

## Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

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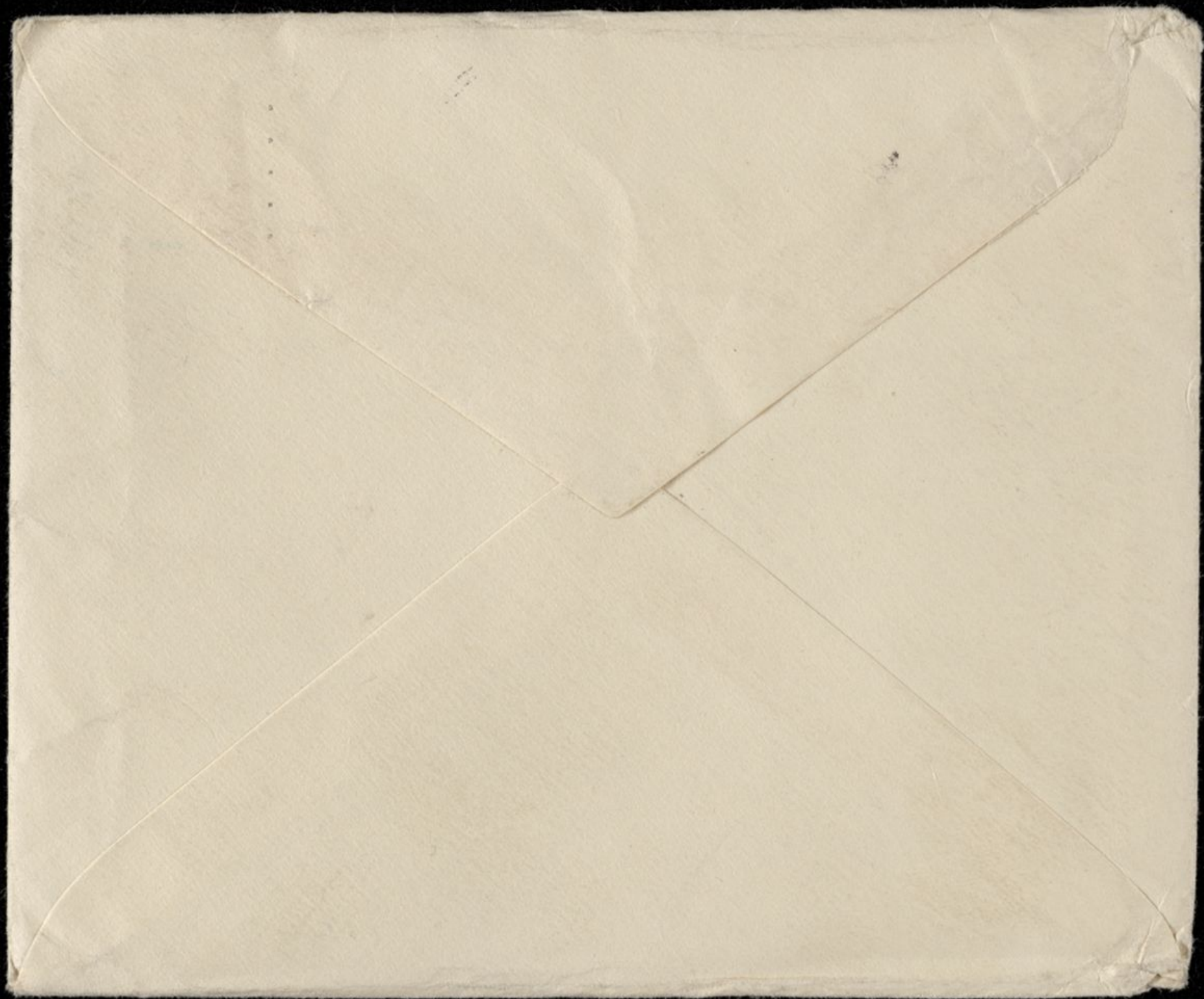
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*My dear Lady,*

All Souls' Day, 1931.

I want to get a letter off to you to-day, though it is Monday, and usually I wait to post till Tuesday, the mail-day; because to-day and yesterday are anniversaries for me; and I shall never forget my first letter from you on All Saints' Day a year ago, and my reply of this anniversary. I am vexed that you have had only one letter from me in the week of your letter this morning (Oct. 26th) because I have written regularly twice a week every week but last week. It was partly business and partly my own fault: I had a very busy day on Thursday last (the 29th) and did not struggle out of bed till 10 a.m.! After morning here, I had Sir Richard Rees to lunch - a nice young man who has taken on the Adelphi to run because he wants to do something, but who has not yet quite made up his mind what he thinks of Murry's ideas; then back to the office, then home early to fetch Vivienne and go to the Poetry Bookshop to give a reading. I have to do this, out of friendship for Harold Monro, whose hobby it is, about once in two years; and I loathe it. Harold being in hospital at the moment, his wife, Alida Klementaski, took charge, and managed very well. But it is a small room, and I was squeezed against a wall at the back, able to see nothing but the spot of light from a reading lamp, and crowded by the front row of elderly ladies. I read them some George Herbert and some Christina Rossetti; whether they got their sixpennyworth I do not know; then came the worst. The moment I finished I saw a large moon face rise over the top of the reading desk - the only object visible in the general obscurity; it surmounted an obese female form, and a voice declared "How do you do. I'm an American. And I'm a friend of Richard and Sally Cobden-Sanderson". A hand the size of a ham was projected at the same moment. There was no means of escape until the whole audience had vacated the room, so this lady delayed me about ten minutes; after which I had to refuse several young people of Jewish and Hindoo appearance who wanted books signed, and then interview a young man who wanted me to come to look at his paintings somewhere. I was pleased however to find that the Thorps had discovered the reading and had come; that was the pleasantest item. Then home, where Dorothy Pound, in England for a short time, was waiting to have supper with us. But all this was to explain why I slept late on Friday.



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I have thought of so much to say on this anniversary: but perhaps it is enough to say this; that looking back over the year, there is nothing I have said, and no word I have used, that I could not repeat always with increasing (if that is possible) ardour and devotion.

I hope you understood my hesitations about America; I mean about the Charles Eliot Norton appointment. I feel that probably, so far as I am concerned, I could adjust myself to the situation - and indeed must, for after all it is a detail to the general situation - and that it would be only the beginning, the first meeting or two, that I should find required all my self-control. As for other considerations, I feel more that if the offer is made definitely, I simply cannot afford financially to reject it. (For two years I have had to pay the rent of a small house which V. thought she liked, and which proved uninhabitable, and which no one else will take - I get rid of that a year hence). More of this again.

About your mother: are you sure, my dear, that she really suffers so acutely? It may be so; but my own experience of the mentally deranged - and it is observation of several cases - leads me to believe that in general the people who are suffering from unreal things, who have confused fact and fancy to that point, do not suffer so much as those who see things sanely as they really are. That is true at least in cases, and I do not know what proportion is otherwise, where the ailment itself is a kind of refuge from reality. To us, the ailment seems far worse than any reality; but many invalids prefer even a terrible malady to quite an ordinary facing of life. Please please do not think me impertinent; I am quite aware how little I know, and that one is unwise to generalise; but still, my observation may have some general value. And even so, believe that I can imagine the agony it must be to you.

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## A Memory of John Bright

By JOSEPH STURGE

*Though to-day the broadcasting of political speeches has taken away some of the glamour of great mass meetings, we can appreciate the thrill which those felt who were privileged to hear the great orators of our Victorian past. Few now left with us can remember John Bright in his prime, but Mr. Sturge, son of the well-known Chartist and Anti-Corn-Law Leaguer, still vividly recalls the days when Bright was Birmingham's leading figure*

IT is more than seventy years since John Bright became member for Birmingham, and there cannot be many living who remember as clearly as I do the first great speech he made in our Town Hall. It was on our foreign policy; this he characterised as a gigantic system of out-door relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain. I was taken to the hall to hear the speech. It was calculated to make a great impression on the mind of a boy of eleven—and it can still be read with profit and delight.

