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.

Wm. April 14th

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

2 April 1931.
Maundy Thursday.

Dear Emily

Your letter of the 21st arrived yesterday, and as I shall have no opportunity to asnwer until next Tuesday, on account of the office being closed for Easter holidays, I have the excuse to write a third letter this week - but if I write too often to please you, you will tell me, I hope. I have a difficulty often, unless your references are very specific, in remembering just which letter you are answering - for I have written several letters since the 10th March, and in this case I do not remember at all which letter it was. I should like to know what I said that seemed to you "quieter and more normal", because, as it happens, I have been feeling neither quiet nor normal the last few days. It is partly the intensity of the season, which impels one to fresh self-examination; and finding that, whatever progress I may have made, I am never really so advanced as in my optimistic moods I persuade myself I am. It is like a periodic rending of body and soul, which in between grow together again while one is not noticing. My life is a kind of struggle to prepare for death, or to try to die and be reborn while still in this life, and my tenacity to this life is still so passionate and stubborn, that at moments I can merely hold on desperately with both hands sweating like one undergoing a major operation without an anaesthetic. I hope this will not distress you - I know my way, if I can ~~xxxxxxx~~ follow it, and I have no right to expect the cup to pass from me.

So I dare say that it is best that I should not see you again for an indefinite time - but I wonder shall I ever see you again? Of course I had been hoping that you might come - and at the same time frightened of myself, - and it is a blow, I admit. Perhaps in two or three years I shall have gone through the transit and be more in command of myself. Anyway, it is something that you will be probably in Boston next winter, and not still further away.

I will write again next week; humbly,

Tom.

Tell me more detail about your reading & study.

Miss Emily Hale.

41. Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

Aug 17th (Thursday)

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

7 April 1931.

Emily -

I have been thoroughly tormented, over this long weekend, by the letter I wrote you on Thursday. I knew I should not have another opportunity to answer yours till to-day, so I wrote at once; and if I write to you at all I can only write in the mood in which I am at the moment - if I had waited two or three days it would have been a different letter. I am ashamed of myself, and can only apologise; I ought not to write so of my own pains to the One who has alone done so much to alleviate them and bring me a strange happiness. Will you forgive me? I am again in a calmer and happier mood since Easter. And please take account of this: four or five years ago I could not have written such a letter, though I was far more unhappy, and in a state of dark dry death; now, what I complain of, when I complain, is far less my circumstances than myself - my increasing consciousness, and my awareness of the standards I set for myself and which you set (by example) for me. I am certain to have such agonies from time to time, as a condition (for me) of life.

I am always happy to have you tell me about your friends, who interest me very much. I can well understand that you must have been very lonely when you went west, and again lonely when you returned. In London I have never formed any very intimate friendships - circumstances have perhaps made me feel more isolated than I need have been - partly because there are so many different worlds and types here - and at least they all allow each other to exist without persecution - I think that it is the least snobbish society, in a way, in the world. On the whole, I am happier with Virginia and Leonard Woolf (the latter by the way, is a Jew! of the type you describe) than with anyone; but then I know all sorts of people whom they don't, and they know sorts that I don't - and that is usually the way - one touches some people closely on one side, and some on another. Perhaps it is again merely circumstance, but I get very little from women. I know hardly any whom I really trust - I suppose I trust Virginia - I think she has always been perfectly loyal - my diffidence - no, not diffidence, but a slight barrier is that I do not in my heart admire her work quite so much as I am sure she likes it (naturally) to be admired; and then, as she is

very delicate, and was once raving mad for a time, there is a whole side of things which I cannot discuss with her (though on this side I have at times found Leonard helpful).

As you suggest, I belive my friendship with Hayward is increased by experience, at least analogous, which neither of us can share with most people. He is a hopeless cripple - if he falls down it takes him ages to get up again, and he doesn't like to be helped - very ugly, and obviously by his physique condemned to a life of celibacy and pain. Some say that he "might bite", but I don't think that he would bite me, and if he did I don't think I should be offended. I wish that he had some religious faith and practice to support him.

