Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

Citation Information

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Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

1 folder

Contact Information

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ans
Dec. 13

Miss Emily Hale.

41 Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A

THE
CRITERION
A QUARTERLY REVIEW
EDITED BY T. S. ELIOT

TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

1 December 1931.

My dear Lamb,

I am feeling sorry for myself again; but as I ignominiously failed to get off a letter until the second mail last week, I am justly punished ubi peccavi by having no letter yet. Nothing particular arrived from America except a letter from my sister Margaret describing my nieve's wedding, which seems to have gone off to the general satisfaction. Chardy is a very pretty girl, in features and colouring like her mother: not a type which I particularly admire, a very swarthy atrain with dark brown eyes, which runs in the Eliot blood and is said to come from the Dawes's. Chardy is essentially a girl for whom matrimony is the best career; not like her elder sister, with whom I feel much more sympathy: a reserved, independant and rather solitary girl who bravely goes her own way and is, I believe, quite an efficient schoolteacher, and likes reading books. Whether Chardy will turn out to be as like my sister Charlotte as she looks, I do not know. Charlotte was originally a lively, society loving girl, with swarms of friends of both sexes. She became much more serious later: she had a hard life - they were for long very poor; George was not a very brilliant architect, and he would put all his money into a large estate near Millis, which made no money - but then George hungered for country life, which is a perfectly reasonable taste: but my father disapproved strongly, thinking that George should stop in town and attend to architecture; and my mother thought that Charlotte suffered much hardship from having to live out of town, and run a large place with insufficient means and staff. She certainly had several terrible illnesses, and weakened her health. So George was not very popular with my family, who considered him rather a lout (though when I have seen him here in recent years, I have found him decidedly intelligent and charming); and I think Charlotte was sensitive to this. She was certainly very loyal to him. I had always supposed that she became an Episcopalian in order to be of the same church as her husband (a step at which the family sighed faintly); but a few years ago Elizabeth Wentworth told me that George's family were Presbyterians; and that the initiative towards orthodoxy came entirely from Charlotte's side: which at least shows a certain independance and seriousness. As happens so often with near relatives, I felt much closer to her when I saw her again, for the last time, in 1924, when she came with my mother on her last visit; and though she said but little, I believe that she came to understand, while she was here, something of my real situation.

So much about my family. Have you, I wonder, seen my sister Marion, or Ada, since you have been back?

My last few days have been bothered by having to prepare the paper on Marston to deliver tomorrow night, and even now I have still three or four pages to write. I have sent a ticket to the Thorps; I shall be pleased if they will go, particularly because I like to have some one present who may be in touch with you. It has been slow writing; and I must turn immediately to write two or three other papers for which I shall be paid by periodicals. I confess that if the Norton professorship falls through my financial anxieties will beem heavier than ever, and I shall regret very deeply that the suggestion was ever put into my mind: it is now two or three weeks since I heard anything about it. In addition, the prospect of such a prolonged holiday has made the prospect of the intervening period more tolerable.

Business, too, is very bad; bad all round in Britain, and getting worse; and a general tone of discouragement. And the future of this firm is causing me apprehension; so, among other occupations, I am racking my brains to think of any possible reforms or enterprise. And I see that there will be a huge deficit in the U.S.A. budget; so no doubt Income Tax will have to be revised to squeeze more out of the middle class; and then you will have more and more unemployment; and heaven knows where it will all end.

Would that I had more time for writing letters: but while I am here in my office I have more than I can do, and am never secure from interruptions, and have to spend part of my time discussing matters with other directors individually; and also have to write here nearly all the private letters that I write. But I snatch every minute I can for correspondence with you, and that helps more than everything to keep me sane and normal and above despair. You spoke of fits of despair yourself in your last letter; and I do pray hard that you may be preserved from them, for real despair is the most terrible thing, a real temptation of the Devil of those whom he cannot attack with the commoner forms of fault. But have I not said this before. But in the context in which you mentioned it, I admit I always feel just as you do, with the same alternations.

your devoted

Tom

ans. Dec. 21st.