Bright was elected during his illness; 'he was never asked to contribute to his expenses. Here, as formerly in Durham and Manchester, he refused, and soon ceased to be asked, to subscribe to bazaars, hospitals, churches or other local objects. When in later years another great man became his colleague in the representation, their several lines of action ran parallel and never clashed, though their opinions on many subjects stood far asunder' (Trevelyan).

It is to the speeches that Bright made during the American Civil War that I wish to refer more particularly. When in 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, and the slave States of the South lost the control of the government which they had held for so long, they seceded at once and broke out into war with the Government and fired on the national flag at Fort Sumter. John Bright was one of those who saw most clearly that slavery would become the vital question to be settled by the long-drawn-out contest. 'He saw it then when the wise men were blind, and he made half England see'.

Public opinion was far from being unanimous in this country. Many people now may not remember how strong was the desire of most of the ruling class in England to recognise the Southern confederacy—and to break the blockade plunging us into war with the North—in the selfish hope that Britain might gain by the break up of the United States. The blockade deprived Lancashire of its cotton supply and reduced a large part of its population to famine. The starving people of the country, to their eternal credit be it spoken, were as a body faithful to the cause of freedom, looking beyond their pressing needs of the moment. But *The Times* and most of the Press bitterly attacked the North and favoured the cause of the South. Even Gladstone, who was born of a slaveholding family, said that Jefferson Davis had made a nation. Scholefield who, as the senior member for Birmingham, spoke first at the crowded annual meeting in the Town Hall, did not conceal his sympathy with the South, and he had his supporters in the audience.

The demand for admission was so great that all the seats on the floor were removed, and the people stood shoulder to shoulder, swaying in waves as pressure came from behind. When vocal interruptions of Bright's speech became intolerable the process of ejecting the disturbers sometimes stopped the proceedings for a quarter of an hour, though it had the good humoured support of the vast majority. Mr. Bright retained his calm composure and it was an interesting experience to watch what was happening from the side galleries. Bright's line may be understood from two of his perorations:

You wish the freedom of your country. You wish it for yourselves. You strive for it in many ways. Do not then give the hand of fellowship to the worst foes of freedom that the world has ever seen, and do not, I beseech you, bring down a curse upon your cause which no after penitence can ever lift from it. You will not do this. I have faith in you. Impartial history will tell that, when your statesmen were hostile or coldly neutral, when many of your rich men were corrupt, when your Press, which ought to have instructed and defended, was mainly written to betray, the fate of a continent and its vast population being in peril, you clung to freedom with an unflinching trust that God in his infinite mercy will yet make it the heritage of all His children.

Bright had spent much energy for many years in pleading for the better government of India. He now showed that the Lancashire famine was caused by the absolute dependence of the manufacturers on America for their raw material, and that dependence had come about from the gross failure of the East India Company which for one hundred years had had the control of the country to do anything to develop and improve the staples by which it might have prospered. The quality of Surat, the Indian cotton which then came to us, was so bad and difficult to work that Bright

told how, when a Lancashire minister was praying that a supply of cotton might come to his famishing people, some working man of the audience, with a keen sense of what he had suffered, in a response exclaimed, 'O Lord, but not Surat'.

When the Southern emissaries Mason and Slidell were taken from the Trent by a northern captain and violent feeling against the North was raised in this country, Bright's task became a difficult one. His letters to Sumner, urging the U.S. Government not to let themselves be drawn into the war for which the British Government were preparing but to admit that their captain had been in the wrong—his letters were read in the American Cabinet. The line he suggested was followed. It deserves remembrance that Prince Albert on his deathbed made it his business to soften expressions calculated to give needless offence in the draft of the despatch to America that was being sent.

Bright's indignation at the slackness by which the *Alabama* (Continued on page 700)



John Bright addressing the electors of Birmingham

By courtesy of the Birmingham Free Library



## The New Spirit in Literature—III

## Are Modern Writers Selfish?

By HAROLD NICOLSON

THE most serious criticism levelled against modernist literature is that of selfishness. It is contended that the writers of the modernist school pay little attention to the great mass of their fellow citizens: that they write only for a tiny clique of intellectuals and that they are not concerned with the hopes and sufferings of the rest of humanity. It is argued, and with considerable force, that a poet like Mr. T. S. Eliot is interested solely in his own experiences and that he does not make any effort either to comprehend the experiences of other and more ordinary people or to render his own experiences comprehensible to them. The modernist, it is contended, is not only undemocratic; he is unsocial and inhuman. He withdraws himself into an ivory tower, closes and locks the door, and in the security and muffled ease of his isolation he chants his songs in a low undertone to himself. A great writer, it is said, should not in this way sever himself from his kind. The great poet has in all ages been the bard, the seer, the prophet. There must be something vatic about all great writing. It is mere Alexandrianism to fiddle, as Mr. Eliot fiddles, with experiences and associations personal only to himself. It is little more than decadent to deny, as Mr. Huxley denies, that there can be any importance or interest in the average feelings of the average man. Modern literature therefore is petty literature since it records only and it does not teach. It is the literature of negation. Such, in the main, is the most damaging accusation levelled against the modernist school.

## Selfishness or Sincerity?

I do not deny that there is considerable foundation for this criticism. It is true that the aim of modernist literature has been not so much to state a theory of its own as to demolish the theories and conventions of past ages. It is true that Mr. Eliot, for instance, is an exclusive and not an inclusive writer, that he is far more interested in the unusual and the exceptional than he is interested in the familiar and the general. It is true also that Mr. Aldous Huxley is not a man of any fervent convictions. Mr. Huxley believes in nothing positively: yet he believes in many things negatively. Mr. Huxley would find it very difficult to state what he considered to be right and good; yet he would not find it very difficult to state what he considered wrong and bad. He would sum up his condemnations in the one word 'insincerity'. Mr. Huxley would condemn nothing which he considered sincere. He would condemn everything which he considered insincere. And as most conventions proceed from a passive insincerity of mind we find Mr. Huxley pouring his satire upon most of our more cherished feelings and beliefs. Mr. Huxley is a tortured sceptic, yearning for some formula and yet too honest to adopt a formula in which he would be unable, with his whole mind and soul, to believe. I feel that the main constituent in what is called the 'selfishness' of modernist art and literature is this fierce sincerity, which divorces the modern writer and artist from all feelings which are not an integral part of himself. This is an important point and one which I shall carefully examine in my present discussion.

## The Convention of the Happy Ending

There are, I think, three considerations to be borne in mind. The first is that, although modernist authors may not recount many of the more general experiences of their contemporaries, yet they do recount the more special experiences. It is perfectly true, for instance, that Mr. Eliot or Mr. Huxley have little that is soothing to say to us about sport, the public school spirit, the purity of the British home, the superiority of British grit and character over all foreign products, or the charms of little birds, children and dogs. It may well be that both Mr. Eliot and Mr. Huxley respond to these aspects of life with the most appropriate emotions. Yet they do not write about them carelessly and whimsically as do Sir James Barrie, Mr. A. A. Milne, Mr. Kipling and Mr. James Douglas. Many people, as is natural, expect to be soothed by their favourite authors. They want to be reassured. They want, without knowing it, to be flattered in their self-esteem. They want to feel that just round the corner there really does exist a life in which there is no hatred, cruelty, malice, or fear. They like the happy ending. And they do not in the least relish books which throw doubts upon the illusions and make-belief wherewith we try in these unhappy days to solace and to drug the twinges of anxiety and despair. They like to read pleasant books about nice people. They do not like to read unpleasant books about nasty people. I fully sympathise with this point of view. 'Why', such people will say, 'when modern life is so distracting and so wretched should I not be allowed to escape from reality into a world of

soft illusion in which everybody is kind and sweet and good and in which people end by living happily ever after? I know that it is all an illusion. But if even for one moment it makes me forget the anxieties and tribulations of the age, then surely such sedatives have proved their value? Why should you ask me to add to the unpleasantness of modern reality the gratuitous unpleasantness of modern books?'

