

Letter from Erasmus Darwin to Matthew Boulton, 1789/03/12

Darwin writes to Boulton of his son, Robert's dispute with Withering.

12 March 1789

Dear Boulton

I was much obliged to you for your kind letter from London, which breath'd the true spirit of our long and ancient[?] friendship; which I dare say will not cease on either side, till the earthy tenement of our minds becomes decomposed. I fail'd in getting any evidence from Dr Johnson, to whom I wrote; and least your name should have been mentioned, you see by Dr Robts paper the fact was not made use of. My letter to Dr Johnson was simply a letter of inquiry; and Dr W. By shewing it only published his own disgrace.

I think Dr Robt Darwin has given him a dressing, He will not soon forget. Whether He designs to write again I have not heard – I should suppose He must already feel his inferiority in his controversy.

How He came to suspect your having told me the affair of Mr Francis of the Moat I can't concieve – but He knew I had called on you that morning.

I hope you have got your contract for coining; or will get it, as soon as the King can do business. Your machinery gave me great pleasure and reminded me much of ancient days.

I beg my compliments to your son, and to Miss Boulton both whom I should be glad to see, if any occasion should bring you into this part of the country.

Adieu from dear Boulton

Your affect. friend

E Darwin

Mar 12-89

I hope you are free from your gravelly complaint. The way to keep free is to drink much aqueous potation – to occasionally lie down in the day on a Sopha – to us the warm bath once or twice a week, and to drink a little wine or malt-liquor or spirit, as you can.

Adieu

If you have no gravelly symptoms I see no use in your continuing to take aerated water, whether with alkaline salt in it or not.