Miss Emily Hale,

41 Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
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24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

4 December 1931.

Dearest Lady

Your letter of November 22nd, which I should have had on Monday or Tuesday, arrived yesterday, Thursday; and I suppose that from now on for several weeks the mails will be quite chaotic with the Christmas flood. I wish that I could think of anything cheerful in connexion with Christmas, or even support it with equanimity: it means bustle, expense and worry and forced geniality. At least, at Easter, people go away for a holiday and leave you alone, so that Easter can be observed in a religious atmosphere; but everything about the Anglo-Saxon Christmas is unfavourable to observing the occasion which it is supposed to commemorate.

I have not read "All Passion Spent" but have heard well of it, and was interested by your comments upon it. I did not read her earlier book either, and her poetry I find very dull indeed. She is a charming person - I have just met her once or twice at the Woolfs': not beautiful at all, but strikingly handsome, with a rather lovely deep voice. Her misfortune was to be an only child and not a boy, so that the peerage passes to her cousin: I mean that she may have been aware of being a disappointment in the matter of sex. She is much more interesting as a personality than her xxxxxx husband, Harold Nicolson, who seems to me rather a silly fellow, with very little real taste in literature at all.

You seem to be extremely busy. I like to buy and read every play you act in, and speculate about the suitability of the part: but pardon my ignorance: Who wrote "Berkeley Square"? I shd I try to find out, but please tell me in case I don't.

And I confess I wonder who is the Mr.Baillie of Scotland whom I am supposed to know!

Now my dear I am sure that you will be very displeased with me for such a short and feeble letter; but on Monday I shall try to explain and reinstate myself in your good graces if possible.

Tom

Tom

Box 44,
Stellenbosch,
Cape Province
S. Africa.

Nov 12. 1931

Dear Sir,

I am making a study of your work & wonder if you would help me on one point. Being interested in the relation of literature & astrology, I would like to study it partly in that light. Would you be so kind as to tell me your birth-date:— year, month, day (including the time, if known) & the place. I could then cast your horoscope.

If you are interested I should be very pleased to tell you what I see there.

I hope you do not think this letter

presumptuous in any way. It is, may I assure you, not the outcome of curiosity, but genuine interest in your work.

I shall be very grateful for any information you can give me

Yours truly

H H Hurst

Miss Emily Hale.
41 Brimmer Street
Boston Mass.
U.S.A.

write Dec 28

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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
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24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

Emily dear -

8 December 1931.

I was very glad, my dear, to have your letter of the 30th this morning: and that is very good speed, isnt it? and to have had a letter on a Thursday and another on the following Tuesday is quite glorious. I have not yet had any letter from Lowell; but yesterday had another letter from Murdock, taking the ratification for granted, and making suggestions about the lectures and housing; so that if the matter does fall through I shall be very deeply distressed in spite of my mental reservations over its certainty.

Nevertheless it all seems quite unreal, and will at least until I arrive in Boston (I should want to take a boat straight to Boston harbour). We must always, as you say, make allowances for the possibilities of misunderstandings even between ourselves, in correspondence, which would not occur in speech. But I think that things will straighten themselves out. It is essential to begin with to know - as we do - that we shall make our plans quite irrespective of each other: for anything else would merely make things more difficult. I think that to see the situation quite simply and without any pretence or dissimulation, as it is, is always the best way to deal with it. And so I do not see how my coming could "force any issue" between us; and our relationship would be of little worth if it were not quite honest on both sides. I don't know how much, or in what circumstances, I can endure to see you; but I shall tell you frankly when I do know.

The portrait - the right missing one - has at last come; but this time they forgot to send the mailing envelope, so I must order that; and I don't know whether you will have it before Christmas or not.

I have been very rushed these last days: the lecture on Marston to the Elizabethan Society went off well. Vivienne said she saw the Thorps in the distance, but I did not see them; and had no chance to look afterwards, as I was engaged in conversation by several importunate people. I was much pleased that they should have come. I believe V. has asked them to a small mixed party on Saturday evening. Gordon George is staying with us for a couple of days, which is a pleasure; we had Ottoline to dinner to meet him last night, and they got on very well, and found acquaintances in common. I am trying to find time to prepare my speech to you on Sunday: difficult to know just what to say about "John Drydnn"

in fourteen minutes. I shall ask Mr. Cesar Saerchinger to present me as the Missouri mocking-bird: for when asked whether I am English or American, I always say: "I am a Missourian" (and an honorary member of the International Mark Twain Circle). And when is Berkeley Square to come off? I shall have to make a pilgrimage to that spot on that day in your honour - though it is getting to be mostly shops now, and motor car showrooms. And are you hearing any music, or is it too expensive? I loathe the radio, and am yet fascinated by it; and I pretend that I am keeping up languages by listening to political speeches from France, Germany and Rome - and it is still rather a thrill to listen to Warsaw or Budapest, even though they are either talking unintelligible languages or else playing the same dance music as everywhere else. How silly it all is.

