Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

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Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

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Miss Emily Hale,

41. Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

2 March 1931.

Dove always,

(Because I must always have one particular name for you that no one else calls you - I hope no one does). I had a lovely letter on Friday and another to-day; so if I were not happy to-day I never should be. Often I lie awake at night and think of you, and of what you are, and what you are to me, and we are to each other; and can lie still quite happily so. First, about the play. I am delighted by your success. Oh I wish I could have seen you. I should like to know more about Miss Davidson, but I don't believe she "created" the part for you at all. But what that letter gave me particularly was a glimmering of the part that acting has played in your development, and has helped, I am sure, to make you so exceptional a person - though dozens of others could act the same parts, and act them pretty well, and yet get nothing out of it permanent. You must now tell me gradually about some of your past roles; it will be a further help to me. Roxane especially. I should be willing to be Cyrano, if it was that Roxane, but perhaps it wasn't. Acting must have freed you (anyway something has) from many of the restrictions which Boston birth and breeding imposes upon one.

The apricot dress had fur trimming, and was one of the prettiest. Another I was attached to was blue with a red band round the ~~xxxxx~~ waist; and there was a green one with tablier effect skirt which you spilt hot water on at a teaparty, and there was a light flowered one in "The Mollusc". And so on - and have you got a "sailor hat" now with a large brim as designed by Patou?

For your second letter, I shall try to write a separate reply this afternoon. Thank you again and again for all your delicacy and fineness of insight and perception. It is a great relief to have written and to have heard; because I had been coming to feel more and more that my reserves would break down more and more completely with you - I hope not beyond your strength; and do do take great care of yourself in every way.

I have had every possible interruption, and must take the time out of a committee this afternoon to write again. Tomorrow I have a meeting all the morning which I call the Sewing Circle because I don't know what to call it: they meet (canons and such) to discuss the conversion of Europe to Christianity, or something cognate.

I also have had a certain success to-day: I have just had letters, which I shall send you, commending my pamphlet; the one from Lord Halifax is the most important, as he is the head of the Catholic party. I have sent you a little book about myself, not because it is good, but merely because it is about me. You will be able to detect some of the places where Tom Mac Greevy's interpretations are wrong - Marie von Moritz was a lady about the age I am now, I guess, who was living in my pension in Munich, and whom I sometimes took walks with. But her conversation is almost word for word!

Dear dear Emily.

your

Tom

Miss Emily Hale.

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LONDON, W.C.1

2 March 1931.

Dove,

(Second Letter).

Here are a few enclosures. The one from Lord Halifax is particularly gratifying; it is rather illegible, but not for a man 94 years old! He is the father of the Viceroy of India. I once spent a delightful though fatiguing weekend with him; fatiguing, because smoking is not allowed in his house, and I smoked up the chimney in my bedroom like a schoolboy, and one had to get up at 6:30 for Low Mass in his chapel, and on Sunday one was in church practically all day except between lunch and tea, when he strode vigorously about the grounds reciting sentimental and comic ballads of the early Victorian period. It was touching to see the old man in church with his little dog squatting quietly beside him all through the service.

Of course I haven't as much time as I had hoped, but I wanted to write something. As for the enclosures, and other enclosures, I hope my dear Iseult will not think I am merely trying to show off to her; it is rather that I like to bring in my birds, mice and rabbits, like a good dog, to lay at her feet.

And the bigger matter I shall write about during the week. I only hope that this week's mail is not too poor a return to you for all your benefaction to me. I expect a good deal of people, I dare say; and I could not love anyone whom I did not also greatly admire in character; but you always give me more than even I expect!

Yours Tom

2 March 1931.

Dear Rowse,

Many thanks for your letter. I think we are fairly closely in agreement about order and liberty. Of course what I had in mind about Liberty was the "time lag" precisely.

I should be interested to know what you think of the Mosley lot and the last move. I am the more interested because I have put in an approving word in my next Commentary! as I was infuriated by the sneering tome of the Sunday Times. I dare say Mosley <u>is</u> a "carserist", but the point is are his ideas right or wrong? which does not matter to the Sunday Times. If he could attract one or two of the more intelligent younger conservatives (there are <u>very</u> few I know) it would be to his advantage.

My own "toryism" is only intelligible on the understanding that there are no Tories inpolitics at all, and that I dont much like any government since Charles I, and that Disraeli was a Jew film producer only commendable because so much less intolerable than Gladstone.

yours ever,

Miss Emily Hale,

41, Brimmer Street,

BOSTON, (Mass.)

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

4 March 1931.

My dove,

I hope that I am not going to fatigue you overmuch with all my fragments of letters. But, as things are with us, and as they can only be, it seems necessary to say ever so much more than would be necessary if we were together; because words are the only form of expression (only you must not distress me by worrying "if you would be right", you must know in your marrow how perfectly right) whereas in continuous contact so much is expressed without words - even in the little menial tasks I should love to perform for you.

In reply to your question: I do not see that anything can be done to improve matters - from my point of view, nothing except to gain more time and rest and occasional opportunities to go away alone; and that would be a great deal; and from her point of view, nothing except to keep her moderately well and sometimes amused. I do not think that she suffers, most of the time, in the way that an adult does, who looks before and after, and I don't think she is capable of any great happiness. I sincerely wish that there was "some other man" - not cynically, but so to speak catholically from the point of view that the good life must in practice be considered relatively to the capacities of the individual. There is one thing in the past that I take account of; although I can by no means rely upon her own accounts of things, and she can hardly repeat a telephone conversation without getting it a little wrong: but I believe that she was very much in love, in her way, with a man she knew before she knew me. Apparently he was as neurotic as herself, and seems to have behaved abominably; after hanging about for two years and dancing together always, so that during that time all other men were more or less out of it, and having induced her to break an engagement with a better man than himself, they were finally engaged; and he broke it off without giving any reason, after the wedding had been fixed - and the presents had to be returned. I belive, whatever the exact facts may be, that this put the finishing touch to an inferiority complex from years before. I cannot help thinking, however, that possibly she might have become really in love with me if I had been the sort of man who could have been really in love with her - but obviously what she had to give was not what could ever have satisfied me.

You are not the only woman who finds hats off the face trying, or imagines they are: I have hears the same complaint from several! But they are going to have wide floppy brims this summer, aren't they?

But of course you have various garments for various occasions and times of day - but do describe at least one of them.

Yes, I do want you to keep up writing. It is a good thing if one is forced to write regularly, say something in connexion with a periodical, and sometimes even to have to pass writing one knows isnt all it should be; nothing but constant practice can give flexibility and remove the traces of stiffness. I never write anything now except a few pencil notes of headings - the actual composition (even of verse) direct on the typewriter. You ought to have a portable typewriter - not that I want you to write to me on it - I love your handwriting too much - you cross your t's differently now, that is the only change. Now then, what are you starting to write now?

