

FitzRoy letters, being an assortment of letters written probably
between 1841 – 1861 to Lord Camden from Robert FitzRoy
originals held at Kent County Council Record Office, County
Hall, Maidstone

Typing notes: FitzRoy commonly used the long ‘s’ which looks like an ‘f’ when writing double ‘s’ together as was the fashion in early days of his youth, in this transcript the modern form of ss is adopted for ease of reading by today’s readers. Words in large italics are ones that spelling is not certain of from the original. Comments during transcription in Square Brackets [thus] The ref number is that of the holding Record office.

Ref: U840 C518/1

Reported at the Foreign Office that Odessa has been “knocked to pieces”

Wednesday 17th 6. PM

My dear Lord Camden

I have been slow in writing because the last few days have been very anxious.

First let me say that my wife is doing well – very well – considering the terrible ordeal which she has gone through – and the severe disappointment ~~by~~ in conclusion.

On Friday, about mid day, she began to feel ill, and at three o’clock was put to bed. The Nurse thought her time would be short the Doctor said he should not expect it to be so – and he was right. Thirty three hours of almost continued suffering, the intervals being very short, did not advance the labour materially – ~~it~~ the baby was in a wrong position and other natural difficulties – from her age and structure were such that her life would have been lost – the doctor (Protheros Smith) tells me – had he not been assisted by a skilful chloroformist who for three hours kept her nearly insensible by the very strongest application ever given (in such cases).

The little girl was in a perfect state - and alive to the time of birth. I had it photographed - so sweet was its face and so expressive.

I will write to you again tomorrow, or next day. Most aff.ly your’s Robert FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/2

The Marques Camden

My dear Lord Camden

I found my dear wife more composed than I fear she was yesterday – but you can feel how heavy a blow this has been. I returned at five this morning – having received her Thursday's letter – but no other.

That I got at Seaham late on Friday night.

She speaks most gratefully of dear Lady Camden 'v and your feeling kindness.

Ever most affectly your's Robt FitzRoy

Lowndes Street
8 Sunday

Ref: U840 C518/3

PS. Will you tell Mr Gore about L L.7 & me – (that we stand well.)

Durham
July . 1 . 1841

My dear friend

No one – except my own partner – will be more truly glad to know that all has gone well with me here – than yourself and Lady Camden.

I have had a very difficult task – but, though a Radical is seated instead of one Conservative (a sham one, by the way) – there is ample cause for satisfaction that things are no worse – considering all that has been attempted – and the strange *insrigners* on foot.

You will be very glad to know that I saw L – Londonderry yesterday at Wynyard – and that he is now quite satisfied – I may say pleased with my conduct throughout – though he was extremely angry till he heard all that. I had to tell him – and till I had written a very sharp and decided letter to him which has now placed us both on much more satisfactory terms.

I will send you the Durham Papers tomorrow – as soon as they are published.

What with locomotion writing and not a little talking – I have had enough to do lately – but I am the better for it – rather than worse – and am quite well – I hope your Lady Camden and your dear children are also quite well.

Ever aff.ly your's Robt FitzRoy

Ref: 840 C518/4

The Ashburnhams are in town
for a few days on account of his hurt ankle – a tedious injury.

Norland Square
8 PM. May 12/52

My dear Lord Campen

Glad indeed and most thankful am I to know that dear and invaluable Lady Camden is safely in bed – with a little girl.

I know how anxious you have been – who has more cause to be anxious – who feels for others so anxiously? And what must your feeling be when Lady Camden is ill?

Thank God she is safe through this peril – and now going on well. I would not try to see her the last month – purposely and although your worthy janitor endeavoured to make me at all events see yourself – the other day – I was obstinate. [small x above full stop] Not one painful feeling would I (x least she should be with you) be the means of causing – at so critical a time – and I well know how sight revives ideas – associations of other days. I rejoice that Mr Driscoll was in the house and Dr Locock in good time. Now I will go & see you freely – for I can do no harm.

I am indeed a solitary – or almost solitary being now. This day my dear Emily left me – to live with Lady L.y I took her there early – to meet a Swiss Protestant Governess. Next week – about Wednesday – they go to Germany for a few months. On Monday I returned with Em and Bob from Grafton – where I was two days. My two little darling are there – well & happy. George & his wife most kind. I am now to be very busy packing up and removing to some Club Chambers – preparations to employment afloat. Sad work.

Most aff.ly your's always Robt. FitzRoy

Regent Street 15
Augt. 18-52

My dear Lord Camden

I cannot turn the key on my papers without first sending a line to express my keen sense of the very kind manner in which Lady Camden and yourself have treated Robert – (Bob Minor) – just as if he has been one of your own children. I saw indeed that he had been given a preference in more arrangements than one and I gratefully acknowledge such undeserved kindness.