I kiss your signature, and remain

Yours etc.

Tom -

Ans Dec 28

Miss Emily Hale,
41 Brimmer Street
Boston Mass.
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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
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24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

15 December 1931.

My dear Dove,

I am ashamed of not having written, for the second time, on Friday. What happened was that I had intended to finish off my wireless talk on the Saturday, and suddenly hear d from the Columbia that according to a B.B.C. regulation they must see my manuscript first: which meant finishing it on Friday. So, feeling very heavy and stupid with a cold, I had to sit down and finish it quickly. Of course, I had only to boil down what I had said here in the spring; but it not very easy to condense an hour and a half's talk into fourteen minutes (13½ it was), and be interesting and provide some solid content to it. I hope I succeeded. It seemed to go well; and you would have been amused to see us all crowded into a tiny studio with Mr. Saerchinger's family faciing me: nice little Jewish children, who sat quiet as mice, and shook hands solemnly afterwards, and a Mr. Hoffmann, a tremendously Assyrian New Yorker, who was presented as a writer on wireless matters. It was very hard to believe that you were listening to me, and still harder to believe that you or anybody could hear what I was saying. I imagined the alternate roars and fading and the pistol shots which, in London, sometimes affect stations like Toulouse or Warsaw. But the Hinkleys very kindly sent me an enthusiastic wire which relieved my anxiety, and from which I infer that I was audible at least; and I also had a wire from the President of the Columbia, which I suppose he sends to every speaker. Anyway, it was all quite thrilling for me, though exhausting.

Yesterday I received a visit from two reporters of the New York Evening Post, who told me they had a cable from New York to say that I had been appointed to the Norton Professorship, and had come to hear d l about it from me. I told them the truth: that I had had some private discussions of an informal nature, but had received no official notification. They seemed inclined to doubt me at first, and I think suspected that I didnt want to "talk". I think I persuaded them in the end. Asked what I intended to lecture about if appointed, I replied discreetly that I should first find out what the university people wanted. They had been informed that the news was to be released to to-day's papers. I wonder if it is true. Very tiresome, if not.

As for what I have been doing else: I have had a cold, and heaps of manuscripts and unanswered letters, numerous interviews - with Senora Victoria Ocampo, an Argentine patroness of letters, and various other

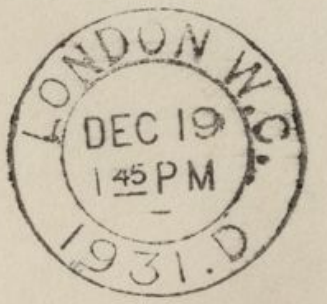
people; and lunched four times at the club - with Orlo Williams, with Osbert Sitwell, just off to the Canaries for the winter, with Fr. Demant and with Algar Thorold, the editor of the Dublin Review. To-day with Kenneth Ingram, tomorrow with Mary Hutchinson, Friday with Canon Underhill. And that is all my engagements, I hope, until after Christmas. Oh yes, we went to tea at Ottoline's on Friday, and a most animated argument on religious matters: Koteliansky, a Russian Jew whom I have known for years, who used to be a friend of Katherine Mansfield's, and who is a sceptic; Ralph Hodgson, the poet, a very charming man whom I had never met before, who is a kind of vague non-Churchman, and Lord David Cecil and myself to uphold orthodoxy. It was most interesting - largely due to Koteliansky, who likes to converse about fundamental things.

