sailing. O! gosh! Life is full of deceptions. Our kindest regards, and humble apologies for unreadiness, to your wife and yourself.

{lc}Faithfully Yours

{ls}Conrad

{lps}Thanks! I've got the N^o of Mercure. Nice. I.O.U. twenty five pounds.

{lh}To Helen Sanderson

Text MS Yale; Unpublished

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

22 July 99.

{lsa}Dear Mrs Sanderson.

{lb}I ought to have thanked you weeks before for the photograph of your charming and very young daughter. We have been delighted with it and we had a good look every day. It is the dearest little face! Of you however there is not much to see.

I am glad You're going to Scotland. There is such a thing as native air -- and native atmosphere; and even such a hopeless vagabond as myself understands the need of it -- the longing for it -- that comes upon one in the midst of cares, in the midst of happiness as well.

The unrest of human thought is like the unrest of the sea, disturbing and futile. There is always something stirring under the surface of accepted beliefs. Nothing new however; nothing enduring. It seems to me I am looking at the rush and recoil of the waves at the foot of a cliff;¹ but a Church should be like a rock in the midst of an ocean -- unmoved. The mad individualism of Niet[z]sche² the exaggerated altruism of the next man tainted with selfishness and pride come with their noise and froth, pass away and are forgotten. Faith remains; but a faith that seeks a compromise with every outbreak of human levity ceases to be a faith, becomes an expedient, a system a social institution -- and perishes. Truth is immovable -- it is eternal, it is one; and a church as the repository of the highest truth cannot listen, cannot absorb what is unstable, complex and doomed to die.

These are my vague thoughts. They could be made the ground of a defensible position. I would not advocate a blind intolerance. The church should be indulgent like a mother to the capricious vagaries of her child; but to surrender to such vagaries or even make the smallest concession to them would be fatal, would be destructive.

Pardon these platitudes and many thanks for your delightful letter.

Your affte and obe^t servant

{ls}Jph Conrad.

{lps}Love to Ted and to Katherine.

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{lh}To Hugh Clifford

Text MS Clifford; Hunter

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

23 July 99

{lsa}My dear Sir.

{lb}I trust you and Mrs Clifford will find it in your hearts to give us a day of your time.

I think you mentionned* the first half of Augst. I want only two days in that fortnight one for a visit to Henry James (who is almost my neighbour in Rye)¹ and another for W. E. Henley who has sent me a reproachful message the other day. I've not fixed the dates for these visits and shall not do so till I hear from you.

If Your fortitude does not flinch at the awful prospect we can put You up for the night -- and this would be the better way. Only in any case I trust you will come early. There is a decent train about 11 am from Char X which I venture to recommend.

I've been very busy and not a little seedy or I would have written before.

{lc}Believe me dear Mr Clifford very

{lc}faithfully yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad.

{lh}To Hugh Clifford

Text MS Clifford; Hunter

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

28 July 99

{lsa}My dear Sir.

{lb}In a tremendous hurry to catch this post. Many thanks for the book² which I've only just seen on my return from a couple of days cruising.

There's much to say -- also about B'wood contributions.³ Very excellent.

{lc}Faithfully yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad

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{lh}To David Meldrum

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 59

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

31st July 99

{lsa}My dear Mr Meldrum.

{lb}Thanks for your letter. I have been seedy and interrupted in various ways; this explains the delay and the small quantity of copy I am sending you now.

Here's the end of Chap III. Chap IV whole and the beginning of Chap V. pp of my type 32 to 50 which I should like to be doubly copied -- one set for me and the other for E'burgh.

I shall be sending you MS almost daily if only a few pages at a time keeping it up till the end which, I pray, may be soon but is not in sight yet -- not by a long way.

I had proof from E'burgh which I return there by the same post that takes this letter to you.

I would like to get {bp}50 on acct of Jim at once.

These three tales will make a thick vol or I am much mistaken. Jim may turn out longer than H of D even. Whether as good? -- that's a question. Let us hope.

I make note of the new agreement¹ entered into with Mr B'wood. {bp}5 per 1000 words serial rights (in England) and 20% book. No advance. And once more thanks very much for arranging the matter.

{lc}I am my dear Mr Meldrum very

{lc}faithfully Yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad.

{lh}To David Meldrum

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 26

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

Friday 10^h August 98

[10/11 August 1899]²

{lsa}My dear Mr Meldrum.

{lb}Very many thanks for the cheque for {bp}20 which You have so kindly sent me. It shall be paid back as soon as I get my advance from M^r Bwood.