I heard from Emily and my little ones this morning – she has gone to Mount Stewart They are at Newcastle – but Fan is not quite well – she has suffered from teeth and deranged *intessin* – but is better again.

She is a delicate child - Kate is much fitter to rough it - in the world.

During their absence from Grafton – Hooping Cough had been in the place – An opportune avoidance of that suits – I may hope my little ones have had – by their absence –

I am going presently to the Steamer. – How it rained last night! I thought of your barley & wheat.. Most aff.ly your's Robt FitzRoy

Pray – when I am next admitted to your happy and hospitable Home – allow me to have a little room – not a good “visitor's room” with too much comfort. Let me be put anywhere if you please - I am very glad I had a glimpse of Lady Georgiana – in her own house

Ref: U840 C518/6

Newcastle – Sunday

My dear Lord Camden

I found my little Fanny recovering from a slight attack of feverishness and disordered bowels –

The Doctor is of opinion that she ought to have a day or two's rest before her journey but that on Wednesday she will be quite ready to travel.

With your kind leave therefore (which you gave beforehand) I propose to arrive at Wilderness with the little girls on Thursday.

I had a long sea passage – but a fine one I got here yesterday - by way of Edinburgh.

Most aff.ly your's

Robt FitzRoy

Newcastle – Tuesday
Aug 24 - 52

My dear Lord Camden

My little Fanny is much better – and will be able to travel tomorrow. We shall sleep in London – and go on Thursday afternoon – by the Sevenoaks Omnibus.

You said that you would send to meet the children but I hope you will not do so – as we can get a Fly at Sevenoaks – and I have an unconquerable aversion to causing any unnecessary thought on the part of kind friends.

I hope you received my note ~~on~~ yesterday – as I intended.

Kind as their Aunt is here – I shall be glad to get my two little ones away – for the town and its neighbourhood are as dirty – smoky – and I think unhealthy – as any place I ever was at – in England.

I hope Lady Camden is not displeased by my venturing to delay our intended arrival at Wilderness two days later than the day first named.

Did you notice the performances of the Napoleon and the comments on them in the Times of yesterday.

No doubt there has been exaggeration – Would that I could have a trial with her – in the Agamemnon some Day – largely as the talk. But it is a serious matter.

Yours most aff.ly
Robt FitzRoy

My dear Lord Camden

I had no idea when we reluctantly departed last Monday that Lady Camden was suffering from a tooth – I thought it was a temporary pain – from cold caught in Mrs Luard’s damp ground – that was annoying her – while in truth the formidable Cartwright was really “looming”. I hope she has felt no pain since – and is quite well otherwise. You are quite right also. I trust – having heard from Panion 1st – that you went to Bayham with a party of the seniors. My Fanny gives an excellent account of herself & Kate – so does her Nurse – and they speak of the kind lessons they are “enjoying”. I have been to Sherness Chatham – Woolwich and Littleton since I saw you. Yesterday I was at the latter place & saw Ly Caroline – as well as Col. & Emily Wood. I thought Lady C better [one word unreadable as faded] when I saw her two years ago. Her look and manner much more like herself and less like old Lady Londonderry – whom I then thought she was resembling more and more. I say Alex & Mrs – just returned from Paris etc. Their daughter is grown like a hop pole. They seem to be flourishing. I heard – by way of Emily & David Wood that my Emmy is getting quite stout & does justice to Lady C’s system. I was very glad to hear this – because she cannot be pining – as L[?] I thought her at first. I hear – from Alex Wood – that it is reported Lord Londonderry is to have the Garter - & that Lord Hard[?] has had a say in it - so one may hope that breach may be rather diminished. Col. Wood seems to think Ld H – did not do quite the right thing – about [?] Ordnance – in not writing to Ld L.y before accepting.

Fanny did not appear except to Bob – whom she glimpsed (as Jonathan would say) – she & Emily are going to Tunbridge again next week – when Col & Ly Caroline Wood are going to town for two months – for a change for her & chiefly – for the Militia. To see Hand bills with “Royal East Midd Mill Colonel Wood etc etc” in 1852 – seems a dream of 1810 – Ld Dyneon is in Wales & my sister goes there next week (Ld Chichesters brother) I fear that Pelham is the man for the Agamemnon - Your’s most aff.ly Robt FitzRoy

My dear Lord Camden

I am much struck by the contents of this little book – and I am sure it will interest Lady Camden as well as yourself.

What is advanced about the condition of the stars – Sun – Planets & so gives one new notions – in opposition to the increasing belief that all the heavenly bodies have beings inhabiting them – similar to those on Earth.

I heard a capital account from my Fanny today – anticipating “such a Harvest Home” – One would think she had been born a farmers daughter – Hooping Cough is still at Grafton – What a blessing your kindness and Lady Camden’s has been – Little Fanny might have been taken had she been there.