Resignation is only a stage, I think; the better stage is reconciliation, perhaps. It is dear of you to insist that if we met I shouldn't and mustn't be timid with you. And as you say it would be so it would be so. But I am overwhelmed at times by my consciousness of unworthiness: so much pain and struggle, and I have got such a little way; and you hadcouchcacdon started from such a long way ahead of me anyway! No doubt, it is because of my weakness that the discipline and routine of catholicism is necessary for me, though circumstances prevent my practicing and meditating all that I should; but communion twice a week and Sunday High Mass have become the minimum essential to support me. You, my dear, I recognise perfectly well, are naturally in a much higher state of grace (if there are degrees - if not - much more near to a state of grace) than I am, and so I feel that you do not need, for this world or the next, the detailed precise beliefs that I need.

Meanwhile I am glad that you continue to lecture and read, and I am glad you like the Magi and QUESTION: how do you get engagements in England? and can you get more? I often get asked to give lectures or read papers, but very seldom am offered payment for them!

I want to send you another book soon - not, this time, one of my own compositions or for use in your lectures and readings - though I shall send you anything from time to time that I think might be useful in that way - but some book just because I have liked it.

Then, when you have to begin with a naturally frivolous though not bad nature, damaged by mistakes of this sort, and an unformed character further undermined by over twenty years of sleeping ~~drafts~~ Draughts, there can be very little left of something which was not much to begin with. Of course I was in every way the wrong man. Being undeveloped myself, and being a foreigner knowing almost no one, I took it for granted that she knew more about most things than I did. So I was utterly at sea. Gradually, as I came to know and understand English people, I came to see that many things I supposed to be English were merely neurotic, that English people were not nearly so different from myself as I had thought, and that what seemed strange to me seemed strange to them too. And very strangely too, as time went on, the superficial appearance of maturity faded away, and she came to appear more and more just a child - sometimes a very precocious and intelligent child (which she had been when quite small), sometimes a good child and very often a naughty one. And it's only in the good child flashes that I can really like her - though of course like her only as one likes a child. And yet now and then, though rarely, she will talk in quite a mature and very intelligent way, for a few moments, about some impersonal topic. How baffling and mysterious the human soul is! and this type of abnormality seems to me to spring from a deeprooted fear: fear of growing up, fear of the responsibility of being adult and having adult responsibilities. If she had married an older man, an Englishman and a man of the world, who should have been moreover contented with prettiness and dependence and demanded no deep emotion, she might be in a different case now.

And that's all I want to say about the subject now. But indeed on any subject, if I wrote volumes, it would not do; because every subject h s to develop slowly and out of our correspondence, our conversations. Only remember, Emily dear, that you owe it to me not to let me tire you or strain you too much, because your own health and all possible happiness is more than the whole world to me, and without it everything in my world would collapse.

Your Tom.

Miss Emily Hale.

41. Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

12 March 1931.

Dove,

As for fulfilment and unfulfillment, I have thought a good deal too. Perhaps we shall understand that better twenty years hence, lady dear, for there will be twenty and thirty and perhaps more, I hope. I only feel sure of this at the moment, that absolutely the fulfilled is best because one cannot overcome the difference between the complete and the incomplete; but that one can (I mean of course two can) make their unfulfilled better than the fulfilment of others - of most at all events; and thatthis is something to aim at; and I take happiness in finding that our relationship does seem to me to become more intimate and more profound as time goes on, so that there is always now a future of some kind to look forward to. And certainly, there is no man in the world, now, with whom I would change places; even those who are happy, at least happy in their domestic life, seem to me to have less than I have got. Is that arrogance? I think not; it springs from my pride of you, and my conviction that no woman could ever have given me so much, and the best, as you give me even as things are.

I don't seem to know many couples whom I should point to as happy. The Fabers seem to me about as happy as any. They have much the same social origins to begin with. Her father was a Sir John Richards, a law professor at Oxford; Geoffrey was the son of a schoolmaster, though most of his family are wealthy brewers, and he is Bursar of All Souls' College ("the best club in London" I always called it, and a very powerful one - it practically runs The Times and swarms with politicians) so that the Oxford atmosphere is very potent. They have charming children, quite enough money, accept each other's numerous relatives wholly, have similar tastes, dislike society and have a huge gramophone with innumerable records of the best music. I think they are very much attached to each other. And yet, though I am very fond of them, and Geoffrey has been infinitely kind to me, and I don't believe that he has more than one or two old school and college friends with whom he is more intimate than me, their respectability sometimes oppresses me. I should

like to feel that they were a little more passionate! instead of just gentle and good and sound and the backbone of England and with no religious strivings whatever. I should sometimes like to inject a little Bang, or Hasheesh, or whatever the Malays use, into him just to see him run howling down the street with flaming eyes like a Malay amok. I don't think I say this in malice. There is no one I like better.

Tomorrow is Friday, and on Friday I begin to look forward to your letter. This letter is a postscript to ~~Xxxxxx~~ Tuesday's, to tell you that I have more <u>from</u> you and live more <u>in</u> you, all the time. And that seems to me quite wonderful.

Your Tom

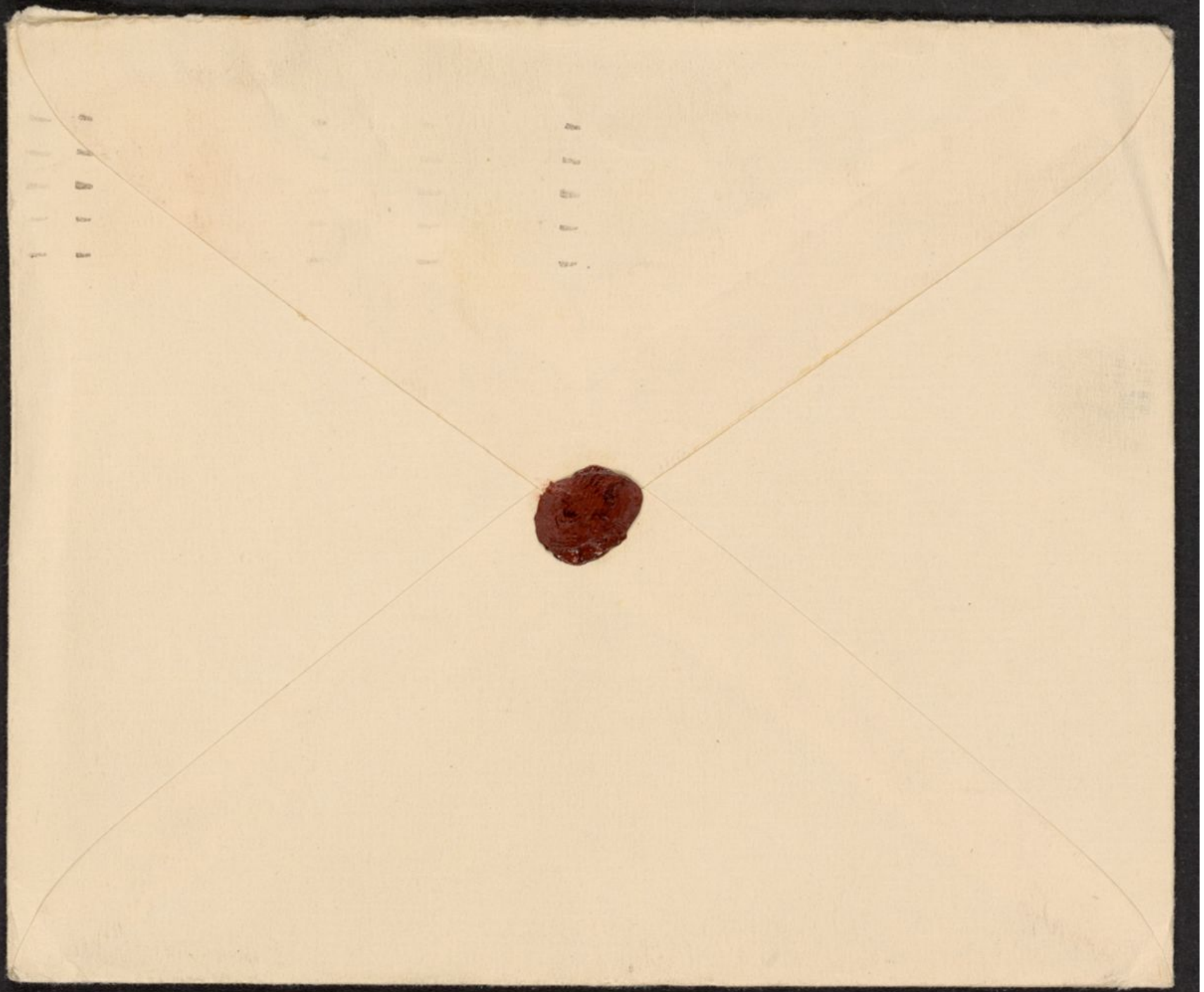
Do you know
Miss Sibyl Bristoe,
of the Lycaeum Club?