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As to Jim: I think that September is safe quite. Strictly speaking you have enough for two instalments now in hand. If you divide in that way the story may run into 4 No^s. But even if you distribute the whole into three I am confident of coming to time.¹ This work isn't like the Rescue where I aim at purely [a]esthetic (if I dare say so) effects. I am now in tolerable health. There's really nothing to stand in the way of a happy termination of Jim's troubles; and its as likely as not the story will be finished a long time before the second instalment comes out.

If America is in the way of the dates I shall not write any slower for it. I never mean to be slow. The stuff comes out at its own rate. I am always ready to put it down; nothing would induce me to lay down my pen if I feel a sentence -- or even a word ready to my hand. The trouble is that too often -- alas! -- I've to wait for the sentence -- for the word.

What wonder then that during the long blank hours the doubt creeps into the mind and I ask myself whether I am fitted for that work. The worst is that while I am thus powerless to produce my imagination is extremely active: whole paragraphs, whole pages, whole chapters pass through my mind. Everything is there: descriptions, dialogue, reflexion -- everything -- everything but the belief, the conviction, the only thing needed to make me put pen to paper. I've thought out a volume in a day till I felt sick in mind and heart and gone to bed, completely done up, without having written a line. The effort I put out should give birth to masterpieces as big as mountains -- and it brings forth a ridiculous mouse now and then.

Therefore I must sell my mice as dear as I can since I must live; that's why I beg you very earnestly to arrange matters so as not to give McClure any excuse for losing my Am: Ser: rights of Jim.² It looks as if I were very mercenary but, God knows, it is not so. I am impatient of material anxieties and they frighten me too because I feel how mysteriously independent of myself is my power of expression. It is there -- I believe -- and some thought, and a little insight. All this is there; but I am not as the workmen who can take up and lay down their tools. I am, so to speak, only the agent of an unreliable master.

Once more -- many thanks for all and every one of the good offices I .p192

receive at your hands. We haven't given up the hope of seeing you here before the {op'}rainy season' sets in. With kindest regards from us both.

{lc}Always yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad

{lps}I've received 2^d batch of Jim last night. There will be a good many corrections to make in proof for Maga. Upon the whole I don't think the story very bad. I am cheered.

{lh}To David Meldrum

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 62

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

22 Augst 99

{lsa}Dear Mr Meldrum.

{lb}I've dispatched today 12 pp. more of Jim -- addressed to the office. More would have been sent but my wife not being very well could not type yesterday. They shall be coming in very soon: I am going straight ahead with Jim and am rather pleased with him so far.

I haven't heard yet from Mr B'wood, neither in reference to the advance I asked for Jim nor to the arrangement for future work. Did I read Your letter aright that that last is {op'}fixed' on conditions proposed by me? As to the first, to have to go a-begging is bad enough -- and nothing

but dire necessity would drive me to it; therefore the delay in the effect of it is most tormenting. All these are miserable cares.

Speaking of future work it is I suppose understood that I have a free hand in placing my stories elsewhere too than in Maga. Or do you think Mr B'wood wishes to have everything till the next vol (after the Three Tales) is completed? I ask for two reasons. One that -- don't you think? -- there may be too much Conrad in Maga by and by. The other is this: That having made a beastly hash of my Rescue engagements (the book itself is right enough) I feel I would like to let Heinemann have something of mine in the meantime. Now there is a law of Medes and Persians¹ that anything appearing in Maga must be published in book form by the Firm -- isn't there? This being so the stuff destined for H. must appear serially somewhere else. I have enough matter laid up in my head for two more vols in the style -- or, let us say as they do of men-of-war cruisers -- in the class {op"} Youth" and if possible I would like .p193

to share it between B'wood and H'nn -- unless I get on (in the next few months) much quicker with the Rescue than I expect.

This for your consideration. Moreover after Jim is finished I would like to give Mr B'wood the sketch of old Captain Loutit¹ and another story -- at new rates -- together about 30 to 35000 words (or more). Will he want them so soon after Jim -- will he want them at all? I wouldn't want to hurry the publication. I would be only anxious to sell them.

Of course my dear Sir I never for a moment supposed you would want to criticize my method (or no-method) of work. If I wrote touching my difficulties it is because sometimes it is very hard to keep one's trouble to oneself, and writing to you I was sure of {op'}comprehension'. You have been so friendly to me that you must bear the penalty of my occasional confidences.

If you could jog their memories in E'gh without breaking any sacred usages or compromising my good standing -- you would be doing a good action. My wife's kind regards.

{lc}Always yours faithfully

{ls}Jph. Conrad.

{lps}I dare say McClure is right in everything. So I've written him. By this time you have 20000 words of Jim in hand, and I want {bp}50. You may reckon on 40-42000 as the whole.