I have put the argument in what is perhaps an extreme form. Yet many of you will, I think, agree that this is the sort of thing which is continually said by elderly people when faced with the fierce rebellion of Lawrence, the devastating operations of Joyce, or the slow sad trickle of Mr. Huxley's acid.

## Breakdown of the Old Formula

It is difficult to find a convincing answer to this objection. Obviously nobody wants his fellow-citizens to be more unhappy than they need be. Obviously nobody wishes, with shadowed hints, to confuse lives which lead melodious days. There is nothing more cruel or more selfish than wilfully and gratuitously to destroy the illusions which minister to the comfort of another human being. Yet that is not the whole of the story. It is possible that some 60 per cent. of the reading public really do derive pleasure, comfort and encouragement from what are called 'nice' books. The remaining 40 per cent. do not. I am convinced that there are many thousands of readers for whom Joyce, Lawrence, or Huxley are a little too strong, and for whom Milne, Barrie, Galsworthy and the rest are a little too weak. Such people realise that the old world is dead and that the new world which is arising around us seems harsh, noisy and a trifle pitiless. Such people are not permanently reassured by being told by our sentimentalists that the old world, thanks to the sturdy good sense of the British people, is not really dead in the least, and that the new world will be all primroses, butterflies, and little children in lilac sunbonnets shouting among the apple trees. It isn't true. It is no use blinking the fact that our future lives will be less lavish and less optimistic than the lives we have led hitherto. We have simply got to evolve a new formula, a new religion if you like, which will enable us to adjust ourselves to the new life with a minimum of suffering and emotional disturbance. This formula, this religion, this new idea, has not as yet been fully proclaimed. At the conclusion of this series I shall be able to indicate to you what, in my opinion, are the shapes which it is most likely to assume. The writers whom I am considering at present give little indication of what the new formula is to be. They do not attempt any such message. But they do give many indications as to why and how the old formula has broken down. Some of you may find it highly unpleasant thus to be reminded of the disappearance of a world of comfort, to be told again and again that they must absent themselves from felicity for a while. Others, on the other hand, will welcome some clear thinking and clear speaking on this aspect and will be glad to clear away the dead wood of past summers, to get back to the essential if stark branches of present growth, and to look forward to the new April which will give us cleaner, clearer buds, and I trust fruit which, if not rich, will at least, if we are courageous, be refreshing.

To-day we are hovering between two worlds—one dead, the other powerless to be born. It is an uncomfortable condition. It will not last. But let us at least adjust our minds and feelings to the future: let us not cling desperately to the theories of a lovely and a venerable past. To continue to think lovingly of the old means that we shall be most unhappy in the years to come. To begin to think courageously of the new means that we shall have, if not happiness, then at least intense interest. And as a preparation for this severance, for this mood of courageous expectancy, a study of modernist literature will give you information, stimulation, and a little confidence.

## Tennyson and T. S. Eliot

But there is also a historical justification for the alleged egoism of the modern school. I want now to explain to you how the aloofness of this school was, in fact, historically inevitable. Why is it that Tennyson is so vastly different from Mr. T. S. Eliot? Such a question is not quite so foolish as it sounds. There is much more in common between Tennyson and Eliot than might be supposed. Essentially they are both mystics and pessimists, sensuous and fastidious, melancholy and virile, intellectual and black-blooded. For all his attempts to reassure himself and his public the essential Tennyson remained a gloomy mystic, yearning for some convincing formula, pro-

A Broadcast Talk!



foundly sceptical of accepted revelation. Throughout his life the mind of Tennyson remained:

'An infant crying in the night  
An infant crying for the light  
And with no language but a cry.'

Throughout his life Tennyson was haunted by the brooding shadow lands between consciousness and half-consciousness, by what he called the 'low moan of an unknown sea'. The central core of Tennyson's being was anything but smug and suburban. He saw his own life in terms of the North Sea fore-shore:

All dark and red—a tract of sand,  
And someone pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

Now compare this mystical half-light with the similar anxious mysticism of Mr. Eliot. I quote the following lines from 'The Hollow Men' of Mr. Eliot. It seems to me one of the finest passages in modern poetry:

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear:  
There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column  
There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Some d'liberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed  
staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—  
Not that final meeting,  
In the twilight kingdom.

Tennyson, being a great poet and a fine mystic, might, and in fact did, write lines as solemn and as irrelevant as these. Yet, although Tennyson might have written poems as fine as 'The Hollow Men', Mr. Eliot could never have written poems so foolish as 'Lady Clara' or the 'Queen of the May'. It is no answer to this problem to contend that the integrity and fastidiousness of Mr. Eliot are of a higher order than were those of Tennyson. I think it is true that at moments the Laureate of the Victorian age did, in fact, deliberately write down to his audience. This seems to us to-day a very discreditable thing to have done. Yet really it was not quite so discreditable as we suppose. For the audience of Tennyson was a homogeneous thing. Even such a man as Thomas Carlyle considered the 'May Queen' to be a 'true and tender poem'. Now nobody could accuse Carlyle of being either sentimental or insincere. He hated bunk with the best of us. He fought it with true Annandale ferocity. And yet Carlyle approved of the 'May Queen'. We are too apt to suppose that Tennyson, for commercial purposes, wrote solely for an audience of young ladies. The fact is that his audience, whether it consisted of Miss Locker-Lampson or Thomas Carlyle, did in fact possess many feelings in common. It was a homogeneous audience. The audience of Mr. Eliot is not homogeneous in the least.

#### How His Audience Affects a Poet

In the seventeenth century authors who considered themselves superior to the Grub Street journalists wrote for a perfectly confined and definite audience—an audience of literary patrons. In the early nineteenth century authors wrote for a wider but equally homogeneous audience, namely what was called 'the town'. In the middle nineteenth century authors wrote for a larger and more dispersed audience coloured predominantly by the upper middle class tenets of the industrial magnates. At the end of the nineteenth century we find this audience expanding and already splitting into cliques. Yet so late as 1890 it remained a definable audience possessing a common average taste and appreciation. To-day there is no definable

or recognisable audience to which an author can appeal. The modernist author, therefore, tends completely to disregard his audience. And the audience, feeling they are not being individually addressed, accuse him of selfishness.

This development is perfectly natural and inevitable. I am aware that the correct thing to say is that all great writers have not written for any particular audience but have written for themselves. I am aware that you could point to such people as Shelley and Landor and contend that they remained wholly unaffected by any sense of audience. I could, I think, contest that assumption, but even were it true it would be an exception which proves the rule. Obviously any writer must be subconsciously affected by the conception of the sort of person who is most likely to read his books. We know ourselves how the style of a private letter shifts and alters according to the character of the person to whom it is addressed. No man or woman writes the same sort of letter to their aunt as they write

to a contemporary. Yet this is not insincerity. All writing, in a sense, is a form of dialogue; and dialogue is coloured by the type of person who responds.

You can trace in Byron the effect of this audience problem. As a young man he wrote for his own college friends. When he returned from his first pilgrimage he brought back with him his 'Hints from Horace' which he thought excellent. Subconsciously, perhaps, he felt that he had written something which would be considered vastly clever by Hobhouse, Matthews, Scrope Davies and the rest. He also brought with him the first Canto of 'Childe Harold' of which he was ashamed. He hid it in the bottom of his trunk. He knew that Hobhouse would think 'Childe Harold' enthusiastic and silly—as indeed it is. Yet old Mr. Dallas found the manuscript and insisted on publication. Byron, as a result, woke up famous. He continued to pander to the audience which he had thus almost accidentally created. He wrote 'The Corsair' and the 'Bride of Abydos'. He obtained much money for these publications, and could sell as many as 20,000 copies in a morning. Then, finally, Byron, being an intolerant man,

became bored with his own audience. He wrote 'Don Juan'—a work that is more expressive of his inner self. And the audience, for their part, were much distressed.

