Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

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1 folder

Contact Information

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BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT, California,

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

5 January 1934.

My dear Lady

I had two spells in bed with chills - one before and one after Christmas - the weather having been very bad - is now much improved to the ordinary mild drizzly weather that I like, and I go to the Morleys for the weekend; but have been very busy, partly in consequence of the time lost in bed. Time is getting short for finishing the play; and I have to prepare a talk to give to the seminaristes at Kelham on the 20th. I was thankful that you told me you were to spend Christmas at the Perkins's, else I should have worried my head off after reading about a sort of cloudburst in Los Angeles in which a number of folk were drowned. There is enough to worry about without that. A Christmas card with a short letter written on it, from Christine Galitzi, to whom I really must write: I have neglected her. She fears, I think, that you are overtaxing your strength - as I do and have done ever since I saw your life in that wretched place. I have to try not to think about that, as with other things. My own affairs do not progress too well. The chief clerk of James & James has died suddenly, which means that an incompetent junior partner will handle much of the affair; and short of having a poor lawyer onself the next worst thing is to have an incompetent lawyer on the other side. V. still refuses to sign anything, so the terms of the agreement will have to be carried out without her assent. But the purpose of the agreement was to secure my being left in peace - not that I have been molested so far, except by having some very trying letters. Until things are more settled and my income tax paid I cannot put my heart into looking for lodgings; and the eventual task of finding unfurnished rooms and buying furniture seems to me tremendous - blankets and pillow cases and all sorts of things I know nothing about. My Virginia lectures will be proofread and off my hands next week - D'Arcy my jesuit friend has expressed his approval in the main, so that's all right - to be published I think in March. Wednesday very tiring - a committee for five hours and then the Criterion evening - a large gathering, everyone invited came - successful, I think, but the responsibility of playing host and talking just enough to everyone and remembering to say the right things to each etc. is certainly fa-

tiguing. We have had to telephone to Paris about "Ulysses" this afternoon - fortunately Morley is very skilful at conducting business by telephone. Tonight I have to dine with the local vicar in S. Kensington.

I hope I may have news on your return from Seattle - that you will return refreshed in body and spirit - et je t'envoie mes souhaits pour la bonne année et je me soussigne comme toujours ton ami dévoué

Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

13 January 1934.

My dear Lady.

I intended to write this morning, as it was my Saturday to be director in charge at the office, but Stewart turned up too, and we spent some time in consultation. The cashbox, without some forty pounds in it, was stolen last week; this morning Stewart had to interview a Detective Inspector, and some one came in with information. A lad in the office is suspected. These events are always distressing. The boy had excellent prospects, and was considered most promising, but he had got into debt. Of course, our suspicions may be wrong; but the boy has already tried to throw suspicion on another whom there seem no reason to suspect, which is much against him.

My difficulty in writing at present is not due to hearing from you so briefly and at such long intervals, but due to uncertainty about your own attitude, views and feelings. I am sure that you must understand my being in an unsettled state for this reason; and being unable to expand or chatter as I have done. I hope you will not try to spare my feelings - frankness is more merciful in the long run; and if there are or have been misunderstandings I should like them to be cleared up, whatever else happens. I do not like to think that you may just fade away without anything being spoken out.

I do not expect to hear from you till towards the end of the month in any case. You will want your holiday in Seattle without any such worries, and on you return you will - will have had your hands very full no doubt for the first week of term. At present I am still very worried about the strain on your health, and the possibility of a serious breakdown if you are obliged to continue long in your present life. And this is about all that seems worth saying at the moment.

Ever devoted

Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT, California,

U.S.A.

Lus Feb. 5

...bout the
...at the age of ten
...to win at Ascot.

When he is no longer able to win the Queen Alexandra Stakes (which he has carried off five times in succession) several young men of my acquaintance will go thirsty.

***

T. S. Eliot—Dramatist

MR. T. S. ELIOT will soon be able to add the drama to his accomplishments as poet, critic and scholar.

I am told that the work on which he is engaged for performance at Sadler's Wells at the end of May is something new in the way of pageant plays.

It is being done in connection with the Bishop of London's "Forty-five Churches Fund"—Mr. Eliot is a keen Churchman.

The Bishop is inviting someone of note to attend each performance as Guest of Honour. He will be expected to make a short speech in the interval.