{lh}To William Blackwood

Text MS NLS; Blackburn 63

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

22 Augst 99.

{lsa}Dear Mr Blackwood.

{lb}I've this afternoon received your letter enclosing a cheque for {bp}50 on acc^t/ of Jim. Many thanks for your unwearied readiness to answer my unceremonious -- to say the least -- demands.

I am glad you like Jim so far. Your good opinion gives one confidence. From the nature of things treated the story can not be as dramatic (in a certain sense) as the H of D. It is certainly more like Youth. It is however longer and more varied. The structure of it is a little loose -- this however .p194

need not detract from its interest -- from the {op"}general reader" point of view. The question of art is so endless, so involved and so obscure that one is tempted to turn one's face resolutely away from it. I've certainly an idea -- apart from the idea and the subject of the story -- which guides me in my writing, but I would be hard put to it if requested to give it out in the shape of a fixed formula. After all in this as in every other human

endeavor one is answerable only to one's conscience.

I have this day sent off another 3000 words to your London office. 2000 more are actually written or rather scrawled and awaiting the domestic typewriter. I devote myself exclusively to Jim. I find I can't live with more than one story at a time. It's a kind of literary monogamism. You know how desperately slow I work. Scores of notions present themselves -- expressions suggest themselves by the dozen, but the inward voice that decides: -- this is well -- this is right -- is not heard sometimes for days together. And meantime one must live!

Very good of you to delay Jim's app'ce out of regard for my american business. It's obvious the matter is of prime importance to me. My unsatisfactory manner of production is at fault here. If the thing can't be managed, well, then it must go. Let no horrid Yank stand in the way of Maga's convenience.

Hugh Clifford with his wife paid me a flying visit. Actually came down all the way to make my acquaintance. I was quite touched. We sang Maga's praises. His last thing (Augst N^o) was rather good -- I mean as a piece of writing. His knowledge is unique. If I only knew one hundre[d]th part of what he knows I would move a mountain or two. This is an endless letter. I've had news of your health from Meldrum. I trust you are quite well now. I've suffered from excruciating headaches all the summer. Believe me dear Mr Blackwood always very faithfully yours
{ls}Joseph Conrad.

{lh}To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; J-A, 1, 278

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

23^d Augst 99

{lsa}Dear Sir^l.

{lb}Thanks very much for your letter.

The Am: Publisher need not be ashamed, tho' the fact is that all my
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prose has been published in the states. Publishers are not supposed to be able to read. I can write a little but God forbid that I should break upon the blessed ignorance of a stranger far from his native land.

My method of writing is so unbusiness-like that I don't think you could have any use for such an unsatisfactory person. I generally sell a work before it is begun, get paid when it is half done and don't do the other half till the spirit moves me. I must add that I have no control whatever over the spirit -- neither has the man who has paid the money.

The above may appear fanciful to you but it is the sober truth. I live in hopes of reformation and whenever that takes place you and you alone shall have the working of the New Conrad. Meantime I must be content to pander to my absurd weaknesses, and hobble along the line of the least resistance.

{lc}I am my dear Sir faithfully yours

{ls}Jph.Conrad.

{lh}To Cora Crane

Text 101 MS Columbia; Stallman 225

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

27 Aug 99

{lsa}Dear Mrs. Crane.

{lb}I am so sorry Stephen worried about the payment. Thanks ever so much for cheque. I've sent Hope^l yesterday {bp}15 in Stephen's name.

A series of visits from Jessie's people has begun. There are now four in

the house and this state of things shall last for a fortnight at least. We have put them off till now having lived in hopes of Your visit early this month.

Could you come in September -- second half? We are extremely sorry to suggest the delay of an event we have been looking forward to with eagerness and delight. Jessie's tearful. She sends her love and would write herself only she is bad with neuralgia. This is the second day of it.

I am at work and doing very little as usual.

{lc}With affectionate regards from us

{lc}both Yours most faithfully

{ls}Jph Conrad

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{lh}To David Meldrum

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 65

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

27 Augst 99

{lsa}My dear M^r Meldrum.

{lb}My wife's and mine heartiest congratulations on the safe arrival of a boy.¹ I trust that in a few days You will find time to drop us a word as to his and his mother's welfare.

The matter I mentioned is not at all pressing. I just wanted to hear Your opinion of it. It is more than kind of you to write at such a length.* If my thoughts ran that way it is only out of regard for Heinemann. I am not anxious to fling myself on sixpenny or even shilling magazines. I am quite content to work for 102Maga and I always meant to have one vol for M^r B'wood and only now and then divert a story for an eventual vol for H.

Why not bring Mr B'wood's manager here? Coming to lunch you may be back in London for dinner.