The same sort of thing happened to Tennyson. 'Maud' and 'In Memoriam' did not at first appeal to his audience. Nor did 'The Princess'. But once the 'Idylls' appeared Tennyson found his way straight to the heart of the wide purchasing public and he continued to write ghastly domestic idylls for their pleasure. It is a mistake to assume that Byron and Tennyson in shifting their sails to the breeze of popular favour were acting with deliberate insincerity. As I have already indicated, the audience which liked their worst poems were composed of the same people as could appreciate their best poems. However diverse individually, this audience did in fact constitute a homogeneous and recognisable whole. And their unseen presence reacted upon the subconscious mind both of Tennyson and Byron. This was inevitable.

#### The Modern Author is Forced to be Selfish

The modern audience, on the other hand, is not homogeneous. The spread of education, the popular press, the wireless and the cinema have all increased the reading public until it has become immeasurable, impersonal and vast. Its very size has led to disintegration. The reading public has split into categories or groups. There exists no solidarity between them, no general



A Lady leaving a Lending Library in the eighteenth century

British Museum



average of acceptance or of taste. And the modernist author is thus thrown back upon himself. His 'selfishness', therefore, is imposed on him from outside. It does not proceed wholly from within.

Even this statement must be modified. In recent years a tendency has developed which has split the reading public into two almost definable categories. Four-fifths of this public still prefer books, mainly works of fiction, which appeal only to their emotions. One-fifth care mainly for books which appeal to their minds. It is encouraging that this minority is gaining in numbers every day. Any librarian will tell you that the demand for informative books is rapidly equalling the demand for fiction. The modern taste for biography, although it has of late been unduly exploited, is in fact a healthy sign. The reading public desire less to be flattered than to be instructed. The popularity of scientific books is also encouraging. Sir James

Jeans is a best seller. So is Mr. Wells. It is quite possible that this active and intelligent audience will rapidly overshadow the fiction public and become the 'audience' for which authors will write. Should this happen it will have an admirable effect both upon the reader and the writer. For I do not believe that any great literature can be constructed either wholly in the study or wholly in the market place. The coming generation of writers may, for their part, be able to detect, and be stimulated by, an audience worthy of their mettle. I believe that we may well be on the verge of a great literary revival and that a new national literature may shortly be produced. The writers of whom I am speaking in this series have not produced or contributed to a national literature. They may have prepared for it. And among the many reasons of their failure is that they are aloof from any wide national audience. The other reasons for their failure will be examined in the talks that follow.

## New Thoughts in Advertising

'*Mise en Page.*' By A. Tolmer. The Studio. 30s.

THE contents of Monsieur A. Tolmer's *Mise en Page* will probably at first sight astonish the reader who is not aware of the extraordinary pitch to which French advertising design has risen. In England we are for the most part lamentably behind the times in our advertising ideas. We rely too much on somewhat stagnant notions of 'prestige' and 'dignity'. Display, which the French rightly insist should perform the function of exciting the beholder's interest immediately, is in England—with rare and invigorating exceptions—fatally ignored. There is no element of excitement in ninety-nine per cent. of the advertisements exhibited in any of our National publications.

M. Tolmer's book is, perhaps, too exciting for the English reader. It is liable to be dismissed as extreme, or high-brow; and it is unlikely that any save the most intelligent advertising executives will be able to glean more than a confused glimmering of the book's central message. Yet there will be many readers to

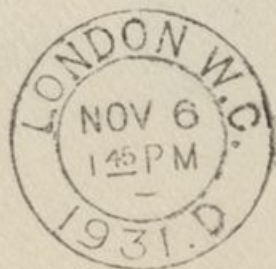
delight in the astonishing brilliance of M. Tolmer's conceptions. His writing may be safely ignored: it is vaguely metaphysical and remote, as much of the modern French artist's writing is. But he has some amazing tricks to show. He is never half-hearted. His book is mostly made up of photographs superimposed to produce the strangest effects: he builds up designs from coloured foils pasted direct on to the page, which are often very beautiful and always delightful to look at. In contrast to the solemnity of his text, the sparkle of French wit and dexterity pervades his specimens. This is, perhaps, the one objection that can be held out to the book as offered to English readers. Its spirit is wholly French: what is needed is an inspiration that will lead to the discovery and understanding of the English spirit. The book is boxed and sumptuously produced by M. Tolmer himself at his Paris printing office. It is a remarkable bargain at the price asked for it.



A Painting by Fernand Leger, whose influence is evident in much of French advertising. The bunch of keys seems to unlock the gates of a new world, where the human eye may discover familiar things under an unknown aspect.

From '*Mise en Page*'





ans. 22 of 100,

Miss Emily Hale,  
41 Brimmer Street,  
BOSTON, Mass.,  
U.S.A.





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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543

TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

6 November 1931.

*My dear Lady,*

I have a cable this morning which must have come from you, and I think it was very lovely of you to cable. At the same time I have a letter from Kenneth Murdock, which says that I have been recommended to the Corporation, whatever that means, and apparently an official invitation from the President is to follow in course; but he wishes me to accept in writing at once. I shall have to consult one or two more interested parties first, but I have practically decided to accept. The performance is beset with all sorts of domestic difficulties and complications, which I need not go into now, any further. As for what I wrote to you, of course it is possible that a year hence you may have gone to Scripps, or elsewhere - which, although it might simplify matters, would exasperate me with the thought of spending seven or eight months in America and not seeing you at all; but I should like to think that to be distant from where I was would not act as a motive in your accepting my post. You see how mixed my feelings are. But especially I should like it to mean a sacrifice or a strain for you, and I should not like to see you impelled to any course you would not otherwise be taking.

And I should imagine from what you said in your last letter that your mother's condition was now, and might be indefinitely, such that your frequent presence was desirable; so that, unless economic need is imperative, your duty seems to be in Boston. In one way I am sorry for this. Because, though it is a happiness to feel again that one can be of use to a person, I am a little worried about the extent to which you may exhaust yourself and torment yourself. Whenever I had to visit Vivienne at the sanatorium at Malmaison, I went away almost in a state of collapse. That was what was in my mind when I wrote to you last. I feared since, my dear, that I might have hurt you; and that you might feel that I was offering uncalled for advice quite inappropriate for the particular case of which I know so little, and which very likely belongs to a type which has not come within my experience. The cases I have known have all had persecution mania. (I had a frightful time once with Vivienne on the station platform at Lausanne, when she thought the police were after her and wanted to appeal to everybody for help). And they all, including Virginia, conceived a violent hostility towards their doctors - the doctor who finally cured



FABER & FABER

PRINTED

her never saw her at all, but treated her through the reports of the nurses. So please forgive me, my dear, if I have been intrusive.

I am irritable as a bear with a sore head, as my father used to say, because I am undergoing a bad attack of hemorrhoids (is that the way to spell it) and find sitting and standing equally unpleasant. It is a common complaint. And I have been struggling with a mass of recent popular books on economics and finance, trying to understand what the matter with the world is. I am convinced that traditional economic practice is all wrong, but in the new theories it is difficult to distinguish between the general truths and the individual crankery. I have made the acquaintance of a Revd. Victor Demant, who is a modern young Christian economist, and next week I am to lunch with the famous Major C.H. Douglas. I cannot say that the subject of economics can ever become sympathetic to me or fascinating for its own sake; but somehow one cannot keep out of it altogether at present.