And there has been no letter from you this week yet; but I had a letter from Aunt Susie yesterday dated the 2nd: they had just heard Hugh Walpole on the wireless. Hugh Walpole is a very kindhearted, fat man who likes collecting first editions of Walter Scott etc. and going to tea with old ladies; quite undiscriminating in his tastes though a good novelist - a good workman - in a peaceful oldfashioned way. But his father was a bishop. I cant believe he is a very brilliant lecturer. And when shall I hear from you again? And it is a year now since you promised me a bookmarker for which you said you were going out to buy the silks, and nearly as long as that since I was promised a recent photograph. Have I faded away in the spirit, if not on the ether? You are never ~~then~~ from my mind, and I feel that I am permeated with your influence, even when my mind is concentrated on other things.

If I thought too constantly of you, I might be very restless; but I am not restless, most of the time, though there are times of agony, and I dare say always will be.

I will say "good night" as I said it to you on Sunday.

Your Pom.



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

17 December 1931.

Dear Lady.

This Norton affair is beginning to fray my nerves. I have had no official notification, but the papers here have got hold of it. Since the reporters called on Monday, I have been rung up at home at all hours; yesterday Mary Hutchinson told me that their man servant had heard it on the wireless; two men have written to me to express their regret that I am going to Harvard permanently; and this morning the last straw: a telephone invitation to lunch with Lady Astor to meet Mr. Bernard Shaw (I replied that I had another engagement, that I did not accept invitations in which my wife was not included, and that I had never met Lady Astor). So I am beginning to feel very tired.

The Criterion evening went off very well last night; Harold just back from ten weeks in a nursing home sat up in an arm chair looking rather miserable, and went on rather too long over his grievances against Richard Aldington; Richard has certainly behaved very badly to all his old friends, and especially to me, but he is a pathological case and it seems to me quite wrong to feel as bitterly as one would if Aldington had to be considered quite sane.

Here I was interrupted by Miss Wilberforce who said Lady Astor was on the telephone. So I told her to repeat my message of this morning.

FRIDAY. More interruptions, and an afternoon in committee yesterday, and then had to rush round afterwards to Ottoline's (she lives round the corner) with V. and Gordon George; where there was a numerous company - Cattaui, Strong, Sturge Moore, Lowes Dickenson, and James Stephens holding forth with his usual endless brilliant prattle. This morning delayed by Gordon George who is leaving for the country; and I must leave shortly for Fr. Underhill's and must make a few quiet minutes first; and this afternoon the Huxleys are coming to tea. I wish I could get away for a month by myself. However, I have next winter to look forward to, and I hope it will not mean many social engagements which must be accepted. Your letter did come to my relief, this morning, the letter of the 6th. Many thanks for all the news about Berkeley Square - and now the play is over - will you

please next time tell me the dates of the performances and the name of the authorso that I can be reading the play and thinking of you acting it.??? As it is, I could visualise your part and costumes better if I know the period; but I hope that someone may take a few photographs of you as good as the 18th century one which I love.

There is much to answer; but to-day I must finish off and will only, very humbly, beg your pardon for having angered you; I am very much disturbed - please, Madam, I should be too frightened ever to want to anger you. Perhaps I was slightly impertinent in an attempt to be humorous? And how on earth can you find anything I say "blasting"? Dear me, I must control my elephantine gambollings, if I tread on the beautiful lady's toe. But very seriously, I am very sorry and repentent, and hope I am really forgiven.

Contritely & devotedly,

Tom

Miss Emily Hale,

41 Brimmer Street,

Boston, Mass.,

U.S.A.

POST PARLY
— FOY —

17. XII. 31

150, CROMWELL ROAD,
S.W.7.

My dear Eliot

I saw the news re the Poetry Professor in the Times this morning, also I saw your name re Seneca's Tragedy the other day — There are good things in them — Come and have tea and a talk any day you like about 4 — or later if necessary — at the East India U.S. Club — 16 St James Square — (next door to the London Library).

Yours
Stephen Spender

52 Tavistock Square. Wednesday

Dear Tom.

Will you come to lunch on Friday at 1?— then we can I hope dispatch business & have a few minutes for conversation. I've been bothered with the usual headaches & so have shut myself up the last few weeks & should have tried to see you. But this will be better than nothing:

Yours J. W.