***

Champion of the Judges

...R WILLIAM HOLDSWORTH, who has ...awarded the Swiney Prize for his ...lish Law, is one of the strongest ...that the cut in Judges'

...ing the

without
his staff who
turbed. It is thought
through a ground-floor window.

I was told at the Manor to-day:

"We do not know yet what actually has been stolen. We are making an inventory of what is missing."

Arlington Manor is about three miles from Newbury, and stands on the main road from Oxford to London.

Germany Refuses To Discuss Saar

From Our Own Correspondent

BERLIN, Tuesday.

GERMANY has declined to accept the invitation of the League Council to take part in the Geneva discussions on the Saar question according to a semi-official statement to-day.

Mr. J. A. R. Cairns Leaves £8000—No Will

MR. J. A. R. CAIRNS, of Little Laleham-road, Shepperton, the Metropolitan Police died on November
estate

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

Tuesday January 23, 1934.

Dearest Emily

Your full and clear letter of January 7th reached me on Friday - or rather I found it when I went to the club for lunch, and as an American mail had come that morning I presume that it had only just arrived. I wanted to answer it at once, but I should not have been able to catch the mail, and experience teaches me that it is best to take a day or two before answering any very important letter.

I do not think that I can answer it very well even yet. First let me say that it is a wonderful and beautiful letter; I do not believe there can be many women who could write such a letter, or who could adopt such a really Christianly charitable and patient attitude. I cannot but think, now, that I must have appeared to you, at least at times during the last year, in a very unfavourable light. But it was also a very painful letter to read, so that I have not yet been able to bring myself to re-read it. I feel very much abased and humbled before you. I must face the fact, for the rest of my life, that I have never entered your life to bring you anything but pain; that the one person in the world I should most like to make happy - or to see made happy if I could not do it myself - would have been better off if she had never met me. And trying to do what small good one can, here and there, to other people is to me by comparison just emptying the sea with an eggcup.

It was a very great shock to learn that I had given you a false impression a year ago. I do not see how it could have happened; but you must remember that I had thought up to that moment that the situation was perfectly clear to you - though I saw afterwards that it was very stupid of me - and perhaps it was the shock at that moment that made me express myself badly. I know that the thought did enter my mind afresh, whether there was anything that could be done, but I saw quickly enough that even if there was some law by which the Church could grant a nullification, the civil law remained the same, and I should be dependent on the willingness to divorce me - and I can't even get her to sign an agreement of informal separation. But even so, I did

not mean to delude you with what even at the moment was the faintest of hopes. But I feel that all this time, perhaps from the start, I have in a sense been acting under false pretenses, and there is nothing I can do about it, nothing. If now you feel, or felt at any time, that you preferred or thought it best that I stopped writing, I would obey you at once.

As I say, I cannot perhaps answer your letter properly until I have brought myself to re-read it. It is a very lovely letter, and I feel very unworthy - such words may sound hackneyed and sanctimonious, but how else can I put it? You have done so much for me - much more even than I have been able to make you know - I used to think foolishly that I was giving something in return - and may have thought (unconsciously) still more foolishly that the relationship was such that - especially considering the exquisite pain it brought - I was almost entitled to the happiness and support - though I have been many times uneasy. I hope I am learning more humility. I hope to love you more and more finely as my love is developed in greater admiration and appreciation of your superiority to myself.

Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

LONDON, W.C.
5.15 PM
26 JAN
1934
D

BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

Cens. 5
Feb. 5

Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT, California,

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

26 January 1934.

Dear Emily,

I had thought that I was going to write to you tonight, and then I remembered that I had promised to go down to the Morleys this evening for the weekend (Frank is leaving for a business visit for New York in a few days). So I must write during the daytime, which is not so satisfactory, because it is apt to be broken by interruptions, and is also against time.

Now I have brought myself to read your letter once more - and I repeat that it is a beautiful letter beautifully expressed. But a greater doubt begins to creep into my mind: whether I ought to take the initiative, for your sake, in suggesting that perhaps it might still be best to break off anything like regular correspondence, at least for a few years? I do not need, I hope, to assure you that for me this would be pure loss and no gain; but I have already on my conscience all I can bear, and in my worst states of depression my past life seems only a nightmare of things ill-done and undone; and I think that if I came to wake up again, I think I should be completely crushed and useless. In short, I am convinced that whatever is best for you is best, in the long run, for me; I might even for forcibleness put it this way: that you would be doing wrong to me in choosing any but what is the best and most wholesome course for you.