And now, my dear Dove, I thank you again, and will write on Monday.

Pom

ink run out -  
so must type  
envelope





arr. 22 Nov

Miss Emily Hale.

41 Brimmer Street.

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.



1711







FABER FABER

agree about the review, you may say that she edits it herself. She pretends to be very frightened of Virginia and Virginia pretends to be very frightened of Princesses, so I trust they will get on well.

Yesterday I lunched at the Athenaeum with J.H. Oldham, who is a great authority on Christian Missions and subject races in Africa, and saw Ramsay Macdonald there, looking extremely well and hearty, I thought.

And on Wednesday I must go to see Harold Monro in his nursing home, and then to lunch with Major Douglas. It is Armistice Day: thirteen dreary years since then. The rain is pouring down at this moment and I can hear artillery being fired, I suppose for the opening of Parliament, and not for the arrival of a new servant who is to sleep in - a strange experiment. And Miss Wilberforce is away with a cold, and I can't find anything I want.

My third portrait is actually being finished for you and I shall grudge it to you, because you wrote when you were in Seattle to say that I was to have a portrait at last, and it's never come.

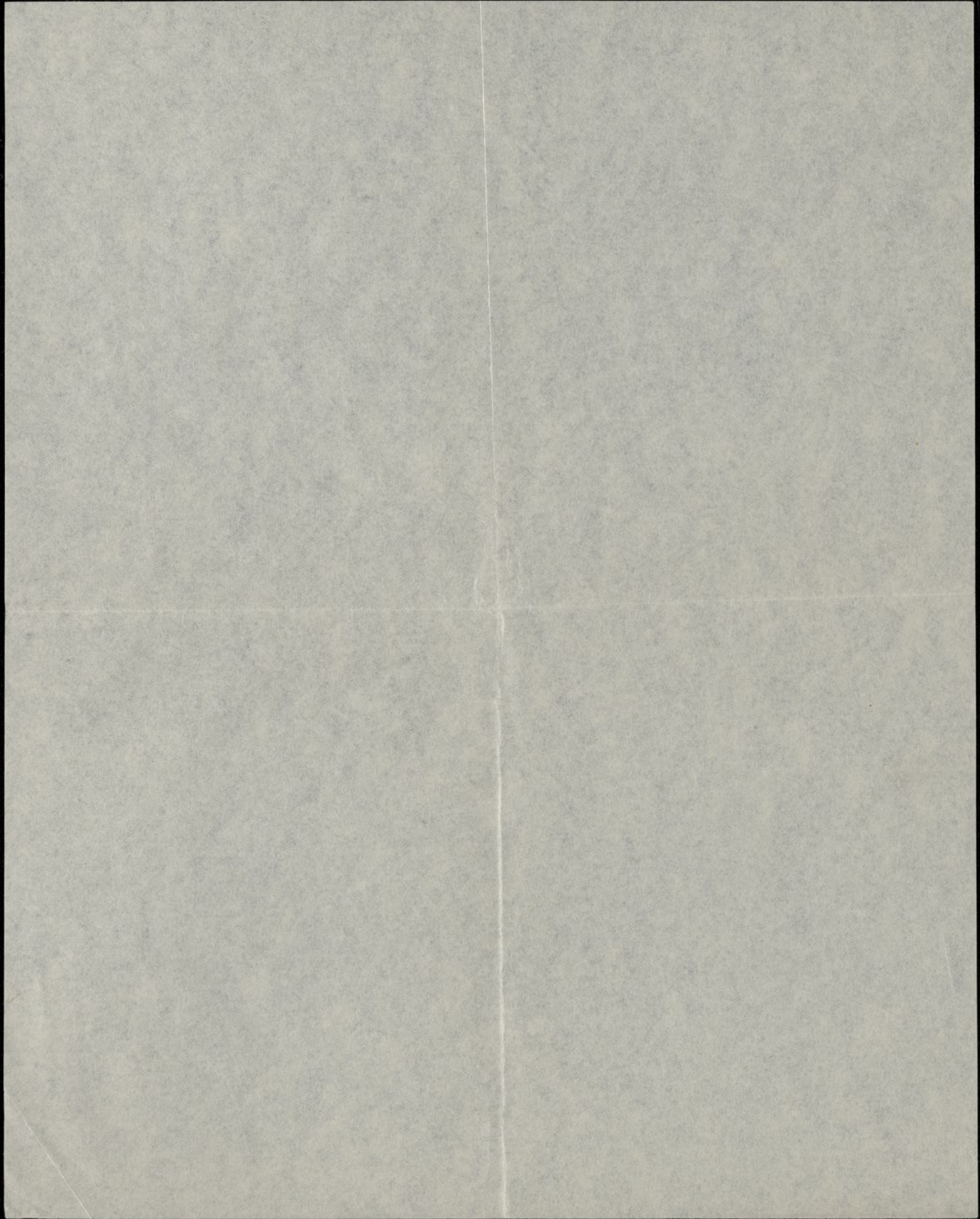
And the last ten days, from All Saints' to Armistice Day, have been filled with Requiem Masses, as always at this time of year: a sombre but impressive ceremony - not terrible like the Mass of Good Friday, but sadness and hope.

Je t'embrasse respectueusement, chère madame la duchesse, aux deux mains.