2 Avenue St. Philibert
Passy
Paris

Dear Eliot: Excuse my silence but I have had a lot of work and worry. 1

First of all how do you stand? Have 7 & 7 signed a contract with Gorman? Have 7 & 7 paid any royalties this year on A.L.P and H.C.E.? If so, when and how many copies were sold then and now? Not knocking my own tipple? I gave the proofs to Mrs Crosby and she said they were identical and I hate to contradict a lady. What did the poles' man go do finally with the verticles? Nicholson

has sent over two letters containing a detailed account of his struggle with the B.B.C. What imbeciles! changing their minds every other day and of course giving way in the end as usual. I think H.H. handled the whole affair with great firmness and courage. 2

Hardcastle sent an offer for Ulysses He would pay, 500 $ or 1000 on signing and the same on publication. I wrote to write a preface telling the public what it was all about. And he would pay royalties to Miss Beach, I suppose, until 20,000 copies at the rate of 10% to be made 15% after 20,000 but his lawyer whose name is Guest I think wrote to get over and above his legal fee a royalty, presumably the

add 5% on every copy sold until the expiration of the U.S. copyright or himself. Pinker advised me to accept this offer whereupon Mr Beach whose skirts are still short took a running kick at the offer and sent it sailing across the Atlantic and through the Vikings' goalposts.

No. In spite of the hue and cry I feared nobody went into my flat and the boys kept on travelling to and fro across London and the agents and my solicitors and the post and the light and the telephone offices continued to send one another letters and bills which were all sent on to me to help me in my work in progress duly stamped with the effigy of King George

3

der Fürsten who, according to a report in the Chicago Tribune written by Geo. Washington Jones, is going to confer the order of the garter on his old pal and fellow countryman Marshal Hindenburg in return for the latter's plucky but unsuccessful attempt to confer the order of the boot on him. Is it not enough to make a Norwegian sailor take to drink?

I don't think it is worth while sending over any copy for the printer till Jones and Hood Green are over. If I send it then will they really set it up because, if not, it had better stay with me until they have really taken off their coats

4

and rolled up their shirt sleeves and started with a doleful sigh to learn that provided print of Emmet's - is - no - good - for Sullivan.

5.

I have a telegram from him, by the way, from the north of Ireland which I sent on to the New Statesman so that I suppose that paper will publish my ferocious strictures about him this week or next.

Friendly remembrances from us both to Mrs Eliot and yourself.

Sincerely yours
James Joyce

RIGEWOOD,
CROHAM MANOR ROAD,
SOUTH CROYDON.

17 . XII . 31

Dear Eliot,

It seems to me to be appropriate in every way. Congratulations! I hope it does you as much good as it will Harvard — a place for which I have a harmless liking, for several sentimental reasons.

Yours
H. Nicolson

Dear

Treioiwerth
Bodsedsm
Anglesey

Dear Eliot,

A line of warmest congratulation on what I am sure must be a great pleasure to you.

The news has just filtered up to this far corner -

Yours
B.L.R.

EZRA POUND

RAPALLO
VIA MARSALA, 12 INT. 5

I7 Dec.

Brer/ Bones .

As to the statement in this mornings Trib.

MY COMPLIMENTS TO HAWVUD Unnervusity. It is the proudest day in their annals since .... Geo. crossed that Delaware.

Hope it wont be too hard on you. Shd. be more cheerful than London , anyhow . and le"Zope the endowmeant is really heavy.

At any rate a change.

oh well , WOWGURI

3

EZRA POUND

RAPALLO
VIA MARSALA, 12 INT. 5

I8 Dec.

My Dear Henry Adams Possum

Deh mo' I reflex on dis hyere notiss in de' paper ; which I whopes befo' de lawd iz true/

de mo' I roahs with jocundity.

You can do the whale of a lot of good if you can stick it even a few months. I mean as to clearin' out mess. Canbys , VanDorens , American academy etc/ all the old bloody clogged sewage.

Also you will have a much freer hand than you've got in London where you want , I take it ; to keep the Criterion circulating at least among a few people.

Hawvud having invited you ; will want it at least as lively as you can make it.

/I//~~Note~~ Let me know anything you think I ought to . I shd. like for several reasons to know WHEN the affair started brewing.

And who had the brain wave.

LONDON W.C. DEC 22 1931 D

POST EARLY
— FOR —
CHRISTMAS

Miss Emily Hale.

41 Brimmer Street.

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

Nice - Dec. 1925

- trying to

look French.