Just as I should not want any woman to marry me because she was sorry for me, or because she knew that she could make me happier than any other woman could, or because she wanted to help me, but primarily and fundamentally just because she wanted me for herself and felt that she would be happy and fulfilled with me...

I still feel in the dark; all the mistakes I have made in the past make me more distrustful of my power to see clearly now. But this last week or so I have been down in the depths, and also my affairs seem to have reached a deadlock, and I cannot pierce the future at all. Perhaps my vision will improve.

Good bye, My Dear.

Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

LONDON W.C.1
12 45 PM
7 FEB
1934
D

BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT, California,

U.S.A.

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

24 RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.1

6 February 1934.

Dear Lady Emily.

Somehow the present stage of our correspondence seems to require waiting for a reply before writing again - and I have been in a state of depression and self-dislike not favourable to expansive letter-writing. Nevertheless I formed the habit of chattering to you, and I don't to anyone else; and you are to a more inconvenient degree, for practical purposes, present in my mind when I don't write than when I do, so here I am sitting down again.

I move on Monday next - after a weekend at Cambridge with the Richards's whom you remember - I did not want to stay in South Kensington, but I have not had the time, or the heart, to look further; this next move will still be temporary, though for longer; and the opportunity presented itself. For the present, it will cost me the same price, and I shall get two nicely furnished rooms, instead of one badly furnished one; I shall have my meals served in my room alone, instead of dining among youths; the food can hardly be worse and will probably be better; my two rooms are self-contained; and there is no one in the house except the vicar, the curate, and one lodger whom I need never see. The out is that my bedroom faces the District Railway, so that I shall have to inure myself to the noise. The side of the sitting room gives upon the Cromwell Road.

Either the Club or 24 Russell Square is good for letters - but please use one or the other consistently, in so far as you write at all - I mean so that I may not be anxiously looking at both places; but I ask my personal correspondents to put PERSONAL on the envelope when they write to Russell Square, because I shall soon be having a new secretary, and they can't be expected to know at first what letters they should open and not - I am the only one who has <u>all</u> his personal correspondence addressed there.

I have been busy enough. Week before last seemed to be filled with committees: one day mostly spent in business connected with the amalgamation of the English Church Union with the Anglo-Catholic Congress (did your papers say anything about Lord Halifax's death? a great loss, but expected, as he was 94); another morning and lunch over the Encyclopaedia, in consenting to be one of the assistant editors of which I have let myself in for a bigger job than I like; one afternoon the Shakespeare Association; one a committee of the Old Vic sadlers Wells Society, smart people and Lillian Bayliss, who is a real picture-card and most likeable. And my ordinary committees twice a week. My work at F. & F. tends to grow; we get more and more

manuscripts, and as Frank Morley is in New York until Easter I have more to do. I loathe reading mss. of Novels: they all seem to be about such repulsive people - and the worst is that they stick in my head, like bad dreams, for days afterward. German politics, French memoirs, lives of Charles I etc. I don't mind, or anything with information in it; I am trying to improve the style of a Treatise on MONEY, written in English by a German. The usual interviews with helpless young men. And correspondence with Ezra Pound about his forthcoming works, and he writes at least once a day. Do you ever find yourself in the position of almost intimate friendship with people whom you fundamentally dont like, with the result that they irritate you almost beyond endurance? that is the way I feel towards Pound and Herbert Read. So far as I can formulate the antipathy, it is that they are both quite without religion and quite plebeian - but perhaps such feelings go deeper than one can put into words. It is a strain to have to keep up the pretense of social equality with one's inferiors; I feel happier with servants, and more real equality with them.

I spent a weekend at Kelham. I am fond of the place, although visits are not restful, and I am longing to tell them that I think these growing youths ought to have more green vegetables - the food is more than spartan. Lectured on the afternoon of my arrival, read poetry to them the next evening, and in between chapel services interviewed lads singly, or took walks with them - not a moment to oneself. I intend to keep up a connexion there, however, because I think it is worth while keeping in touch with the priests of the future. They come from the most humble homes, mostly, mines and slums, and that is a type which, when taken young and well educated, we very much need in the Church - the old class distinctions cannot survive there. The "guestmaster" who looked after my room, fetched hot water etc. comes from a London slum, and is a particularly refined and nicely-spoken boy.

