

John Chambre Townsend [629]

John aged 8



John aged 13



Copy of Directions and Advice, from my Great grandfather,
Samuel Townsend Esq^r of Whitehall, County of Cork (fifth son of
Bryan Townsend of Castle Townsend) to his son Samuel, (My mother's
father) afterwards General Townsend, on his first parting with him.

My D^r Sam —

We are now parting for a time, but I hope we shall have a happy
meeting again, and as much satisfaction in it as this World can afford.
My anxiety will be great for you, and you will seldom or ever be absent
from my thoughts, — I know you so well that I am persuaded your
conduct will be as happy, and as well as possible, and that your
usual sobriety and goodness will ever subsist with you, however as
'tis an ease to my mind at parting to repeat something to you that I have
often observed to you before, tho' I am obliged to do it in a hurry I
would not omit it — First then let your strictest Duty to God be
your constant care we can hope for here blessing a happiness but
through the Almighty, this World is transient and trifling filled with
troubles and uncertainty — we must however do the best we can in it,
in the most prudent and virtuous manner — A blessed Sterility is not
we must have the greatest regard to, and indeed is the only thing worth
our anxiety and care —

Next to your Duty to God, that of your Duty to your King & Country
you are not to forget. —

Be courteous and obliging to every body and never on any
occasion suffer your self to fall in to any passion, or hurry in
your thoughts or expressions. —

Consider seriously in every thing you do and every steppe you take, that you may by that means always act with prudence and Discretion, and not hang yo^r selfe into any thing that may not afterw^d - answer - to yo^r - Satisfaction. —

Be carefull to read diligently and to gett the best instruction you can in your intended profession, when you think you can read in yo^r Country, I think Cap^m Gwynns at Upham in Hampshire will be a convenient place, where you may be assured of a sincere

Welcom. Trinsaran^{*} I think in yo^r - same way of, but you will have more Company there than at Upham, however should have you use both places as your Discretion will Direct you. —

Be prudent in your Expenses, but dont want w^t ever is necessary for a Gentleman, you pritty well know my Situation and Circumstances and that I shall always answer - you Calls while I am able for I begrudge you nothing. You are Centered in my heart and from your Conduct and behaviour with virtue Hon^r - & discretion will be placed the greatest Happy ness I can have in life. I am Hurryd soe I am forced to Conclude, may the great God always bleps And preserve you, and have you in his Keeping. Write often, never omitt a month at a time at most. —

be carefull in your Choise of Company ~~at a time~~ Keep none that are wicked or Wild or of loose bad Characters, for such bring discredit - And lead a man into misfortunes.

Transcript of various Letters and Notes about John's mental stability

December 27th. 1883.

Montrose,

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of 24th just sent me on by Mrs. Norton to my father's house & thence here - thus the delay in answering. I did not say that your son had a "lucid period", a phrase to which lawyers attach great importance, but that he would be perfectly able to understand a legal document. As to whether he is in a fit mental state to properly sign such a document would entirely depend on the nature of the document. I certainly do not consider (from his great abnegation of self) that he is in a fit mental state to look after his own interest in such a matter. I will be in London about the middle of January & could arrange to meet you and talk the matter over. With all the compliments of the season to Mrs. Townshend & yourself I am yours faithfully (Dr.) **David Bown.**

To Commander Townshend R.N.

2nd. January 1884.

Langdon House, St. Ann's Hill, Wandsworth, London.

S.W.

J.B.Somerville Esq.,

Dear Mr. Somerville,

Yesterday I had an interview with Dr. Bown, the Proprietor of the Asylum at Bedford where my son is at present. Dr. Bown, is still most unwilling to sign any document, relating to the alteration of the estate. He is nervous about taking any part in the matter, and quotes the cautions that he receives from the Commissioners now and then on the subject. He says he is most anxious to carry out my wishes, but is most cautious, and is afraid of the consequences in a court of law. - Another feature in this matter is that he thinks we propose too large an amount in Favour of John's Mother. He would propose half for my son instead of one third. Dr. Bown obtained your address from me and he proposes to call at your office very shortly, to talk over matters with you. There are therefore apparently the fees of the Commissioners in Lunacy, and of the Law Courts, which he needs, - but which properly you may inform him about. Also the proportion for the son to be a third, as at first proposed instead of half he, Dr. B. proposed, a change which I should strongly object to if possible to avoid. Dr. Bown repeatedly said that he wanted to carry out my views, and to meet my wishes. - He's a kind hearted good natured man, but he is somewhat afraid of the consequences. I told Dr. Bown to write and ask you to give a time when you could see him. - Yours faithfully **John Townshend.**
[622]

J.C.O.Townshend.

Examined by Mr. Younger on April 15th. 1885, while holding in his hand an unread letter from J.C.O.T. written in Jan'y, 1885, to his Mother.