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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.1

Emily dear,

22 December 1931.

There is only one Emily, and I would never voluntarily or consciously offend her; and I am still grieved that I should even for a moment have tempted you to write a severe letter to me; though if it was written, I am rather sorry that it was destroyed and not sent; because I should always like to know all your feelings towards me, from moment to moment. And yet, if you will understand what I try to say, it is not so much the giving you pain as the misunderstanding which would grieve me. For in a way I should mind less giving pain to you than to a stranger! For to hurt you would be to hurt myself, and I could not distinguish clearly between your pain and mine; and as I might be willing to hurt myself so I might be willing to hurt you. Just as I could not praise you to others as easily and clearly as I might be able to praise someone indifferent to me: because, if you will pardon the impertinence, I could not sufficiently detach myself from you or you from me. You just are, and are the whole world. And conversely, I should not like to think that you were ever fearful of hurting me: for where there is perfect understanding, the hurt doesn't hurt.

I have not yet fully answered your previous letter, and now to-day comes your welcome long letter of the 14th (and your Christmas card has arrived, but I did not open it this morning). Thank you for all you say about the broadcast: I am surprised that none of my sisters was present, and I hope that they heard elsewhere. My brother heard in New York, and I have a letter from him this morning. Nothing from Harvard: I think I may cable to Murdock to enquire. I am glad to have the programme of "Berkeley Square", and now I shall try to obtain the text, and see for myself what sort of part they gave you. It must from what you said in your last have been a fatiguing affair, and I hope you are resting now. But I long for some portrait of you in your period costume; and you know that 18th century costume does suit you; and you know that there is one person at least to whom your youth will last forever. I am glad that you are not starving physically now; but sometimes I get into most unchristian frenzies in thinking of the spiritual and social and emotional starvation of your life. But this, rather than any previous, is my Christmas letter to you - I hope to send a little cable on Thursday - I may

not have time to write again till Monday - I shall not attempt to put more information, any information, into this, or even general thoughts: only my unexpressed unexpressible thoughts for my beautiful Lady, my Dove.

à toujours Pom.

RADIOGRAM

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POUR LE NOEL ET LA BONNE ANNEE

"Via RCA" R. C. A. COMMUNICATIONS, Inc. "Via RCA"

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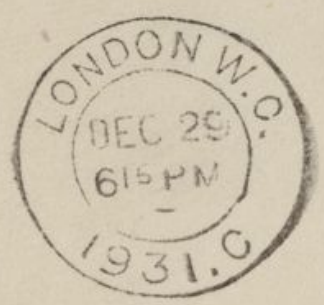

Miss Emily Hale,

41 Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

ans. Jan. 13

(wine merchant)

Mr. Francis Downman begs

Mr. Harold Monro *

to honour him by accepting a small Pork Pie, which has just been baked in the County of Rutland, after an old Recipe.

* who forwards it, knowing T.S.E.'s

weakness for it, & it being
the one thing in the world
that he (H.M.) cant digest.

FABER & FABER
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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.1

Très-chère Emilie.

29 December 1931.

The holidays are over, God be praised, and I am able to sit again at my window looking out over Woburn Square - a bright clear day for London, sunlight on the spire of Christ Church and on the bare boles of trees round the square, and patches of snow on the green. I have felt of course extremely tired for some days; today, owing partly to the good weather, a little stronger. Yesterday, Monday, the office was closed; so I only came and read my letters and went away again. Several from America. One from an old college friend, who has since made and lost a great deal of money in bond businesses, warning me of the bad quality of the liquor - that I trust, will not concern me much - it is tiresome that so many Americans now talk and think so much of drink - I shall miss my bedtime Guinness, but, I hope, conditions will be favourable enough for me not to miss it long. Another letter from one Theodore Spencer offering me a suite in Eliot House at fifty dollars a month, which seems dear to me; anyway, I shall consult Richards and Eric Maclagan first, as it is just possible that one might be more serene if less immersed in academic and undergraduate society. Nothing from the University itself, and nothing from you. But you seem to have led a very busy life yourself! too busy to chide me for overdoing. And what are these "social barriers" that exist in Boston society, pray? As you know, I never knew much about Boston Society; as a boy, I was much too timid and awkward to make any advantage of the "Friday Evenings"; and after I returned to Harvard I was quite indifferent to the more brilliant - meaning more wealthy, part of Boston. I should like to see something of it, next year, just out of curiosity. Life in London is so much freer than anywhere else in the world - people gravitate into their proper circles by natural affinities; and in the end the people one does not know are the people whom one does not particularly want to know. Paris is not quite so free, but comes next; people find it so easy however to live in Paris without knowing its society that they often miss it; whereas in London it is impossible to live as an outsider. And now what is Emilia doing next, in the way of acting, speaking, or training etc.? She seems to have a good deal of work in connexion with the Church. I have been intending to apply to serve at Mass once or twice a week, but am still too diffident. I wish that you could see the Exhibition of