I return the advance You have been so kind as to accom[m]odate me with.² Many thanks.

{lc}Always yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad.

{lh}To William Blackwood and Sons

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 65

{lra}1st Sept 99

{lra}Pent Farm

Stanford.

N^r Hythe.

{lsa}Dear Sirs.

{lb}I beg to acknowledge receipt of {op'}type' of Jim. Allow me to point out that I've this time got only one copy of type and that my original text has not been returned to me. Would You kindly send me the duplicate and also the original.

{lc}Very faithfully Yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad.

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{lh}To John Galsworthy

Text MS Forbes; J-A, 1, 278

{lra}Pent Farm

2^d Sept. 99

{lsa}Dearest Jack

{lb}Horrors. I think I am too late in writing. The days dropped by so fast, so fast!

Dear of you to drop me a line to think of me and my work. You have no idea how your interest in me keeps me up. I am unutterably weary of thinking, of writing, of seeing of feeling of living.

Jim will be finished end this month. I plod on without much faith. Its money. Thats all.

I think of your work. Hueffer has been here inquiring about You and your prose. We are all interested. You've made the conquest of C. Graham whom I treat worse than a dog not having answered two of his letters.

Jessie's kindest regards. Borys talks about {op"}nice man Jack." Forgive this familiarity.

{lc}Yours ever

{ls}Conrad.

{lh}To Stephen Crane

Text MS Columbia; Stallman 230

{lra}Sunday [10 September? 1899]¹

{lra}Pent Farm.

Stanford

Nr Hythe.

{lsa}Dear old Pard.

{lb}Right. Bully for you. You are the greatest of the boys -- and you are as good as I want you so you needn't trouble to apologise.

Could you come? You would make me happy. And will you pardon me for not coming to you. Dear Stephen I am like a damned paralyzed mud turtle. I can't move. I can't write. I can't do anything. But I can be wretched and, by God! I am! Jess sends her love to the whole house. Give my affectionate regards and compliments. Let me know the day before when you are coming. You are a dear old chap.

{lc}Ever Yours

{ls}Conrad.

{lps}Station: Sandling Junction. From Charg X good train a[t] 11 am and 4.25 pm (S.E.R)

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{lh}To Edward Garnett

Text MS Indiana; G. 152

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

16th Sept 99.

{lsa}Dearest Edward.

{lb}To drop me a line was a generous action. I had not the courage to write; I feel to you like a son who has gone wrong and what with shame and recklessness remains silent -- and yet nourishes the hope of rehabilitation and keeps his eye fixed steadily on some distant day of pardon and embraces.

It will come, it will come, and whether the prodigal comes to you or you come to the prodigal some poor innocent calf is sure to suffer.

I had nothing to write -- or else too much -- so much that no piece of paper seemed long enough no ink-well of adequate depth! And yet when some day we sit together at last over the remains of the obese heifer of forgiveness half a dozen words or a judicious wink of the eye shall make everything clear -- everything clear!

I wouldn't trust C Graham's literary judgment -- wouldn't -- not

much. I am writing -- it is true -- but this is only piling crime upon crime: every line is odious like a bad action. I mean odious to me -- because I still have some pretences to the possession of a conscience though my morality is gone to the dogs. I am like a man who has lost his gods. My efforts seem unrelated to anything in heaven and everything under heaven is impalpable to the touch like shapes of mist. Do you see how easy writing must be under such conditions? Do you see? Even writing to a friend -- to a person one has heard, touched, drank* with, quar[r]elled with -- does not give me a sense of reality. All is illusion -- the words written, the mind at which they are aimed, the truth they are intended to express, the hands that will hold the paper, the eyes that will glance at the lines. Every image floats vaguely in a sea of doubt -- and the doubt itself is lost in an unexpected universe of incertitudes.

I've written. Are you any the wiser? Are you disposed to forgive?

I end here because I must to catch the post.

{lc}Ever Yours

{ls}Conrad.

{lps}Jessie's love. We are well enough -- considering.

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{lh}To David Meldrum

Text MS Duke; Blackburn 66

{lra}[letterhead: Pent Farm]

Monday. 17 Sep^t 99

{lsa}My dear Mr Meldrum.

{lb}Many thanks for your letter. Will you convey my cordial invitation to Mr Morton.¹ If You go to Rye in the morning why not come on here for dinner and the night. You could be back in London next day at 10.30 am were it necessary. Any day after Tuesday will do.

I trust Mrs Meldrum and the boy are going on well.

{lc}Always yours

{ls}Jph. Conrad.

{lps}Please wire or write in time. Wire best as letters do go astray. I will be sending more Jim in a day or two.