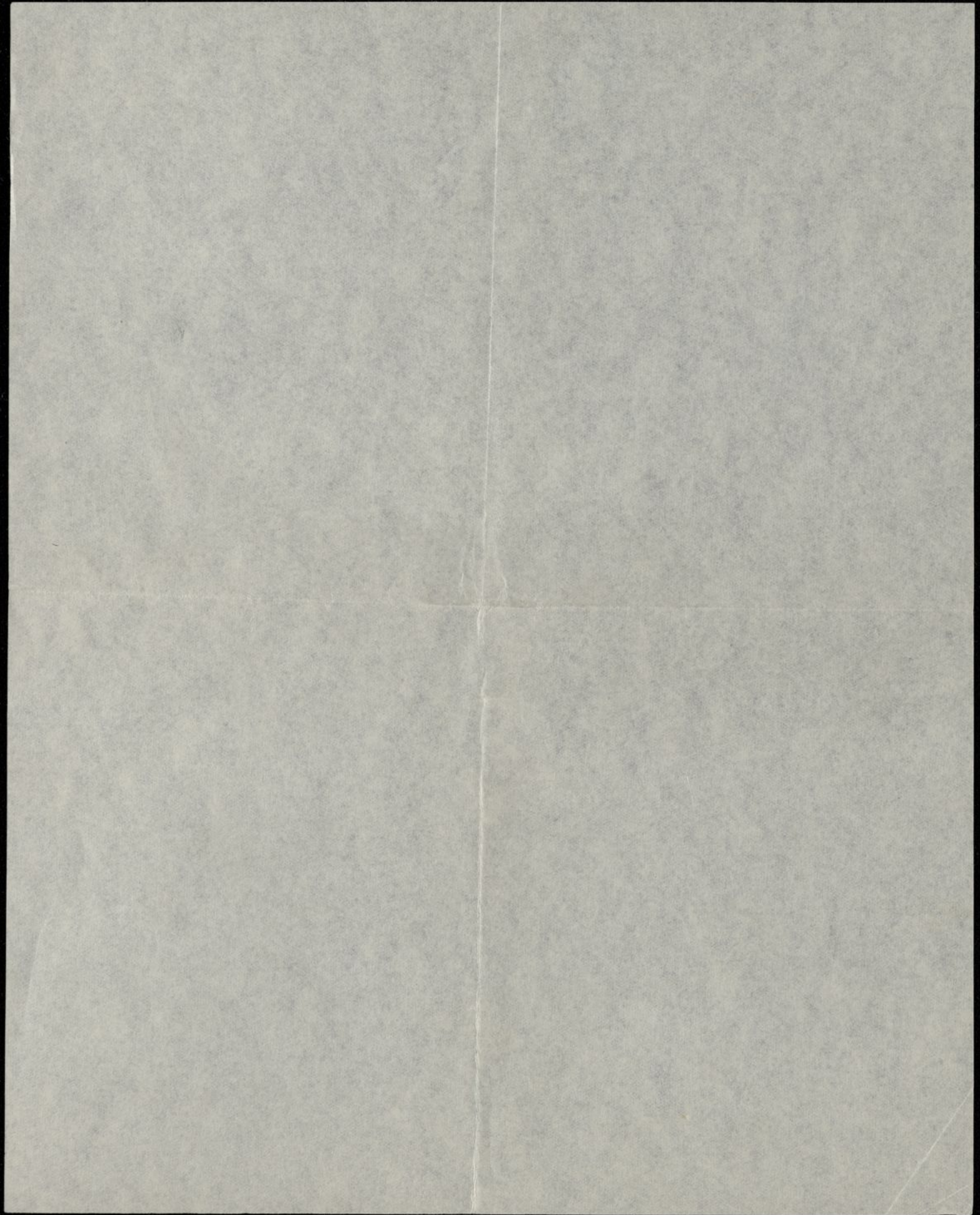
Tom

One day - do you think I might have just a tiny slip of hair?













Miss Emily Hale.

41 Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.



BOSTON, MASS.  
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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

*Emily dear,*

13 November 1931.

I confess that I feel rather dismal this morning, because it is Friday and no letter has come from you - nor, mysteriously, from anyone else in America all this week. It is incredible that no American mail should have arrived for a whole week; yet I always get a few letters from the U.S.A. twice a week - even when there is nothing expected but yours, there are always a few editors, publishers, contributors, or mere miscellaneous enquirers. A certain reticence prevents me from asking anyone else whether they have had American letters, and I had rather remain in ignorance than learn that American letters had been coming. So I

My dear, I must break off here: I was interrupted by a very long telephone call from my mother in law, and then by two other calls which were held up by it. She was very sweet, and said most emphatically that I must accept the Norton Professorship, and that Vivienne must stay at home. Now I shall write a long letter on Monday-Tuesday whether I hear from you or not. But Oh my dear, I hope I may.

*Tom*



FABER & FABER

STATIONERS

15, N. 11th Street

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA, PA.





THE OLD RECTORY,  
LARKING,  
NR. NORWICH.

October 21 1931

My dear Tom,

I have asked Richard Rees to write to you suggesting lunch together.

In the last year, my attitude has undergone new development; and it seems now to have reached a point of clarification. The main phases, as I see them now, have been these: (1) extreme individualism, ending in complete isolation (2) mystical experience, and an end (apparently final) of isolation (3) a gradual movement towards Spinozism, by which I mean a gradual dissociation of Being from Existence, Eternity from Time — a gradual realization that these are truly heterogeneous (4) a growing conviction that the world in time is to be estimated by a purely naturalistic calculus, and that the so-called 'spiritual' virtues have a need no transcendental sanction (5) the clarification of the last year — a fundamental acceptance of historical realism, in the Marxian sense, as the basis of political & social thinking.

My Marxism is, I know, peculiar; peculiar as the road by which I reached it. The main peculiarity is that I hold fast to the reality of the spiritual. In practice, that makes no difficulty in the way of my accepting the Marxian revolution-in-thought, because I hold — very firmly — that the spiritual is heterogeneous with the ethical-political. Conventional



THE OFF BRIGADE,  
LARKING,  
IN NORWICH.

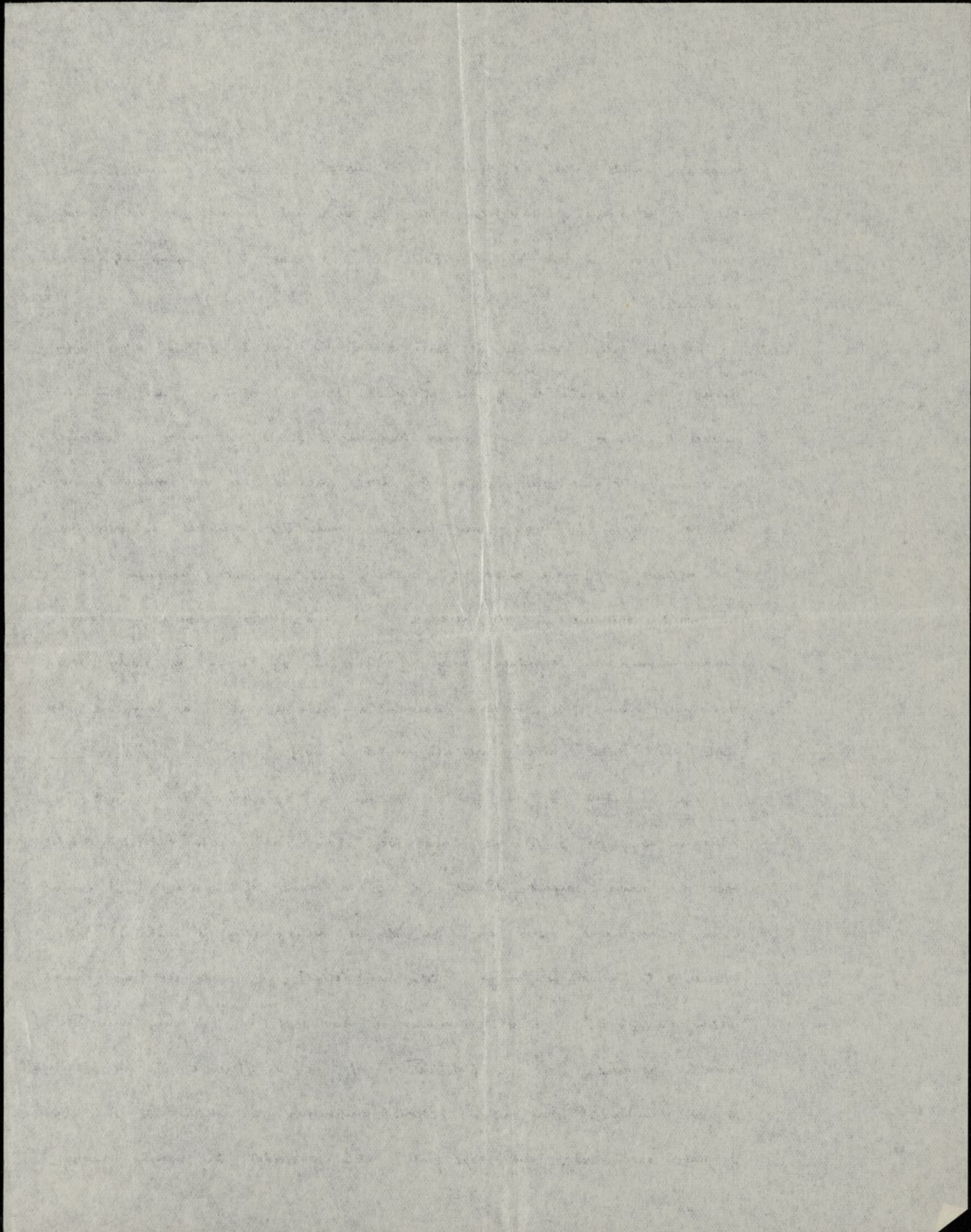


Marxism holds that the spiritual is unreal: which is nonsense to me. But the heterogeneity involves that the spiritual cannot be considered as a factor in the ethical-political. So there is a ~~kind~~ <sup>real</sup> of pragmatic agreement.