French Painting which opens here next week. I shall try to see it and describe it to you. Do you ever get to the Art Museum or to Mrs. Gardner's? How little I can remember of either. There are some wonderful Oriental things in the Museum, collected by the shrewd old Okakura Kakuzo ("Hakagawa"); a fine wooden Buddha; some superb Tibetan kakemomos with dreadful lurid gods; the best Monet I have ever seen (Banks of the Rhone I think, not so messy as his later work); a beautiful little Degas of some jockeys; a few perfectly lovely early Greek things and a head of a goddess that might as well be a Pheidias and two slabs of a bas-relief affair the other part of which is in Rome - an extremely Greek representation of a naked boy playing a flute - and some very good Greek pottery and some good Cretan with the octopus design: that is very little to come to mind out of what is indeed a very fine collection. Of the Gardner things, except for some fine Venetian canvases, I remember a small madonna (I think) by Gruenewald - or am I wrong? and a marvellous Vermeer of Delft. Do you know these things?

After my Advent confession I determined to go straight through the Epistles of St. Paul reading one chapter every night at bedtime; the programme was inevitably interrupted by Christmas; but I shall now resume it. But what very stiff reading it is! His method of thought is difficult; it is so very concentrated; it is a Jew, even though a cosmopolitan citizen of the Roman Empire, who speaks, and to follow his thought is hard for westerners brought up more on the Greek dialectic. And in reading through his work carefully one gets the conviction that every sentence and phrase is very highly charged with meaning, and the phrases which one has heard glibly repeated or echoed since childhood are seen to be heavy with a significance unsuspected and consistent. I shall have to go through them again with Gore's Commentary on the Bible (the best and most up to date commentary there is) beside me.

And now I hope, the mails will resume their normal regularity, such as it is: somehow they seemed more regular and just as quick from Seattle, perhaps because I expected less of them, than from Boston - not that I like you to be so far away! I wonder if you will go out there again next summer, or what plans you will have. It is too soon for you to know, but when the plans come I hope they will be communicated instantly to

Ton serviteur humble et dévoué.

Tom

Miss Emily Hale

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U.S.A.

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31 December 1931.

My dear Bird

I am fortunate in finding no committee this Thursday afternoon, and so have time for a line to you; for I shall have but little time tomorrow morning as I have to lunch with Harry Crofton at 12 o'clock at the St. James's Club; and Edith Sitwell is coming to tea in the afternoon. So I send you my "Happy New Year" wishes on New Year's Eve, wondering platitudinously what it will bring, for you and for me and for others. I find the transit from one year to the next, the simple changing of one figure at the end of the date, a rather terrifying movement. The past has done so much to one - of course with some blessings as well as with agony - that was the last thing one expected of life. And often the good as well as the bad was the last thing that one would have desired, at some time or other in the past. Now and then, but rarely, I get flashes of perception of a kind of "pattern" in life, in my life, which are like mystical moments; flashes which do not give peace "as the world gives" but which, while they last, reconcile one to all the mystery of fault and suffering in the past. Just as still more rarely, at other times, I have had a kind of flash of anticipation of my future, in a very general way, and in a way in a way which neither makes possible, or even desirable, that we should alter our course in any way. What a cumbrous and confused sentence. But I do take such feelings seriously.

Well, my dear, this is a poor note; please accept it in the knowledge that my short scraps convey with them all the emotion of my longer, and of my apparently more personal and emotional letters. The Year is at hand.

Tom.

- et la bonne année à Emilie.