Miss Emily Hale.

41. Brimmer Street.

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.



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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

16 March 1931.

Dove, my dear

I am writing this little note this morning because it is Monday, and because I want something from me to come regularly. Had your letter come this morning I should have written at length: but no American letters have come. So I hope for one tomorrow - last week it was Tuesday; but I may have to go to the country for the whole day, or alternatively I may be in bed with a bad sneezing cold in the head - nothing serious; so I may not be able to write again until Wednesday; anyway you may expect a much longer letter a few days after this. You will understand that I always have a feeling of expansion and elation directly upon getting a letter from you, and a corresponding feeling of depression on the morning on which I had hoped for a letter and it had not come; and consequently I cannot write at length

But at all events my weekly question list:

How well do you read French and how much have you read? Do not let modesty distort your answer, but make it as clear as possible; because if you do ever read French, and have time ever, I might now and then want to send you a book or two.

Do you hear much music nowadays? I don't, except now and then by wireless or gramophone. My great delight at present is Beethoven's A Minor Quartet which I have on the gramophone. Do you know it? I like Beethoven so much that I can hardly endure anything else, except some Brahms (the Tristan music is too painful for me to listen to). There is a kind of supernatural gaity, almost an angelic frivolity, about Beethoven's later music, as of a man who had gone through all human suffering and come out into some strange country - which I would give my life to be able to translate into poetry. I have been wanting to do a Coriolan in verse; but alas, verse-thinking is what I have least time of all for.

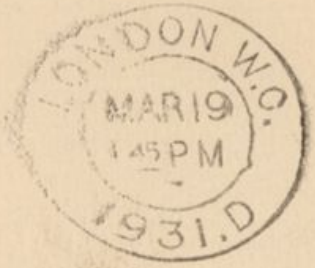
Last: what do you know about scents and perfumes? Are the French ones obtainable in America, or are they prohibited as containing spirits?

I have a busy week ahead. Wednesday night a monthly Criterion meeting - that is an informal gathering of men interested in the paper - at Harold Monro's - I always find it immensely fatiguing - there is a regular membership of six - myself, Herbert Read, Bonamy Dobrée, Frank Flint, Monro and Frank Morley (Frank is a fellow director here whom I like very much indeed, though I never took to his brother Christopher) who discuss business from 6 p.m. over sandwiches and wine, then others who arrive at 8, and guests invited. This time I have asked William Empson and Sir William Rothenstein (did I sent you his portfolio of portrait drawings including myself?). I always feel just a sense of heavy responsibility towards everyone present - with my eye on the clock too - and have to work myself up into a state of mental activity and false gaity which I pay for afterwards. Thursday lunch with Douglas Jerrold, following by a board meeting; then down to Westminster to vote for Duff Cooper at a bye-election, in order to keep out the Rothermere-Beaverbrook candidate; Friday a meeting of the Shakespeare Association Council, following by a paper by my young protegé Wilson Knight (The Wheel of Fire); next Monday a semi-political dinner at the House of Commons. Is this not a depraved life for one who hoped to write poetry? This is my fault of restlessness, I believe.

But what I am really think of, my Bird, is whether I shall see a letter tomorrow: how impatient I shall be if I have to wait until Wednesday to see it; and how desolate if it isnt there by Wednesday.

to Emily, ~~yours~~ her querulous

Tom



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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

19 March 1931.

Emily dear.

After much chafing, I received your letter of the 6th late yesterday afternoon: I can't understand the mails (I never tried to before); the postoffice seems every week to make my letter one day later. So though I have little time this morning, I must write a line or two, in case I have still less time tomorrow. And your letter gives me so much to say in addition to what I have to say anyhow.

I have sent two poses of my photograph from Vandyk. I meant to send all three, but they stupidly made up two of one instead. Tell me if you do not really like either, and I will have the third done. My damned shyness or something prevented me from signing them - perhaps also the feeling that if I couldnt write on them just as wanted to write I preferred not to write at all; and leave the real message so to speak in invisible ink.

One thing I hesitate to ask - but it has been worrying me - so forgive me, dear, if it is intrusive - but do your find your visits to your mother very exhausting? Of course cases differ infinitely, according to the original character of the patient: but, you know, at three different periods I have had to visit constantly a patient in such a sanatorium - and I have never known more complete exhaustion of spirit.

Now, you are not to suppose that I have reached any appreciable or secure degree of spiritual development. How can a man, who has to ration his own whisky, who has to struggle daily with the craving for oblivion, with his own irritable and hysterical temper, with physical and mental exhaustion, and with rebellious desires, have got very far? I have only just sufficient stubbornness of will never to abandon the struggle to make something better, the best, out of what I have.

To be quite candid - for it is better to expose to you my moods from day to day than to try to have one set mood to write to you in -

your letter saddened me, and I felt for a time more rebellious and insurgent against circumstances than usual. It is partly perhaps that the weather is suddenly wholly springlike, and the lilacs are pushing out in Russell and Woburn Squares (bythe way this is W.C.1 not W.1.) and there are times when one has a sudden rush of useless natural vitality, and feels how much there is in the world to enjoy and how incredible that one should be cut off from it, when so many people - though not so many perhaps after all - can take it all freely. I think that one passage in Alice in Wonderland expresses subtly a great deal of human tragedy: do you remember that when she was the right size to get through the door into the garden she was too small to reach the key, and when she got the key she was too big to squeeze through the door, and could only lie flat and peep through?