The subsequent weekend with the Morleys in Surrey, just before Frank left. I miss him very much, as one of my most trusted friends.

On Friday I have to read Ash Wednesday at St.Martin's-in-the-Fields (next Wednesday is the real Ash Wednesday). I havebegun working on parts of the pageant which do not interest me very much; prose dialogues and speeches by historical characters. Looking up Robert Browne, the first Congregationalist; Pope Urban, Peter the Hermit, and the Crusades etc. Written an article on the Morte D'Arthur for the Spectator. A letter about Fascism to the Church Times (I have said so much about communism that I thought it was time I attacked fascism too - there would be no excuse for violent anti-semitism here, though there might be some cause, if not justification, for it in New York. I play chess once a week with John Hayward and once with Jan Culpin. What a bad actress Mae West (I went to the pictures with the Dobrees) is - no personality, just conventional husky vamping. But the Walt Disney Santa Claus was superb. Occasionally do a few lines for my Nonsense book:

Mr.Pugstyles, the Elegant Pig; the History of Rumpuscat beginning

In the year that King Uzziah died
Rumpuscat felt bad inside

and continuing his illness and recovery down to the Repeal of the Corn Laws etc; final balloon ascent of myself and birds & beasts (Up up up to the Heaviside Layer!) It turns to tend into political satire, unfortunately.

I should have mentioned dining informally with the Woolfs - one other guest, a young Tomlin - and with the Hutchinsons, with Roger Fry whom I had not seen for years, but the same old cocoa Roger, and Mrs.Anrep, wife of a Russian mosaic artist, but Scotch and born and brought up in California. This all sounds very crowded, one rouns O of events, but I am really summing up several weeks. When I write in this way, it is partly for the pleasure of having somebody to whom I can write in this way (thinking much more of the somebody than of the contents of the letter) and partly for avoidance of the things I would be saying if I didn't chatter. But the other way about, I do always want INFORMATION about you and yours!

I have at last written to Miss Galitzi - though I cannot soar to the heights of the figurative language of her correspondence in French. I am ashamed not to have written before. I wonder will she mention it to you.

A young man has done a Bust of me in clay - looking very ugly - I did not know I was so ugly as that - much more forceful than I think I am, and rather like a brutal Roman emperor. I have asked for photographs.

Your humble
Tom

No change in my private affairs, except that the new financial arrangement has been put into force. And that, I suppose, is as far as I can get.

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT California,

U.S.A.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.1

16 February 1934.

Dearest Lady,

Since I last wrote I have pursued my investigation of the cinema, with still discouraging results. The Marx Brothers this time. They left me quite unamused; there are a few pleasant and ingenious surprises in detail; but the humour in general is crude, the construction does not exist, instead of a cutting satire they give the effect only of the low envious snarl of the degraded classes, through the medium of three especially low class Jews. Mae West at least is harmless; but these "comedians" have something sickeningly repulsive about them. There was a very clever French marionette film and a Silly Symphony, which is always good.

Yesterday morning I interviewed one Rupert Doone, who is producing Auden's "Dance of Death" for a private society called the "Group Theatre" on Sunday week. I will send you the Dance of Death - it is not a really first rate piece of work, and much feebler than Auden is capable of, but, with music, it may act well. Doone wants me to do a paraphrase and adaptation of an Aristophanes play (Eirene) for this group to act; I should be very glad to turn my hand to such a task when the pageant business is over, but as he wants to produce it at Cambridge during the Michaelmas term I shall not have the time. It is a pity, because Aristophanes is congenial, and I feel the great advantage of having these jobs to do to order, as theatrical apprenticeship, rather than just sitting down and writing probably unactable verse plays without experience of the stage. Dialogue is the very devil. In the afternoon I had a long discussion with Martin Browne and his wife about details of some of the unwritten pageant scenes, and went on to another meeting of the Sadlers' Wells Committee. The Secretary, one Sir Reginald Rowe, whoever he is, is a most irritating fellow, and had been interviewing the Ministry of Labour to get them to limit the length of time which the Russian Ballet should be allowed to play in London, so that it should not compete with the Vic-Wells ballet! which seems to me unscrupulous. On Wednesday I am to take Christina Morley to see Elizabeth Bergner, a famous German actress (apparently no longer persona grata in Germany). I rather dread that, because Christina's conversational powers are limited; but she has rather a dull time in the country while Frank is away.