Stephen Spender is a very different type - tall and handsome and surely attractive to everybody, blue eyes and curly blond hair - who came down from Oxford a year ago with a great undergraduate reputation as a poet - a small ~~xxixxxixxxxx~~ private income, and every qualification for being a great success in any society. He has chosen to go to live indefinitely alone in Hamburg, and doesn't want to publish a book of verse for a long time - in which reticence I try to encourage him. I like him more, personally, than any young poet I have known.

I think it would be a very good thing if you could get more engagements outside of New England, and get about the country more next winter, though I confess selfishly (but this time shamelessly) that it is vexing not to know at any moment exactly where you are, and to wonder whether I shall be able to depend upon my Letter once a week. I weigh every word and analyse every sentence, as if it were a difficult Greek text! to try to catch every shade of meaning and mood, and to try to find jealously how you are thinking of me - I am an egotist, and I dare say a goosy one.

By the way, there is "Jacob's Room" a novel, and "A Room of One's Own" - does Mrs.Davidson mean either of these? Virginia is away at present, and besides I dont like to risk to her any exposure of ignorance - I can have these or any sent to you. I hope for another Letter during this week and will in that event write again before the week is out.

Ton ami le plus dévoué

Tom.

Long essay - very good

Worcester College, Oxford.

17th Feb 1931

Dear Eliot

A wandering Irish artist has been here & drawn this sketch of me — I've had a few photos made — please accept this one — It makes me look about as ugly as I am but at least as though I were in dead earnest about a few things — as indeed I am.

Won't you come down and spend a night with us? I won't bother you to write a paper or even to meet people.

How are things going with you?

I am intensely melancholy about everything — no real faith, (just religious desire) — no real purpose — no strength of character.

"Awake thou that sleepest" but I am asleep and troubled with dreams.

Affectionately WJS

Scotts Arms

Yately

Hants

My dear Tom,

Thank you, very much, for sending me "Thoughts after Lambeth". I have read it, and will read it again with still greater care than I may write something about it for The Adelphi. I don't know how you make out that my 'religion' is 'respectable' — except as a debating point. I shd. have thought rather that just in so far as I am, in my own idea, a religious or more truly a Christian person, I am quite disrespectable. Respectability today (in your sense) centres in the Huxley Brothers — an admirable touch — & B. Russell — I am in the unfortunate position, really I suppose the fortunate one, of being spewed out by both the new respectability & the old one.

I must think you read Blake. It's a pity.

for he has a very fine, tho' very strange, vocabulary for distinguishing such phenomena as you & me & the rest. You have relapsed into the Covering Cherub. However — I can't expound the mutations of Urizen.

But, seriously, Tom as between you & me I don't think you ought to be tempted into scoring debating points. I suppose that when one is as militant as you are it's terribly hard to resist — as Pascal found it irresistible when he wrote the Provinciales — none the less, I do feel that when you do it, you betray the God in whom you believe. You tithe the mint & cummin & neglect the weightier matters of the Law.

But it's all very queer. Sometimes I feel that I have a more intimate sense of your God, in whom alas I can't believe with all my heart & all my mind & all my soul, than you have yourself: as though some central intuition, out of which the Christian faith has grown, had been given to me & withheld from you.

But all this writing — it takes me now hours & hours even to write a letter such as this — is a weariness.

Will you come down and spend a night? My wife has been taken away: so that there is room. And I feel it is the moment when you & I should speak to one another.

John.

(Christopher Sherry.)

THEOLOGY

A Monthly Journal of Historic Christianity

Edited by the Dean of Winchester, The Deanery, Winchester, to whom all editorial matters should be addressed.

Vol. XXII APRIL, 1931 No. 130

EDITORIAL

Among the various criticisms and considerations called forth by the Lambeth Conference of last year, few in our judgment are more deserving of study than Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Thoughts after Lambeth*.* The pamphlet has all the independence of judgment and the crispness of comment to which we are accustomed in the Editor of the *Criterion*; and these are combined with an understanding of the *ethos* of Anglicanism which makes it an important document of the Liberal Catholic position. Nowhere is this more apparent than in what Mr. Eliot has to say about Lambeth's handling of the moral issues before the Conference. As regards the substance of their findings on the question of Birth Control, he considers that "it was a courageous facing of facts of life; and was the only way of dealing with the question possible within the Anglican organization." But he goes on to make the important criticism that far too little emphasis was laid on the place of "spiritual advice" in the life of the ordinary Christian.

