

Welston Knoll,

58  
May 10. 1867.

My dear young friend,

Thank you for your very kind despatches forwarded to me here (I am copying out a Military Memoir for my father, so the term despatch is just, tho' I can't say yours is of a warlike tenour). — You may be perfectly out of trouble — & I am sorry you were ever in it — about the bits of newspaper — I never meant them to be returned.

My jiddle certainly was not worth answering — it meant that if  $ACR + x$  was = infinity, &  $ACR - x$  was = nothing at all at all, then  $x$  was = a pertuner for life! — So you see it was answerable tho' neither answered nor worth it. But my dear fellow, about answering letters — when I want an



answer to a letter, it is not (or only oc-  
casionally, & not often of late) a reply to di-  
verse astronomical, optical, electrical, algebra-  
ical, or any other ical difficulties - but some-  
thing to tell me how you are - what are your  
prospects of honours - what employment you  
have for your time - how far you succeed in  
overcoming what you complained of - the en-  
croachment, I mean, of idle companions -  
what progress you make in political opinions  
and above all - in religious stability & consis-  
tency - These are the kind of things your  
friends ~~to~~ want to hear about - & therefore  
are the answers to their letters - Are they  
you have at last answered - but not till my  
wife dragged it out - that you will come to  
us in you can - Wherefore, more



thanks than this paper will carry: & I do earnestly  
trust we shall not be disappointed. - I want very  
much to show you the rubbishy entirely help-  
printed little cupboard upon posts which is dis-  
guised with the title of an Observatory, &  
the telescopes into which, as to definition this  
of course is light, I am prepared to challenge  
my Lady Northumbria (I have Dawes's au-  
thority for thinking the feminine gender the  
more suitable for so elegant a contrivance).  
And perhaps Mr Croketoo would recollect you -  
and there has been a discovery of Ophioglossum  
near the Priory - and be be be.

I am glad you like Stokes's letters - it is  
so good a thing to be interested in your work -  
& the blue bells are a charming variety (not  
to insinuate that blue eyes would be more



charming still) - I was at the Flower  
Shed Bath on Wed<sup>2</sup> - & wish you had been  
there - tho' how you w<sup>o</sup>ld have escaped I  
cannot tell - & perhaps you could not guess  
by your Prussian acquaintance certainly in  
me who overlooked - but she was eclipsed there  
- You will be sorry to hear that M<sup>rs</sup> Newcomb  
is in Bath for the waters - very ill with rheu-  
matism & neuralgia in her arm: & I fear  
her recovery may be tedious - yet even so it will  
be a great pleasure to see her again - & she is bent on  
doing good in the boarding-house - I wish I had  
help her zeal - but I am sorely behind.

Oh! Do you know I have SEEN the  
real figure head of the Chesapeake!

Your loving friend  
J. W. Webb