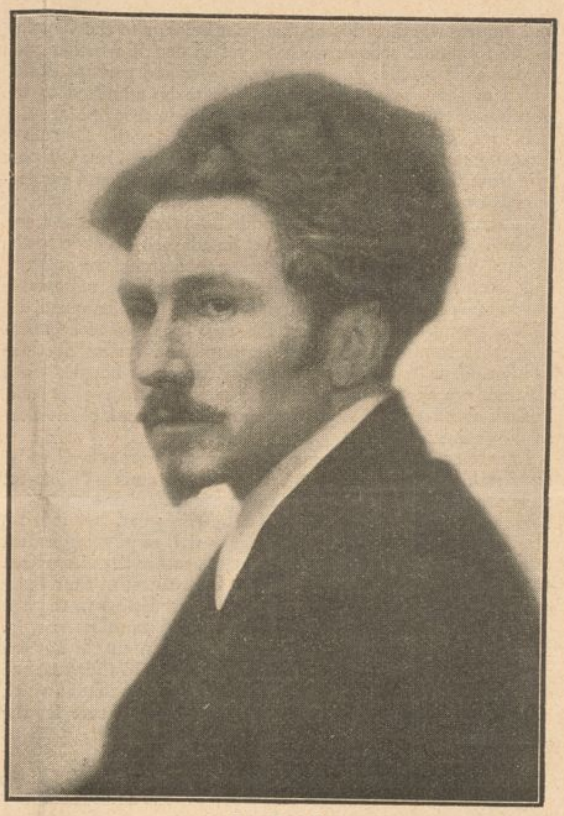
I want next Monday to write in response to the most intimate part of your letter - that about the young girl in Milwaukee. But I am sure that as it was, it was a good and normal experience, good for her and for you, and that you have nothing to regret.

I wonder still whether you can understand quite how much your letters mean to me. And I want you to understand that I am a kind of spiritual cripple; I know I have had much experience denied to most men, but also that I have never had full emotional realisation in this life, and have only looked at the happiness or ecstasy of others through a little window.

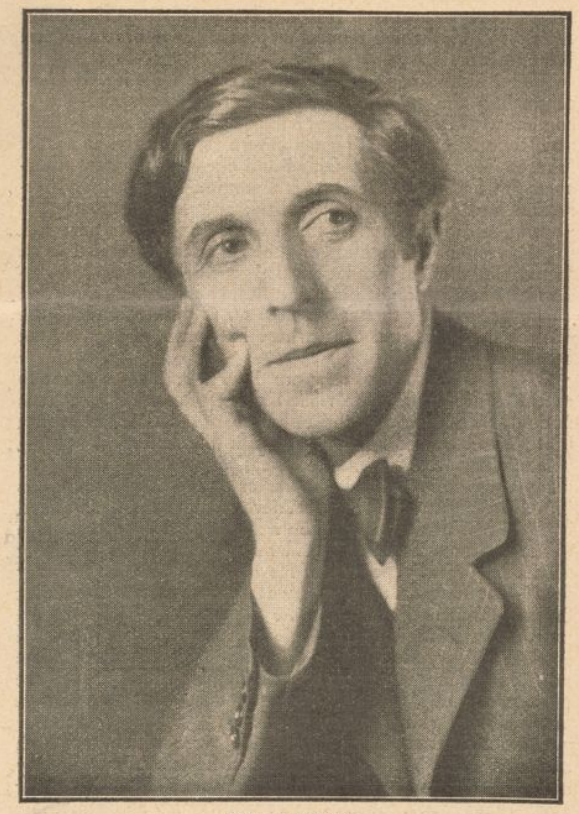
Je t'embrasse les deux mains.

Tom

Edith Sitwell



Ezra Pound



Humbert Wolfe

T. S. Eliot

and inquire whether this or that poet belongs to the Classical or the Romantic school: we have yet to decide whether such schools exist to-day. But we can consider and perhaps decide which of them would be more likely to be admitted to the freedom of the city of Bridges and which to that of Hardy.

If we start, in alphabetical order, with LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE, we shall make an easy beginning. Here is a poet who from the first was a learned student of verse, and a determined experimenter in metre and diction; his 'Sale of St. Thomas' showed a skilful hand in both these directions, and in parts of his 'Emblems of Love' he adapted his style to the Biblical setting of his scenes by using such archaisms as 'hath' and 'doth'. The revival of these forms, and the remarkable innovations in blank verse attempted in an earlier poem did in fact greatly interest Robert Bridges. It is also to be noted that Abercrombie though an accomplished lyrical poet (as he showed in 'Ryton Firs') nevertheless seems happier when his lines are spoken by a dramatic character than when he is himself overheard soliloquising: and this is a mark of the classical impersonality.

LAURENCE BINYON belongs by temperament, as well as by early training, to the clan of Bridges: the 'London Visions' of 1895 proved it. But it was soon made clear that he was no mere borrower or dependent. His lyrical gift is great, but it has a rare individual quality—it is remote as well as piercing, ardent rather than exuberant, and keen-sighted rather than brooding. It ranges not so much over familiar landscapes, as over those of the past and the remoter worlds. Nevertheless in them it finds the present, and perhaps pictures it more unerringly. In 'The Death of Adam' is mirrored, as if in an old Eastern pool, the spiritual tragedy of man's social life. In the great ode called 'The Sirens' the most characteristic part is that in which his Airman takes his place in the history of the race for the first time.

> Careless of death is he, riding in the eagle's ways
> Above the peak and storm, so dear a sting
> Drives him unresting to strive beyond the boundaries
> Of his condition, being so brief a thing,
> Being a creature perishable and passionate,
> To drink the bright wine, danger, and to woo
> Life on the invisible edge of airy precipices,
> A lover, else to his own faith untrue.

EDMUND BLUNDEN is a poet of special interest for our inquiry. There is a quiet certainty about his writing which suggests an unusual origin. The secret is, I think, that he is to a rare degree one with his subject—which is for the best part the English country, its secluded life and intimate beauty, as he and his kin have known it for generations. It is curious to reflect on what he might have written in certain other circumstances: but futile, because then he would have been another man and not his essential self at all. The range of his best poems may widen, but he can hardly excel the charm of what he has already done. He writes with mastery because he is himself mastered—his every observation or description or recollection is an act of self-expression as well. His poetry is, therefore, not only true but personal, and not only personal but universal.