The dissociation between the spiritual & the ethical-political does not involve any degradation <sup>or weakening</sup> of the ethical. Ethical passion is not diminished because it knows itself for wholly human; I do not cease to admire & strain after the perfection of Our Lord because he was merely human. On the contrary. Further, my historical materialism makes me recognize (as objective fact) the entry of a new kind of ethical impulse into the world-structure in His person. And this ethical impulse — however much conventional Marxians may be ignorant of it — is really the dynamic behind the Marxian revolution-in-thought (as any one who reads "Das Kapital" with sensitivity must know.)

Thus I return to our Lord as origin of symbol. He is dual, & heterogeneous. He is ① the living focal point at which ethical impulse took on new & ardent vitality & ② a master of spirituality, known to be heterogeneous. His recognition of the heterogeneity is enshrined in "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, & unto God the things which are God's." The real meaning of this text is, in my conviction, honestly perceived, into a justification of the indifference of the spiritual to the mundane. That is a hideous temptation to which in my time I have succumbed, and have only lately succeeded in putting away.







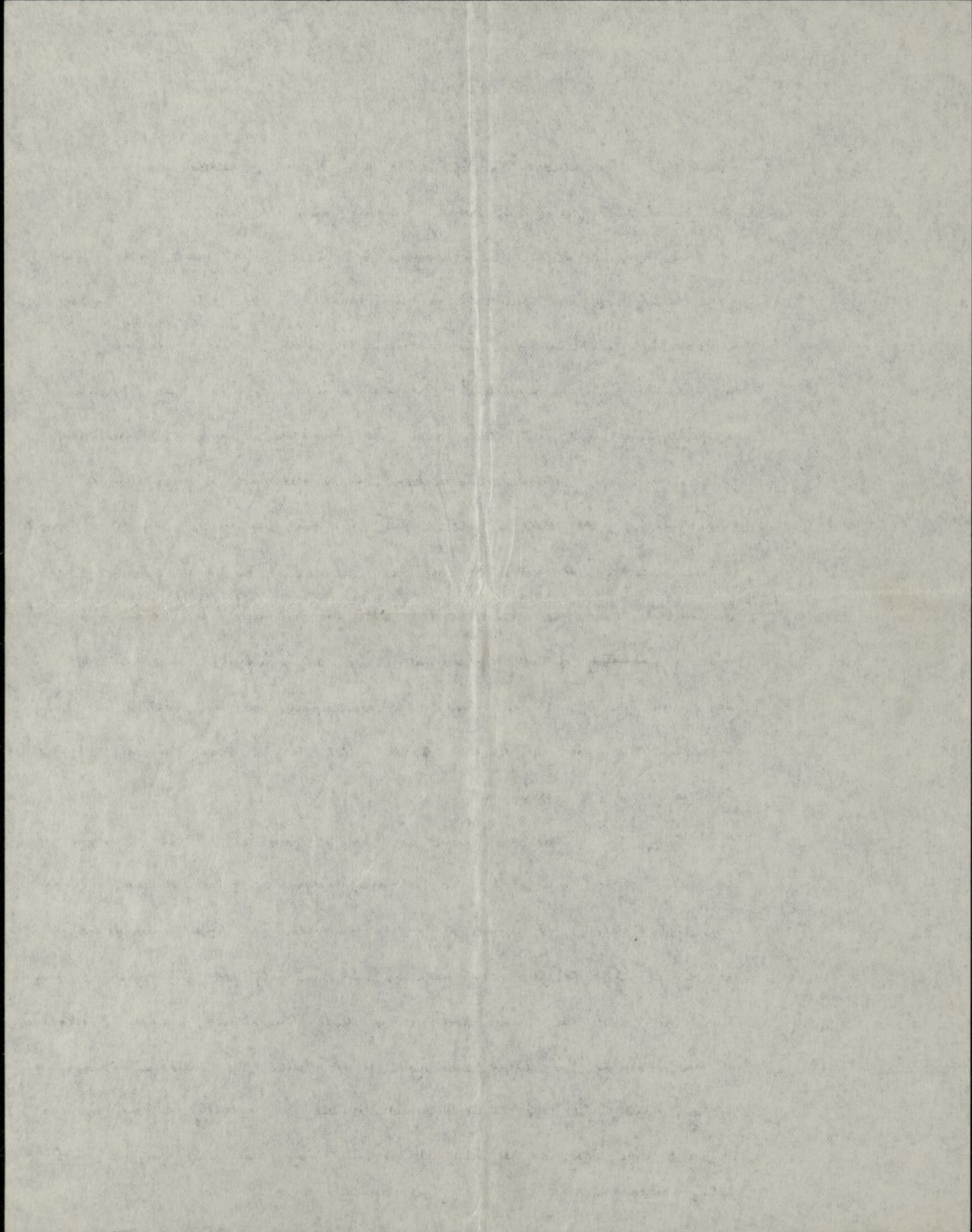
completely. The heterogeneity of Being & Existence <sup>implies</sup> ~~means~~ that we must give ourselves selflessly to both, knowing them different.

Here then I discuss the function of those who have become aware of the reality of the spiritual in the modern chaos. It is to supply the spiritual complement to the Marxian objectivity. This, inevitably, is no mere mechanical combination. The establishment of the pure spiritual as heterogeneous and equipollent with the mundane, involves a deepening of the concept of historical materialism, — a resistance to the simple immersion of the ethical-political in the pure economic, though of course no resistance to the recognition of the fact that the pure economic has predominated since the Middle Ages. <sup>But</sup> ~~this~~ this resistance to economic 'mission' must be ~~protected~~ <sup>purified</sup> of all contamination by self-interest: that is not easy, but it is all-important: the counterpart, in the world of existence, of that loving self-life to save ~~it~~ that is the condition of entrance into the world of spirituality.

These, Tom, are the merit & rough outlines. I felt I ought to put them before you. I fear it may mean a final parting of our ways. In reality, I think it ought to mean a final convergence. But the things I hope for never happen. I can only set it down as my conviction that the final position is truly Christian, though I recognise it has nothing, or almost nothing, to do with the Christian Church of to-day, and that the Church would oppose it violently. None the less it must come, or so I feel. It is only way, at least for me, of feeling clean.

Ever yours  
John.









ans. Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>

Miss Emily Hale,

41 Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.







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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

20 November 1931.

*My Emily*

Your dear letter of the 7th arrived yesterday - it was very good of you to write at once as well as cable. I must emphasise that the matter does not appear to be settled - I have too much experience of hopes to depend upon anything in the least uncertain - but if I am not appointed, it will probably be because of some strong personal objection on the part of the President. But so far as I am concerned, I have definitely accepted.

I read your letter with very mixed feelings, but here are my conclusions. It would be very much more depressing to me to come expecting not to see you at all, than to come somewhat apprehensive of how we should arrange if you were in Boston. If you were somewhere where I might see you even once during my stay, it would make all the difference; but if you were in California, it might be difficult to find an excuse to go so far, in order to see you; I would fly anywhere on the prospect of seeing you, if I had a sufficient pretext. But if you are in Boston, it is neither the first meeting, nor the public meetings, which worry me. As for the latter, as you say, we both know how to play parts. As for the former, I cannot finally imagine it, or "arrange" it in my mind beforehand, because of its complete uniqueness in my life; but I do not worry about that; I might just break down and blubber, I dare say. It would be the question of whether and when, and if so how and how often, to see you after that, which would be the problem: it is not the obviously set rôle to be assumed in public, but the rôle, so to speak, in private, which is the difficult one. I hope you understand this quite as I mean it; it is important to me that you should. How can anyone know how much control he has over his own feelings until it is tested? My emotions might be so strong that I might find it impossible to see you alone on arriving and before leaving; or on the other hand the undercurrents might flow quite easily below a relation of expressed friendship.

But in short, we are not able to foresee, and the reasonable thing is to make our plans irrespective of each other... But Oh Dove my dear, I do so long to see you.