So you see I am having a deal of the theatre at present. Have you got to tackle some other big production this term? And has the arthritis been troubling you? I am steadily worried about this overwork.

I must say that I am extremely comfortable in my new abode with the vicar. I have a nicely furnished self-contained flat, except that the bath is outside and I share that with the vicar, the curate and a young lodger whom I never see. I have my meals served in my own room, the food is good, and the servants are well-trained. It is in every way a great improvement over Miss Bevan's, and I feel that I ought to be paying more rent. The District Railway does not really disturb me, and is better than most other kinds of noise, as soon as one gets used to the vibration when a train passes. It is satisfactory also to have a landlord to whom I can explain my circumstances - which are certainly peculiar - frankly. I confess that there is still a great deal of strain, which only time can relax; I still have a hunted feeling in the streets, and at my office; and I have nightmare dreams. But people still tell me how well I look.

And this, I think, is all my news of any interest. I should just like to know that you are well, and whether you are having to undertake any extra work at present.

Your Tom

Oh yes, a very pleasnt and satisfactory weekend at Cambridge with the Richards's.

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT, California,

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TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.1

Tuesday.
20 February 1934.

Dear Lady Emily,

Your letter was handed to me to-day by the Porter as I went in to lunch - that's 14 days, but it may have taken less, as I have not been in since Friday, having been away for the weekend, so it may have come sooner; fourteen days seems long but I wish that I could be with you in a fortnight; I had to put it in my pocket and was not able to read it until 3.30, as I was lunching with the suffragan-bishops of Willesden, Kensington and Stepney (It is confusing lunching with 3 bishops at once, I kept getting them mixed up "I know Kensington very well". "I am not the Bishop of Kensington, that is he opposite; I am the Bishop of Willesden" etc.) so of course my mind was very distracted thinking of my letter. I am distressed that my letters should have caused you anxiety and unhappiness; so in compensation let me tell you that this letter of the 6th made me very happy, as happy as any letter I have ever had from you, if it were possible to compare letters in that way. It was just the letter that I should have prayed that you might write. (You seem to me an exceptionally good letter-writer, if I may say so; I mean you can write exceptionally good letters: not that I have any basis for comparison). In the circumstances, nothing could have made me happier. It was not anything that you said or suggested, that made me doubtful about my continuing to write to you: only a natural wave of uncertainty after considerable self-reproach and abasement. I shall still have twinges of conscience about having begun it, but as for present and future I feel more confident and assured; and perhaps shall expand more and more under your benign influence. It has all become rather bitter at the moments when I believed that I was really giving nothing in return for all this; but so long as you can keep me under the sweet delusion that I give as well as receive, that there is an even balence more or less, I am more happy. But I want to say once again that if at any time you find this kind of relationship a strain or a drain, I wish you to say so, and I shall make no fuss over stopping. Meanwhile, I shall take the advantage of pursuing the only real intimacy of my life, with any person. You may be sure, my dear, that your letter has been kissed a number of times, with especial attention to the signature.

I cannot bear in this letter to descend to such common matters as ordinary diary of little events; I will do that separately for the next mail. And now, my dear Girl, please remember that at your leisure I want you to give some account of yourself, and especially of your health.

I am posting (not by Air Mail) at the same time the three photographs of the Ugly Mug Bust - upon which you are not called upon to comment: but please tell me just how much difference of time the Air Mail makes, betwen them and this letter. I am curious to know. If it's only a day, that is worth it to me.

I am, by the way, extremely comfortable and contented in my new abode c/o the Revd. Eric Cheetham. The food is good, and an excellent well-trained elderly maid looks after me.

Your very devoted humble

Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

BY AIR MAIL FROM NEW YORK.