> On the green they watched their sons
> Playing till too dark to see,
> As their fathers watched them once
> As my father once watched me;
> While the bat and beetle flew
> On the warm air webbed with dew.
>
> Unrecorded, unrenowned,
> Men from whom my days begin
> Here I know you by your ground
> But I know you not within—
> All is mist, and there survives
> Not a moment of your lives.
>
> (From 'Forefathers')

WILLIAM H. DAVIES, who has tramped like a troubadour in both hemispheres, is clearly proved a romantic by his natural gift of song. But he would probably be surprised to hear it said: and it is indeed a paradox, for he habitually uses old forms. But he uses them as innocently as if they were fine old instruments of the sixteenth century, which he had picked up in boyhood, and made his own without thinking twice about it. No question of originality can be raised; he has the same power of making melody as the previous owners had; he does not imitate their moods, but succeeds to them as we might all wish to do. In this way he expresses his own feeling by aid of something more imperishable, and that is an achievement after the classical kind. I will quote a verse at random, from 'The Moon'.

> Though there are birds that sing this night
> With thy white beams across their throats,
> Let my deep silence speak for me
> More than for them their sweetest notes:
> Who worships thee till music fails
> Is greater than thy nightingales.

WALTER DE LA MARE'S gift is that of a composer rather than a singer. He is a born maker of rhythms: they owe their newness not to any motive of rebellion or reform, but simply to the poet's expression of his inner life. His great popularity has caused echoes on all sides, but they are broken and transitory—no disciple, no rival, can be said to have imitated him. That would need two impossible coincidences: first a nature like the poet's own, half Northern, half Mediterranean, and all unique: and then the power of transmuting old metres into new and more delicate movements, of which none but himself has the secret. What could any coiner make of patterns like this?

> Her voice, her narrow chin,
> Her grave small lovely head
> Seemed half the meaning
> Of the words she said.

or this:

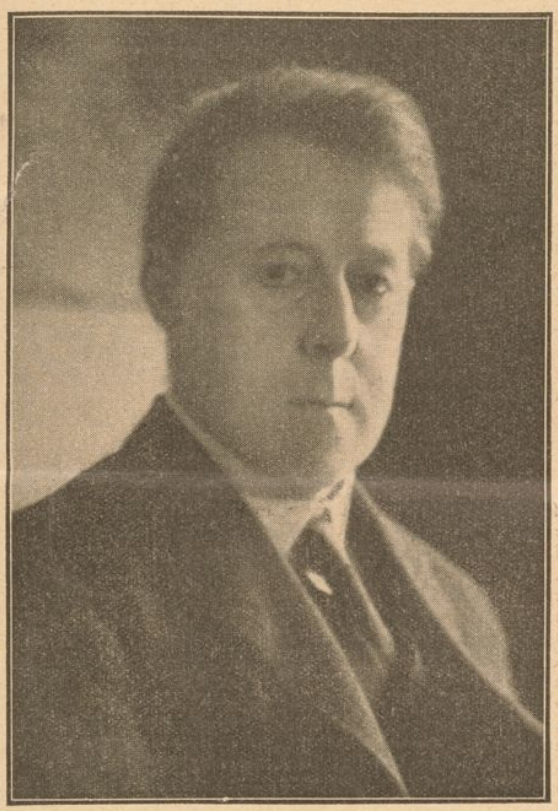
> And the last gold beam across the green world
> Faltered and failed, as he
> Remembered his solitude and the dark night's
> Inhospitality.

FORD MADOX FORD was for some years in advance in the practice of free verse, and he tells us that he practised it, not as a conscious art, but as the expression of an emotion. His emotions were often those of revolt or rejection or renunciation—he felt that the old faith, the old restraints, the old form and diction must go, and that with them must perish, too, the poetry of all the old scenes and sounds. What remains, in his view, is the world of reality, where the ideal is the enjoyment of 'a good time': but for him it is a sad place, unsatisfying, overcrowded and chaotic. He is thus in rebellion against both the past and the present: and he completes this sympathetic paradox by expressing a creed like that of Matthew Arnold in tones which remind us pleasantly of Browning and William Morris.

RALPH HODGSON is a poet of marked originality. It is an originality due to character rather than technique—he is content with instruments and subjects that have already been used by others. But his poems have a rare quality: and what is rarest is his gift of sustained and entrancing lyrical utterance. 'The Song of Honour' is a song of extraordinary perfection and power: it rises swiftly, and in a moment it is pouring out joy incessantly like a well-spring newly unsealed, till the reciter is breathless or the silent reader carried to an incredible pitch of exaltation. In general he lives compassionately in a region of birds and bears and dancing dogs and tamed and shabby tigers: but here on the hilltops under the stars is the place and time where he draws, and gives, the breath of fullest life.

Of JOHN MASEFIELD, now our Laureate, I am content to repeat as near as may be what I wrote four years ago. 'It is not only by his love of ships, of horses, of sport, and of poetry, that Masefield is so typically English: his method in writing, whether narrative, dramatic, lyrical, or reflective shows the ready-and-willing practical character of the Englishman. His impulse seems to be always free, never for a moment hampered by theory or anxiety. He is the workman who will undertake to use any material in any familiar style, and almost invariably succeeds beyond expectation. He has found beauty in many fields—in "Reynard the Fox" by a triple intuition of life almost beyond Chaucer's own—the life of the fox, the life of the pursuers, the life, not of a single homestead, but of the whole English countryside. Add to this that "The Wanderer" is the most convincing sea poem in the language, and "1914" the most profoundly patriotic: so easily does this poet achieve originality by taking no thought for it'.

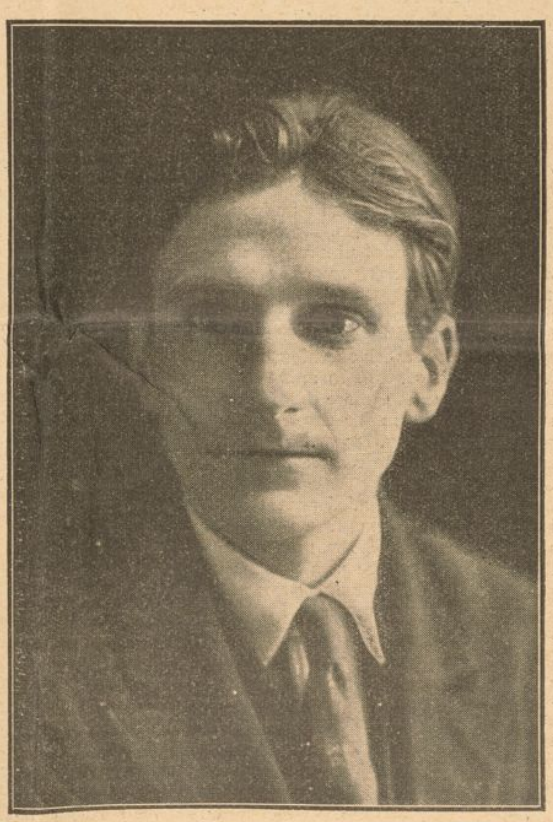
HAROLD MONRO began by writing verse which was both orthodox and beautiful: but like Ford he was exasperated by a feeling that poetry had been for centuries standing too far aloof from Nature. He became a revolutionary and something more—an iconoclast. In his later period, mollified by the



Laurence Binyon

V. Sackville-West

Herbert Read



Edmund Blunden

success of the liberation movement, he has worked in a *genre* of his own, depicting scenes of everyday life with remarkable fidelity and charm. They are creatively and not decoratively poetical: and this is the result not so much of metrical freedom as of a perfectly modulated diction.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE is first and last a classical poet. He has a humour and a pathos of his own, but these are employed under the direction of an imagination recalling that of an Athenian sculptor or an Alexandrian poet. The result is a striking objective quality, comparable to that of an idyll or a frieze. 'The Centaur's Booty' and 'The Rout of the Amazons' are full of human nature, but their first effect is the pleasure of the eye: the emotions are reached through this more subtly and some moments later—which is the way of nature, and the secret of classical art.