I wrote to the Duke of N-d about Robert – as advised by some Admiralty friends – Enclosed is Capt. Pelham’s answer - to that and to my observations in private to himself – about the Agamemnon –

I really now cannot name any one whom I think has a better chance than myself. She will be ready the end of this month – being pushed on as rapidly as possible. I have also written to Admiral Hornby – (a friend) about Robert but have not yet received his reply – Robert & I are now steadily at work daily – with lessons & exercise – I have got hold of a gymnastic man near here - & I think he will do him good.

Please return Pelham’s note some day – Your most aff.ly
Robt FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/10

Regent Street 15.
Sept. 16. 1852

I saw Mr Gore last Saturday – and found him better than I had expected – clear & fairly cheerful.

My dear Lord Camden

At last the great tree has fallen – the last of the old Oaks so truly venerable. Some say that Lord Hardings some that Lord FitzRoy Somerset will be his successor. – All the advertising vans are prepared into the service of the Newspaper – as Wellington advertising Vans – and are offending the eye and feeling by placarding the death of the Duke of Wellington in every direction.

I think you are quite right in dissuading me from being too sanguine – about the Agamemnon – but I cannot now hear of any one else whom the *savvons* of the Clubs & Dockyards think likely. Meanwhile it is said that I have the best chance of succeeding Beaufort – (but he means to live for ever).

Alex? Wood wants to pack me off to the Pacific as you will see by the enclosed – but he is mistaken – I think - the ships he refers to are going to the West Indies. Respecting the present Board of Admirals only Milne or Pelham could command Agamemnon & I know they would not for special reasons peculiar to each.

Thank you for your good news of my Fanny – and for making her well. Their avoiding the hooping cough is indeed a blessing – and I feel deeply Lady Camden & your kindness in allowing them to benefit by much instructions in addition to the other great advantages. I hope the Butter manufactory prospers.

Dear little Panions – I hope the Quartet do not get too noisey now & then in their glee.

Most aff.ly your's
Robt FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/11

15 Regent Street
Monday 30th

My dear Lord Camden

With the feelings uppermost in our hearts – it is not surprising that we went direct to the Archery Shops – as soon as Robert & I arrived here.

May I beg that you will permit Fanny & Carry to accept the bows sent by us jointly – they cost very little – and we trust that they may be accepted.

I had intended to send my gossoon about some business for my children's Nurse – (and to collect some of Bob's things) – so he saves Daddy Cook a walk.

In haste –

Most aff.ly yours Robt FitzRoy

Perhaps you will allow my servant to sleep at Wilderness tonight – he will return (by “bus”) – tomorrow.

Anglesey-Gosport
Aug. 17. 1853

My dear Lord Camden

I have been looking for Sir P and Lady Dyke – but without success. As it has been a wet and windy day perhaps they have deferred their visit to the Dockyard and ships. I will enquire again at the Hotels and Dockyard Gates tomorrow and next day so that I may meet them if possible. But there will be no kind of difficulty in seeing either Yard or Ships – even if without a naval *cicerone* – as the ways of the officials have been improved by Admiral Fanshaw – (now the Superintendent)- and all Visitors are properly assisted and attended.

On board the ships there is also very careful civility and respect.

It is remarkable that so large a number of ships should have been so free from unpleasant occurrences and should have looked and done so well – after so short a preparation – as the Spithead Fleet.

I wish you could have seen them – and yet – had you been here on the 11th I suspect that you would have been much disappointed – as many were who expected – very naturally - a great deal more than they were able to observe. The excess of smoke – from so many steamers – and the distance to which the ships went – precluded much observation of their appearance or even movements. Besides which – critics say that the plan of operations was inferior to general expectations. However all ended well – without an accident or drawback – which made amends for other things. Perhaps a greater attempt – a less simple plan of operations might have failed – by some person's error, or an accident, and the whole day's satisfaction might have been considerably diminished.

Your account of Lady Camden is not so satisfactory as I trust you will soon be able to give – when the effects of home – pure air – and tranquillity have had more time to show themselves.

Queen Bess being better and all the other young folks well – Fanny's Confirmation having taken place – and a happy prospect appearing for Eleanor Murray – must tend to quiet and cheer Lady Camden even among the many cases for recurring anxiety which are inevitable in her position. May I beg that you will offer my sincere congratulations On Miss Murray's hope of future happiness.

How cheering to Lady Sarah & the Bishop - ! from whom she will be even less distant than either of her sisters.