*Tom*

*For the rest of your letter I have written  
little - more on Monday.  
I believe I understand very well.*



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Ans Dec 13



Miss Emily Hale  
41 Brimmer Street  
Boston Mass.  
USA







THE  
CRITERION

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

EDITED BY T. S. ELIOT

TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543  
TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.C.1

24 November 1931.

*Dearest Lady*

Your letter of the 15th (postmarked the 16th) arrived to-day; eight days is very good, isn't it? though as you say, letters from Boston have seemed oddly slower, relatively and even absolutely, than from and to Seattle. It gave me a particular pleasure, though I cannot always say why one letter makes me happier than another; is it something between the lines? I have been very rushed lately - but if one is always in London, then there are always engagements which cannot be avoided; the only way to escape is to be able to hide oneself in the country, which I cannot do. And I have felt very tired lately, which has meant lying abed later, and so shortening my morning work. I have to rush off to lunch with Gordon George (whom you know) and Jim Barnes, then back here to a monthly board meeting, which will no doubt exhibit very depressing financial figures; and I shall leave this letter in the hope of adding another paragraph after the meeting; then this evening out to dinner with the St. John Hutchinsons, old friends - lunch tomorrow with Major Douglas, Grieve and Whyte & tea with Ottoline - lunch Thursday with Cattani at the St. James's Club - Friday a council meeting of the Shakespeare Association - and next week a paper to prepare on John Marston for the Elizabethan Society. And so on. I have sent you the promised birthday book of Ellen Terry and Shaw: I have not had time to dip into it myself, so I shall depend eagerly upon your report of it, when you have time to read some. But I shall send a copy of Keats's Letters for our occasional bedtime reading, to last until the spring; Letters and Journals are so suitable for that kind of reading. I am very glad that you still find something in the Von Huegel, because the book has meant much to me, though I do not believe I have read it through.

The play you describe sounds like a play I saw last spring, called "Autumn Crocus", though perhaps it is less vulgar, as there is a good deal of farcical comedy in "Autumn Crocus". This play has been immensely successful, and is still running; and I must say that it was well acted, Francis Lederer being particularly good. The heroine is a very poor little schoolmistress from Manchester, who on her first holiday in the Tyrol falls immediately in love with the local hotel-keeper, who turns out to be married. She and her friend were only to be at the hotel for one night, but the hotel-keeper urges her to stay on. She is finally dissuaded by her friend, and returns to her dull job in England. But the point is that she seems to have no moral struggle whatever, and



NOVEMBER

is really preserved from becoming the hotel-keeper's mistress merely by her friend's greater force of character, and (what is the matter with this typewriter?) on chiefly prudential grounds. What however is more offensive is a sub-plot of two young English people who are carrying out a "trial marriage" at the hotel: there is a good deal of comedy between them and a stock size Vicar who is shocked, and the Vicar's <sup>elderly</sup> maiden sister who is not shocked, and who gets tipsy by drinking too much brandy after being lost in a forest. The play is advertised by a placard of caricature sketches of the characters, and on the board the young couple are designated as "living in sin". Yet it has played for many months to large houses of ordinary suburban people - the sort who make up the bulk of audiences - and they received all the discussions of companionate marriage with roars of delight. It is a curious commentary upon the present time. Restoration Comedy is to my mind far more moral (as well as often very funny, e.g. "The Country Wife") because it is not in any way subversive of morals; it acknowledges, I consider, the moral laws, and simply makes sport with the people who transgress them.

All this sort of thing is very troubling. The vicious, of course, we have always with us to the end of the world; but I am inclined to believe that the best agents of the Devil are unconscious agents, not the people who are bad and know it, but the people who preach evil in the name of virtue, reason and human happiness. It may sound hysterical or superstitious to you - to me it would have seemed so ten years ago - but I do believe in the existence of "powers and principalities" of darkness as well as of light, the powers of which St. Paul speaks in one of his letters; and that we can expose ourselves either to the good or the evil. Does this seem quite fantastic, that anyone should talk this way in quite a literal sense?

I have just had a disappointment. I told you that I had finally ordered a print of that third photograph for you; they took a very long time making it; but it arrived yesterday and turned out to be not the one I ordered but the old profile which you had long ago. So I have written a furious letter and now we must start all over again.

I agree that McKnight Kauffer is not an ideal illustrator, though I must say that his drawing for "Triumphal March" seems to me the best so far (it means that he is now imitating Chirico instead of the earlier Cubist styles of ten or twelve years ago); but it really is a choice of evils, and I do not know of anyone available who would not be worse. I tried to make a change with "Animula" and the result was not at all happy. You see, what I want for my poems is not an illustration but a design & that is the great danger of illustrating poetry anyway, that the illustrator will merely impose his own particular interpretation of the poem upon the reader, instead of letting the reader, if he can, get his own direct impression. This however is the last occasion; for the market for these Christmas card poems is pretty well exhaust-



ed; and I should never have illustrations to any collection of poems. If I ever finished my dramatic poem, "Sweeney Agonistes", I might have that illustrated, because the illustrations there would be justified as "sets" for the theatre; but then I should try to get an illustrator who would be content to carry out my own conceptions of what the characters look like.

I am surprised that the Hinkleys' (one always speaks of them in the plural) had never asked about your mother; but probably people who have no experience of such matters feel more diffidence in speaking of them. (I do not know, by the way, how high you would "rate" Eleanor in degree of intimacy among your other friends). I fear that what I last said may have pained you; of course I wrote it with all reserves knowing that none of observation may apply in the least to your mother's case. But I do pray for such sufferers that they should not feel acutely. As I say, I only know the type of case of those who are convinced that they are persecuted and wronged, not the type of those (much rarer perhaps) who are possessed with the delusion that they have done wrong. But from the point of view of possible improvement I doubt whether the case is more hopeful because of more acute suffering than because of less: because always they are suffering for other reasons than those which they invent for themselves. I can understand your feeling about it, because when you know that the person is not suffering as much as he professes to suffer, you feel more cut off from the person. But there, I feel that in well-meaning attempts, I have already, and in previous letters, said too much already. It is not that I want to spare your feelings, for if I were in a position to know enough, I should always tell you quite frankly what I believed to be the truth - as I hope you would with me; it is merely that I may ~~perhaps~~ have said more than I am justified in saying on what little I know. And I think that a really good and understanding doctor, if your mother has one, can understand much better than you can, whose feelings are too deeply involved. Anyway, I hope you will forgive me.

This has been a very scrappy letter. I started it on Tuesday, but was not able to get enough written to be worth sending, and have been adding to it on Wednesday, Thursday and to-day Friday. It will be the first time that I have ever missed a Tuesday post, and please do not reprove me, because writing to you is the chief avocation and delight of my life, and it is far more exasperating to me to have to miss a post, than it can be to you not to receive a letter.

I continue to worry about your starving yourself. Really, I don't see how you can live on a dollar a day, unless the cost of food in Boston is much lower than it is in London. (I predict that the cost of living in England is going to soar by the spring; the pound is still falling; tariffs are going to do very little good; in six months the country will be simmering with discontent; and I should not be surprised within a year to see a coup d'état: political predictions are usually wrong, so here are mind). Have you been able



to supply yourself with any new clothes, and have you even enough warm things for the winter? For with undernourishment, and poor clothes (even the psychological effect of being shabby is a drain on the energy) I am afraid that my Emily may have a serious illness, and then what would become of me, please?

I hope we can soon have the Thorps to a meal. - I do like Christina Rossetti. I also like Mrs. Thorp very much, both intelligent and sensitive, I thought. Her husband I did not take to at first, but I think he improves: he looks too juvenile, but has <sup>+</sup> think a pretty alert and perceptive mind underneath his chubby exterior.

I was much interested by your account of your meeting with Dr. Park.

No further news from Harvard.

Your humble devoted servant

*Tom*

*27 Nov. 31.*