EZRA POUND is almost too devoted an artist—he did good service to the cause of free verse: but he is a leader who has never led, because he has always moved too fast for his company. There would seem to be no field of poetical learning which he has not explored and left behind. Those who admired the delicate and plangent rhythms of his earlier days are now regretting this doubly: his voice is no longer familiar in England, and if it were it would tell us that his old poetry is long since buried beneath his own disapproval. In this sense he might echo Bridges—'Go find thy friends if there be one to love thee: Casting thee forth my child I rise above thee'.

JAMES STEPHENS, like Ralph Hodgson, and in the same year (1912), made his reputation by a single poem. In his book 'The Hill of Vision' there were many original and exquisite short poems, but there was also 'A Prelude and a Song' which is not surpassed for perfect and long-drawn rapture even by Hodgson's 'Song of Honour'. Stephens has therefore the lyric gift in the fullest measure, but he has other gifts, too. In 'Songs from the Clay' he shows a kinship with Blake, Emerson and Coleridge, and one of his most imaginative pieces is a glimpse of the Greek world, perceived, after reading two lines by Sappho, through the mist and moonlight of 'twenty hundred years'.

III—The Younger Poets of To-day

THE Laureateship fell vacant, as everyone remembers, on April 21, 1930. It is an appointment in which the reading public is always interested, and the moment of choice is therefore an appropriate one for inquiring into the position of poetry at the time. That position, in the present instance was partly due to the work of Robert Bridges and his contemporary Thomas Hardy, partly to that of the next older poets whom I mentioned at the beginning, and partly to the generation of my own younger contemporaries, upon whom the foregoing notes have been made.

I have further suggested that the old antithesis or antagonism by which English poets have been divided in time past—that of Classical and Romantic, was remarkably paralleled by the difference between the two modern clans, the poetical kindred or adherents of Hardy and of Bridges. This antithesis I propose to examine a little further: and if possible to find in it some indication of the probable future of English Poetry.

We may, I think, assume that the twelve poets whom I have tried to describe have, by this time come to their full height and are not likely to change their poetical condition. It may, therefore, be possible to make some estimate of the relative strength of the two clans and their culture during the last ten years, and then to go on and forecast the future of their successors—the poets of the period after the War, who are with us still.

We must note first, as clearly as we can, the characteristic beliefs, methods, qualities and moods which distinguish the members of the two clans. The Romantic poet will be generally one who seeks first of all a means of self-expression: his verse will be full of frank personal feeling; lyrical therefore, and moved by such urgency that form will either be a matter not too recondite, too carefully accomplished, or it will be the form necessitated by his own peculiar way of thought and feeling, without much consideration for the audience whom he may be disconcerting. In metre and diction he will be constantly demanding more freedom and less tradition. His strength will lie in the combination of egoistic energy and generous sympathy. It was Burns of whose poems it was said that 'with them the reserve and quietism of the eighteenth century broke up'.

The classically minded poet, too, may write lyrically, but his methods will spring from different motives. He will aim at self-expression, but he will limit that expression by binding himself to the service of a power more universal and more permanent than his own. By this adherence he will be sacrificing neither freedom nor satisfaction; he will be helped, not hindered, by the tradition and the discipline of form, and perhaps rewarded by the acceptance of his own values, which would be more to him than the honouring of his own performance.

These are types, not actual persons, that I have been trying to describe: and there is no question of merit involved. Poets do not even belong altogether to one type or the other: but they may be more easily grouped by means of these marks, if we wish to gather an impression of the poetical trend of to-day and to-morrow.

The twelve names before us may, perhaps, be sorted as follows. In the Classical City, Binyon, Moore, Abercrombie and Pound would all, I think, beyond question be allowed houses of their own—though Pound would have long ago sold his for a new song. Then there are six who would be welcomed as guests from time to time: they were born in the other territory, but have a sympathetic knowledge of the Classical customs, politics and tongue: these are Masefield, Blunden, Davies, de la Mare, Hodgson and Stephens. Lastly, there are two with revolutionary records, Monro and Ford: they, too, would be gladly received, but with a hope that they would not spend too much of their time on propaganda for freedom in what is now a free country.

And now we must leave them and go on to consider those by whom to-day is claimed as all their own.

ROY CAMPBELL is determined to flame in the forehead of the morning sky. He came to us from South Africa, with a message which, though strongly personal, was of wide import—a denunciation of the weariness and decadence of this age-worn world of ours, and a proclamation of the renewed vitality and future glory of the race. In his gigantesque allegory he pictures humanity under the figure of Noah in his crowded Ark, drawn by a primeval monster—the Flaming Terrapin—which represents Life, the force that created all things and alone can animate them. The Ark is finally beached on the shore of a New World, her company disembarks as a torrent of joyful energy. Old Noah from the top of Ararat foresees the future, and 'Smiles on the proud irreverence of Man'—the mortal whose lineage is to be for ever 'the ancient hunter—the dreamer that remains'. Of this truly flamboyant and forcible allegory we may perhaps say that the concluding prophecy will pass, as other prophecies have passed, but the poet will survive, like Noah, in his succeeding race. The virile energies of our kin overseas will be poured out more and more in poetic form: and some of it may prove to be of the classic quality. Here we have received the challenge of an undoubted romantic, living by rebellion.

T. S. ELIOT is one of the few poets of England who have written free verse with success. It is a success in which not many will be able to follow him, for it results from a wide knowledge of great poetry, united with subtle analysis, ironic humour, and an unusual sense of rhythm. In 'The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock' and 'The Portrait of a Lady' these powers are used with admirable effect: in 'The Waste Land' they enable him to paint the desolate scene, or to chant the hopeless dirge, of the modern world as he conceives it. His method is a scientific one: it lies in forming new combinations of the old feelings and phrases of the poets. The drawback of it is that in this process the modern poet's immense learning supplies him with an abundance of recondite allusions, not likely to be equally familiar to the reader. It is therefore necessary to append to some of the more esoteric poems whole pages of references and explanatory notes. This is destructive of the reader's confidence and pleasure. It is communication, but hardly poetical communication.

PETER QUENNELL is a poet of whom it is difficult to form a judgment—he has published so little, and it is of so marked

Miss Emily Hale.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

24 March 1931.

My dear Lady.

I am almost dreading tomorrow morning, lest I come in and find no letter - my last one was on last Wednesday, so that I look for one - but what if there is none?