My Panions and their brothers are well. We enjoy this place & shall stay all the month as it is cheap and healthy. We all bathe regularly.
Most aff.ly yours Robt FitzRoy

Onslow Square
Sunday 21st

My dear Lord Camden

You were kind enough to make time to come “far West” yesterday – and found me, for a wonder, in the Doctors hands. Today I am well again – and shall be about as usual tomorrow. It was a sharp bilious attack from cold and indigestion – that obliged me to have recourse to serve discipline. I was sorry indeed, to hear through Marion, that Lady Camden has not been better the last few days. – Possibly she has felt the effects of the treacherous weather we have had the last fortnight. Wet - cold and heat so jumbled together that no one could be quite proof against it. Yesterday morning – and two nights before – it was freezing in the country – yet the mid day sun was hot as summer.

I think I have been a little too much at pen & ink lately – not on Lord *Hardingly's* account so much as about affairs of my own – I was much urged to review a book and I wished to do it well. The last month has not been exactly the best time for literary task – but I have got through it – and have paid the penalty by wanting the Doctor!

I am mortified at having managed so ill as not to have seen Lady Georgiana while in town – she kindly came here – but I was out – and no one at home – so she did not even come in. I have just now sent to ask whether she is still in Belgrave Square.

I have found it very difficult to call anywhere since I went to Lord H – for he seldom begins his office day till noon – and then stays till late – 6 or 7 –

I expect Emily to come to me about Wednesday next - from Newcastle. Her sisters will join the party next week – about the 31st. George is no better I regret to say. His knee still confines him to ~~his~~ the house.

Perhaps you would like to read the enclosed.

By the by – perhaps Brsckmock has Robert's letter of April 18th I have mislaid it somehow –
Always most aff.ly yours
Robt FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/14

Will you tell Alex?
Of the [unreadable]

Onslow Square
April 22. 1854
10 A.M.

My dear Lord Camden

Alex Wood said he intended to call on you at eleven this morning – to talk about some matter of consequence and would then go with you, if you pleased, and me, to St. Peters!

I find it will be more convenient that I should go with the Clergyman who came up from Yorkshire to marry his Cousin – he being this side of Belgrave Square – so, if you please – I will pick him up, & take him to the Church (to be sure of him!) deserting you ;and Alex? In that short time – and not appearing at your house this morning.

Most aff.ly yours Robt FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/15

Onslow Square
May 2 1854

My dear Lord Camden

When I last saw you – the morning of the 22nd – Lady Camden was very unwell – and you were going to see Locock. Since then I have heard of her – but tomorrow morning I mean to try to see and enquire from yourself. Last Thursday I was all day at the Horse Guards – so I could not see Fanny go to the Drawing Room – (a miserable day it was) Each day since then I have been at the same Office except Sunday when it rained. Hence I have not been near you since the day of my marriage.

We are now – my partner and I – in our home – comfortably settled – and happy. Towards the end of this month my children will come here. My brother George is laid up – for a long time I fear – with a strained knee.

I heard from Robert in the Baltic – April 19th all well – though icicles formed as the sea splashed on the ship.

Most aff.ly yours Robt FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/16

Board of Trade (and Admiralty)
Meteorological Department
Dec. 30. 1858

My brother is laid up with a bad sprained ankle of his lame leg -

My dear Lord Camden

Tomorrow is such a doubtful time – that I will not leave my table today without wishing you (what the Brethren of the Trinity House call) the “Complements of the Season” – and expressing my earnest hope that 1859 may be to you and those you love best happy and beneficial.

In my corner all are well – including “Q” – and Mrs FitzRoy would join cordially with my wishes and hopes if she were “within hail”. (She is a great blessing to me - a truer or kinder heart I never knew and this is say’ing very much. But she is not like most of the family and is not appreciated by her own nearest and most familiar – out of our own house.) Pardon this diversion, in private to yourself.

How is the convalescent may I beg to hear – some day when the Christmas festivities & (I hope) New Year Eve Ball are over? I hope no one else has been threatened?

You heard of the fire at *Dyneon* – the evening after they arrived – that evening bonfires blazed – but the next the House J Harding has a small addition to his pay – 30s weekly – instead of 21s – I cannot get him on the permanent establishment on the Board of Trade at present. He is a very deserving lad – now 18/19.

Always I am aff.ly your’s
Robt FitzRoy

Ref: U840 C518/17

Warning Signals to the out posts, this morning.

Parl.t St. July 4 1861
5 P.M.

My dear Lord Camden

Whilst this rainy and windy day makes me feel that I ought to be here – and should have been in a worry had I been elsewhere. My vexation is great on your account – thinking it will interfere with out of door *feasting*.

Last night the barometers in Ireland fell an inch – It rained heavily there this morning - and is blowing there now – strongly. This weather will cross the middle of England tomorrow – but as you are far South - and rather Eastward – I hope it will not take your district in its sweep. I am a bad “Clerk of the Weather” for you –
But very aff.ly your’s Robt FitzRoy
(Tis not the Comet)