"He appears to suffer from locomotor ataxy which causes him to have want of control over his limbs. The cerebellum is affected and the base of the spine. Both are much congested. He is in the third stage of epilepsy, and his whole life appears to have been a series of shocks to both body and mind. He had more than one bad fall in which the base of the brain and also of the spine were injured. Some small blood vessels were ruptured at the base of the brain, which produced obstruction in the circulation of the brain and permanent congestion there. Owing to his epileptic condition he clenches his hands so hard that sometimes his nails press into the palms of his hands. His genital organs are paralysed. There is involuntary escape of semen whenever he passes water, and also whenever he is at all startled or surprised at anything. He cannot retain it. He had a very severe mental shock when in his teens growing up, - a shock about his brother, which affected his whole circulation most seriously & produced very injurious effects. He has been in the habit of keeping things very much to himself, and it seems as if he had never told you of some trouble that affected him very greatly. He has thought too much about many things, and in fact his brain work in thought has worn out his cerebellum - his intellect has been always drawing on it so much. He had remarkably good mental powers and a very finely formed brain of superior quality & organisation, but its development has been hindered by all he has passed through,"

Prescription for J.C.O.T.

15 drops of Avena Lativa 3 times daily, adding to each dose 2 drops of Hydrastis Candensis. This to be taken for one month. Magnetised oil to be rubbed gently into the lower part of the spine and over base of brain for twenty minutes every night. Then passes to be made for 20 minutes from top of head down over feet, while lying on bed - over back & front of body, without contact, at distance of two inches from his body while covered with the bedclothes. This will secure good sleep. Every morning let him be rubbed all over with a large sponge dipped in dilute acetic acid.

The following, very sad, recollection was probably written by John's mother or his Uncle Aubrey Townsend [621]. John's father died in 1884.

Saturday, May 9th, 1885.

Went to Bedford. Met Dr. Craig at Station & had a little talk with him - very satisfactory. Drove out in hired Brougham to Springfield. Dr. Bown & Miss N. were out. I met my darling J. in the hall, going out to watch the tennis & croquet games. He looked very pleased to see me, & we went together into the drawing-room, & had a good long talk. I told him about all at home & he asked specially after M. & K. (*Marion [632] & Kathleen [631]*) & observed "they must be getting quite grown up I suppose, 18 or 19, quite old; and you too are getting old," he said; "it is very long since I saw you. How is Ned (*Edward [630]*)?" So I related all about him, to which he listened with interest & said "When can I go home, I want to be with you. I wish I could be a help to you. You must have a great deal of care & anxiety about every thing". He afterwards asked "How is my Uncle Aubrey? Is he at Woodbine? I want to see Ned & my sisters. I told him they were having lessons in town. He asked "In what?" I said May was having singing lessons & had a very nice voice & Kathleen was learning the violin, & he said "That is very difficult & it takes a great deal of time to learn." He then asked me about his Father (*John Townsend [622] who died 11 Feb 1884*). Did he really die, & was I sure he was dead? adding "I could not believe it" he seemed such a fine strong man." He said, did he die quietly? So I told him all about it, & how lovely he looked the day after, and he said, "I did not think he could have died so quietly, I thought he had too much vigour for his death to be easy. I am often very much puzzled about the other world. What do you think, can you tell me anything about supernatural things. Do you believe we can see & know people there? I have sometimes thought I heard voices & heard God speaking to me, & I have seemed to see God-like beings. Do you think it was a real tangible thing. I can't understand about it. Heaven to be up there seems so strange. We see the sky & the stars, & here is the earth, and every thing here seems real. Is the other world real too?" I said, "Yes I was certain it was but could not know all about it yet. God would teach us more when He saw fit. For the present we had just to live right lives here, & we had His voice speaking to us in our hearts always, telling us what was right or not, and we must listen to that. He said several times, "when can I go home, I want you to settle about it, I have been here too long, I am not insane nor subject to delusions now, as some people are, and this is not a fit place for me to be in. I could find plenty to do at home." This observation was in answer to my reply that if he was at home there would be nothing for him to do, & very little to interest him..... I then went back to the drawing-room with Dr. Bown & Johnnie looked full at him, - drew himself up, & said "Dr. Bown I have been here a very long time now, & I am quite well. I want you to arrange for me to go home. How soon can you settle for it? I am very anxious to go home." Dr. Bown told him I had proposed his going away for a change, but J. said "That is not what I want. I want to go home."

June 23rd. 1890.

Tramore, Wilton Road, Bexhill on Sea,

Sussex.

My very dear Mother,

Much thanks for your last letter. The wedding I am glad to hear was so successful. I hope your journey was not very fatiguing. A short time ago we went for a charming excursion upon the sea. The ship that took us departed from Hastings carrying us away down the channel and round the Sovereign Light Ship. I hope this will find you very well, and my own health is very good. Good bye, your affectionate son **J.C.O.Townshend.**