I think that the experience you told me of was perfectly good, normal and right for both you and the girl. Similar experiences happen to thousands, according to their degree of sensibility and refinement; nothing is more natural than for a sensitive young person to feel this attraction and admiration for an elder of their own sex, and the influence can be very great for good, of the right person. And innumerable teachers, priests, and people in such positions have had the same experience. I once, when I was a schoolmaster at Highgate, had something of that feeling towards one of my boys, but it was not reciprocated, and I do not think he was even aware of me. The only danger in such a relationship seems to me to be this: In the more intimate relation of a man and a woman there is a kind of equality which comes from reciprocity of power. Each one has both the sense of dominating and the sense of being dominated - at least in a right adaptation of two congenial persons, - and is both dominant and submissive. But in the other relationship, with the same sex and considerable difference of age, the power is all on one side - or mostly. I am sure that yours was exerted all for good - I am only pointing out that the relationship is a right one though it can be abused. Years ago, when I was in Paris in 1910 -11, I was very much under the influence of an Englishman much older than myself, named Matthew Prichard, a strange intense fanatical fellow, who did at that time very much modify my life, and influenced deeply my views on art and philosophy. In some respects, it was very much to the good, and I owe him a great debt. In others it was not, and I felt simultaneously a fascination and an aversion which was a great mental strain and precipitated at one moment a kind of mystical crisis which was awful. I felt afterwards that the man had an abnormal love of power over younger men which sprang from some sexual distortion (his life however was most ascetic) or possibly from some early and crushing blow to his pride. Certainly, he only consorted with very young men, which was a bad sign, and in the course of his career many had been his temporary disciples. He

is living in London now, and from time to time I come across young men who are seeing him; but I have not seen him for twenty years. (In a poem called Gerontion I referred to him as Mr.Silvero).

Even this however is quite separated from real sexual xxxxxxxx inversion. Some twelve years ago or more, I struck up a friendship with Lytton Strachey, which terminated one evening when he went down on his knees and kissed me - I was completely taken aback, and in such a shock my first impulse was to laugh, for xxx there was something farcical about it; and then I felt terribly ashamed for him - and sometimes it is more painful to feel ashamed for another person than for oneself. I am afraid he was really hurt; he is a sensitive person, and after all he can't help being like that, and I do like him otherwise, and like all his family very much. We have never met again except in company.

Perhaps it is inexcusable for me to be led so far away from the point. The excuse was that you said xxx you sometimes felt troubled in retrospect; and I wanted to put the whole matter in perspective and show you that you had nothing at which to be troubled or anything but glad. The one torment of conscience which one never gets rid of is the thought of the harm one has done to others; and you have never done any harm; and it is bad for you to worry needlessly about what was really good.

As for my belief in you - well, dear, that is one thing you can be sure is permanent and unshakeable. And I myself live on my belief in you, and always have done and always shall. It is the one fixed point in this world for me. My pride in you is my only substantial pride. I believe I appreciate more keenly what I have now, than I ever should without the experience of loneliness and the experience of the world that I have had. You and I know what solitude is, better than most people.

My dinner at the House of Commons was rather tiring. It was an assemblage of people got together to elaborate a political and social anti-Fabian programme particularly for ventilation in the English Review. Mostly politicians present - I had an ingenuous young M.P. named Lord Lymington, and a rather dreary Marquess of Hartington, to talk to. Interminable speeches of course, leading nowhere - Lord Lloyd spoke to the point, he is one of the ablest of the conservatives; but Jack Squire got up and yarned on and on the utterest balderdash. I left as soon as he had finished, so escaped having to say anything myself. I have no patience with people who find it easier to speak than to stop speaking. I doubt if there is enough brains in the lot to accomplish anything.

To-day I lunch with Aldous Huxley - rather a charming letter the enclosed is I think - tomorrow with Clive Bell and the Woolfs - Thursday a confession and lunch after with Canon Underhill. It sounds very social, doesnt it? but is not so gay as it sounds. Next week is Holy Week, the last in Lent, which means daily church, and the terrific Mass of the Pre-sanctified on Good Friday.

I do xxxx hope I may have a letter tomorrow. And what are you writing now, and are you quite well and rested?

Always your

Tom.

I shall write again as soon as I have my letter.

What a prosy letter! I'll do better next time.

COLNE VALLEY

PARCHMENT

Dalmeny Court
Duke Street
S.W.1.

Thursday.

My dear Tom,

I waited to write & thank you for your pamphlet till I was back again in England, when a letter might be followed up by a conversation.

I liked the pamphlet

ous in the main, (in
spite of the <u>banderillos</u>
I'm plant in my
mmp,) & agree with
what I'm say on the
need for an asceticism
based on some inward
consent to denial, some
acceptance of a hierarchy
of values. You say
that the only possible
hierarchy is the Christian.
It may be; but I don't
feel convinced. The
world was civilized
— & with a civilization
in many respects superior
to mediaval & modern
civilization — for at
least 4000 years

before the rise of Christianity & probably for much longer. This being so, I don't ~~see~~ why the "experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality" should necessarily fail. It was done before; so it can presumably be done again. True, it seems improbable that it can be done on the current Wells-Ford lines: but there are other lines. Whether in fact the other lines (including the Christian line) are followable, I don't know. Perhaps the modern circumstances are inevitably imposing Wells & Ford. Perhaps

we're doomed to Utopia —
for the real horror of Utopia
is that it <u>can</u> be realized.
Machines & the new psycho-
logical & physiological
Techniques (of Pavlov, of
Watson etc) make it
possible. A most horrible
thought. I am at present
trying to write ~~about~~ of
the horror in a fable
about the Future — the
realized Utopia & a
rising against it (natur-
ally suppressed in the
end: it wd have no
chance).
I am harried at the
moment by the rehearsals
of a comedy of mine

3/

which is shortly to be
produced: but I hope
none the less to see
you. Wd there be
a chance of getting you
to lunch or Monday,
say, or Tuesday next?
Either at the Athenaeum
or, if that were too
far from Russell Sq,
somewhere in the shade
of the British Museum.
I do hope so; & also
that you are well &
Vivienne too. Please
give her my love.

Yours
Always H

Miss Emily Hale.

41. Brimmer Street,

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

30 March 1931.

My Dove,

this can be only a tiny note this morning - I resent being so cramped for time, for I have so much to say - tomorrow or Wednesday I will write again. I am exasperated by the mails, your dear letter of the 14th was 13 days reaching me - I bit my thumbs all the week, and it finally came just as I was leaving on Friday. My heart skipped like a lamb when I saw two envelopes, but when I saw the same datemark on both the horrid truth wassuspected - that you were conscientiously returning me the letters which I no longer prize - for having shown them to you, what more could I want of them? I had rather, if You please, that You kept or destroyed such letters - unless I say at the time that I need them back.) Two things in your lovely letter might have disturbed me - if You feel "a stranger", then where pray am I to place everyone else I know, except beyond the horizon? But I did not take you seriously over that. The other, ending with the possibility of your changing Your mind - isn't that a very teasing way to end a letter - especially as, on account of the Easter holidays, I don't expect to see another till Tuesday. With every letter, I have a renewed sense of glory in You, and to be able to feel that I am of importance to you is far more to me, for self-confidence and a feeling of being justified in existing at all, than any results of the most daemonic activity in the public world. And I am learning from you all the time in many ways, probably more than I can myself perceive at the moment - for I have never known any woman intimately,* and it has all been exploration of a new and strange beautiful world.