S. KENSINGTON
8.30PM
24 FEB
1934
S.W.

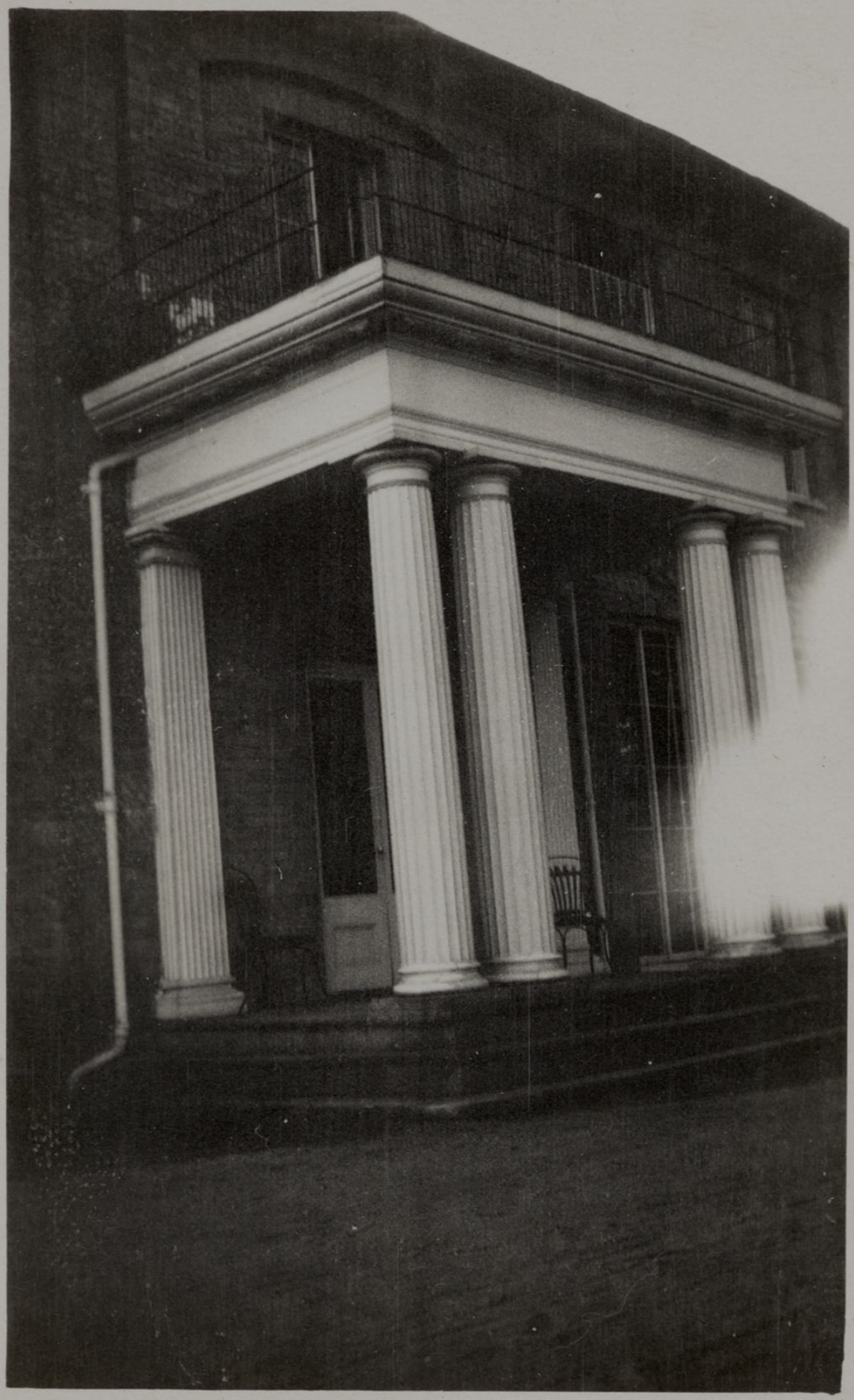
Miss Emily Hale,

Toll Hall,

Scripps College,

CLAREMONT, California,

U.S.A.



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TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