* and I am very glad I have! but You.

I had thought I had said all I had to say about fulfillment - but I often find that you put things better than I do, and too that you are in some ways wiser and stronger than I - indeed in many ways. You are quite right - I only make the reserve that if circumstances were quite otherwise I should not be content to remain thousands of miles away from you; but as things are, I am wonderfully and unmeritedly blessed. So now, my dear Bird, news, such as it is, can wait till tomorrow or next day - I long for your photograph, though pain will come with it too - and if I could indulge myself, I should spend half of every day writing to You.

Your humble Tom.

Miss Emily Hale.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

31 March 1931.

Emily, my dear,

(Because I did not put your Name at all into my last letter, and it is so beautiful to me as to be almost an incantation).

What have I to add first to what I wrote yesterday? Oh, first, that I agree with you wholly about the qualification of "abnormal", so far as my life and health is concerned, and that your reassurance about yourself is always of great help to me. One "qualification" however - my friends say that I am always qualifying and "precising" everything - (there is a wholly false story about me - that a lady said to me at a party "Oh Mr.Eliot, dont't you think that D.H. Lawrence's new book is ~~xxx~~ so amusing?" and that after pondering heavily for several moments I replied "But what precisely do you mean by so?" - the story isn't true, but I wish it was) - there is only one qualification - in the way the World would think, it is not abnormal - but a fulfillment - but there is a more superficial, not physical abnormality - which I must state in order to reduce it to its proper proportions: that when anyone feels as I do he wants to tell everyone publicly, and idolise openly, and impress upon everyone how honoured and distinguished he is to love such an exceptional object - and he may not. That is the great abnormality in my mind: that what is, and is what I am proudest of, what I can tell my confessor in good conscience, and receive approval of, I must keep from the world - until long after I have started the longest journey.

Well, I am writing to you at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, because I have been lunching at 12.30 with my friend William Force Stead, Fellow and Chaplain of Worcester College, an American and a Virginian - of whom I shal tell you more at another time - he baptised me and arranged my confirmation by the Bishop of Oxford in 1927 - who was in a tearing hurry as he was catching the train to go out to Hyères to stay with our good Papist friend Gordon George, whom you met, and of whom also I shall tell you more. Stead's wife has just become a Papist (she is an American from Washington) and wants to annul their marriage and become a Nun: it is doubtful as they have a small boy to whom he is much attached, but whom she doesn't like.

I missed Aldous Huxley on Tuesday by mistake - but he ran in to see us on Saturday afternoon - after paying his condolences to Mrs. Arnold Bennett - I am sorry too that Bennett is dead - he was very kind to me on two or three occasions, though I never found him congenial - he was certainly vulgar - when one dined with him there were people like Michael Arlen and Edward Knoblock, and too much champagne, and too big cigars - but he was a kind man - I think that he rather exploited his commonness as a social asset to make him an eccentricity. Aldous is an uncommonly bad writer, I think, with a pernicious ragbag of ideas, but as a person of great charm and sensitiveness - quite different from his common brother Julian - and his Belgian wife Maria is very good and sensible. I lunched with Clive Bell on Wednesday, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf were there: I always feel very happy with those three people, though on some vital matters of principle we are poles apart. I think the Stephens (Virginia was a daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, and her sister Vanessa is Mrs. Bell) and the Stracheys are mutatis mutandis more like our Cambridge (Mass.) society than anyone I know here - the hereditary literary background, the sense of humour and sensitiveness and refinement, the number of things that don't have to be said, the things to be taken for granted - I think you would like these people. They seem much more civilised in their way than the Bentincks and the Cecils and such great political notables. It is the inheritance of all the George Eliot, Ruskin, Herbert Spencer world. They are snobs in their own way - for instance, the first time I met Virginia I remarked, in a simple effort to place myself in response to enquiries - that I was a cousin of Charles Eliot Norton - this humble fact to my astonishment seemed to effect a reorientation - because it happened that Norton was a friend of her father's - but don't people in Boston and Cambridge behave in just the same way when they learn that a nobody is a cousin of a somebody? Clive comes from a different origin - his father was a country squire in Wiltshire, and he was brought up to horses and hounds - but he has assimilated himself successfully to the intellectual world, at the same time retaining a charming John Bullishness. -- Now I see that my book committee is at hand, and I must stop. This letter is only a bundle of notes from

Your Tom

Apart from accents.
not put in - or can
discover all the errors of
Fernandez - I have not spoken
it for so long that I can
it for no longer write it.

31 mars 1931.

Madame Helene Megret,

42 rue St. Patrice,

Rouen, Seine Inf.

Madame,

Il m'a fallu beaucoup de temps pour arriver a consacrer a votre article interessant et si flatteur l'attention qu'il merite, et j'espere que vous m'excuserez le retard inevitable. Je vous rends l'article sous ce meme pli.

Naturellement, un auteur trouve toujours difficile de faire la critique de ses critiques; mais je ne puis entrevoir dans ce que vous avez ecrit que tres peu qui ne soit pas juste et conforme a ma pensee. Il est ~~certain que~~ l'abime que vous creusez entre l'idee de Babbitt et les humanistes americains et l'idee de Fernandez; et il est certain que mes objections contre celle-la portent peu contre Fernandez. J'ai lu attentivement les deux livres de Fernandez, et j'ai parfois discute avec lui des questions de detail; mais jusqu'ici, je n'ai jamais tente de faire face a son position integrale. C'est plutot ceci, que je trouve (ai-je tort?) que Fernandez n'a pas encore donne que des ebauches d'un systeme qui ne manquera pas, a la longue, d'etre parmi les plus vivants; par consequent, le temps n'est pas venu pour le soumettre a une etude definitive - definitive, je veux dire, pour moi.

Neanmoins, toutes reserves faites, je ne veux pas etre trop prudent, et je ne veux pas dissimuler ma certitude que nos idees seront enfin opposees. Je n'y vois pas encore clair, mais je crois que ~~Fernandez~~ la critique de la pensee de Fernandez y trouveront au fond un bel "acte de foi", quoique bien cache. Mais j'affirme toutefois une grande admiration pour cette pensee qui

des plus hardies et des plus originales de notre age.

Je vous prie d'accepter, chere madame, avec ma reconnaissance, l'expression de mes salutations tres distingues.

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LONDON, W.C.1

I have just sent two books - one the von Hügel I spoke of - and remember that every mark I made in it was for myself and with no expectation of your seeing it - and a play by my friend Cocteau - I think Cocteau has a real talent for the theatre, though a sham talent for everything else - you probably can read a play and see how it would go on the stage - I can't - but I saw the play when it was produced in Paris and liked it very much.