24 RUSSELL SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.1

24 February 1934.

Dearest Lady,

I have happened to get to the theatre much more than usual lately; besides the two films I have been, this week, twice to the theatre. I took Christina to a constant nymph play by Margaret Kennedy, in order to see a German actress who has been much praised: Elisabeth Bergner (she is in films too, so you may have seen her if you ever go to films do you?) (I wonder if living near Los Angeles puts one off films as it does off oranges). I believe she is a good actress; but the play is so bad that it is difficult to tell. She seemed much more affecting in the tragic or tears than in the comic or smiles (this is ordinary melodrama up to date - the difference from old melodrama is in such trifles as that the illegitimate baby is comic matter while it is alive, and only tragedy when it dies). I should say that a German actress is, comparatively to the English, always in movement, very restless; and in the lighter scenes this becomes a sort of archness and gaminerie which becomes very tedious (this is generalising from only one instance, to be sure). On the whole I am inclined to think that a play goes better when all the actors are of the same nationality, except possibly such parts as are cast for a foreigner anyway. Last night Martin Shaw (the musician of our pageant) took me to "Within the Gates" by Sean O'Casey (he is best known by "Juno and the Paycock"). This was very well done indeed (Shaw is a friend of Norman MacDermott the producer)(MacDermott used to run the Everyman Theatre is Hampstead, which was very good in its day). There is one big & difficult part, and rather unpleasant to do, a harlot in Hyde Park, which was very well done by a woman named Marjorie Mars whom I never heard of before. The play is extremely grim (social unrest etc. hunger-marchers), and an extraordinary mixture of maudlin sentiment (there is a dreary poet known only as "Dreamer"! but he redeems himself somewhat by stealing a pound note from the harlot; and a Bishop less like a real Bishop than anything that has ever been seen on the Stage); but the play works up to a climax which is really impressive, though one doesn't know what it is all about, and is not sure that the author knows. There are interesting weaknesses due to the author being an Irishman (I don't know him, but would rather like to) and writing about England and English and as best he can in English. That is probably one reason why the Anglican Bishop is so unreal; if he had been able to make him an Irish Catholic he would probably have done better. Some of the more maudlin "poe-

tic passages, one feels, might pass in the language of Synge and Yeats and Lady Gregory, but the English just don't talk poetry like that without appearing silly. It suffers from a vague symbolism which you suspect that the author has not thought out as he should do. If it has been printed (and I believe it has) I will send you a copy. But it has to be very well produced to be possible at all.

Also I have surrendered to the temptation of Richards to go down to Cambridge for a night (in three weeks time) to see the Marlowe Society do "Antony and Cleopatra" (a favourite of mine). On this occasion the role of Cleopatra will be taken by a female, some girl from Newnham I believe. Tomorrow night I go to "The Dance of Death" with Mary Hutchinson and the McKnight Kauffers. Tonight and most of tomorrow I must spend in trying to work out the pageant scene which is to be enacted by parishioners of St. Martins-in-the-Fields. We want it to be a sort of modern ballet, with communists and fascists and plutocrats and gunmen etc. (to all of whom the Church, represented by eight of Miss Fogerty's young women, will appeal in vain); difficult to write, and then perhaps difficult to get accepted by the Revd. Pat McCormick of that Church, to say nothing of the Bp. of Kensington. Did I tell you I had to give a poetry recital at St.Martin's? "Ash Wednesday" of course. The first and I hope the last time I have ever spoken from a Pulpit. It is very high and steep and no room to move about in, and I was so terrified of falling down the stairs backward that I clung to the rail the whole time, and the sounding board and the microphone bothered me; and I lunched with the Rev. and Mrs. MacCormick and the Misses MacCormick afterwards, and he showed me photographs of the last Christmas pageant they had had at the church o dear with one of the Miss MacCormicks as the Angel Gabriel in the Annunciation.

I do find dialogue difficult to write. I always <u>write</u> too much, and don't leave enough for the actor to <u>do</u>, and give him too much to <u>say</u>. But I hope that practice will improve that; and I ought to learn a lot from seeing the weaknesses in rehearsal.

Did I mention or not a pleasant weekend at the Richards's in Cambridge? and since then a pleasant weekend at the Dobrées' in Norfolk. I had never been in that county before: a part of England one might become very fond of, I think. Bonamy is cast for a country gentleman, and he is fundamentally much more an Army type than a University type (he was a Major in the Regular Army before ever he went up to Cambridge); but he can't afford to keep up a country estate. The photographs enclosed are very unflattering and not very good likenesses (except of me). There is also a quaint little daughter and an elderly father-in-law, Col. Sir Alexander Pechell who lives with them and drives a small car very slowly, explaining the dangers of the road the whole way (he drove me to church, and also an elderly villager who is very lame and who, he explained, has almost no other virtue than that of going to

church regularly).

This is only a chatter letter, and I hope will be received as such. Please let them be understood always as carrying with them etc. etc. etc.

I will write after "The Dance of Death".

Always your

Tom

My letters (like this) may sometimes sound as if I was absorbed in my own doings; but I am really much more interested in yours.