> I do not suggest (he says) that the full Sacrament of Confession and Penance shall be imposed upon every part of the Church; but the Church ought to be able to enjoin upon all its communicants that they should take spiritual advice upon specified problems of life; and both clergy and parishioners should recognize the full seriousness and responsibility of such consultation. . . . But here, if anywhere, is definitely a matter upon which the individual conscience is no reliable guide; spiritual guidance should be imperative; and it should be clearly placed above medical advice. . . . In short, a general principle of the greatest importance, exceeding the application to this particular issue alone, might have been laid down; and its enunciation was evaded.

Mr. Eliot has mentioned a point of which the omission can still be made good; and we think that the Committee appointed at the last session of the Lower House of the Convocation of

* *Criterion Miscellany*, No. 30. Faber and Faber. 1s. net.

Canterbury might well address itself in the main to this task. There are, of course, great difficulties. It is not simply that, as Mr. Eliot observes, there are differences of opinion among moralists as among doctors. What complicates things in the case of "spiritual advice" is that some confessors are not content to advise a rigorist line of conduct simply as what they themselves advise (as is the case with medical advice), but are prepared to insist on their advice as the sole teaching of "the Church," and to refuse absolution unless it is accepted. That is a position with which it seems to us impossible for any who hold the liberal view to come to terms. The issue of the right to refuse absolution on these *a priori* grounds represents in fact a prior question which must be settled before any approach to agreement among the clergy becomes possible. We believe, as we said in the December number of this journal, that an Anglican priest is not now entitled (even if he ever was) to refuse absolution on this ground; and we hope that all Liberal Catholics will be resolute on this point.

Few events in recent history have been more dramatic or more pregnant with hope for the future than the agreement to which Lord Irwin won the assent of Mr. Gandhi and his followers in the Indian Congress movement. It has been a triumph of Christian faith and character imposing itself on public policy and shaping it to the ends of peace, liberty, and good-will. Our history in India has been rich in examples of administrators who ruled "less by kingly power than love": but assuredly the name of none will shine with greater lustre than that of the Viceroy who now lays down the burdens of his office.

52 Tavistock Square wc i

Mydear Tom,

What a bore--I went out, casually, last Monday, as I had not heard from you. This week seems rather crowded--that is we shant be alone. But if you could come next Monday, 30th, I think, we shall be by ourselves. and delighted if Vivienne, who has successfully routed Petter, can come too. I thought I heard Murrys voice, lamenting our deaths, in the Lit Sup. The wish is father to the review. But I've now looked at the book; and cant see a word about you or me to justify him. So let us know about Monday, and I wont go out.

Yours affly

Virginia

Cant spell my pen name

Virginia

Monks House, Rodmell, Lewes.

30th Dec. 1930

My dear Tom,

I think you were sanguine to expect the practically defunct and always lily livered Nation to print your letter. They havent had a bug in their pages since Leonard left. I wish the letter could have pappeared--I should have liked your support. Mrs McLaren seemed to me idiotic. D uckworth apologised, and said that Beaton had told them he had got pemission in every case. Bruce Richmond, after long delays, sent me the enclosed. But by that time, pestered as I was, I had sent my letter to the Nation; and the Times would do no more. But the bug Beaton is sarcely worth squashing, delighted as I should be to have him squashed by your august fingers.

Here we are wind beaten and rain wetted. And I have spent five days in bed with influenza, which is one way of passing the time, and I hope pays that particular debt for another year. We go back next week. Will you ring up and come to tea again?

Your maginicent portrait adorns my wall. Then you say it ought to be quite easy to fire off criticims of your poems! -- when you look like that. I am extremely glad to have it. And Vivienne sent me a charming table cloth, for which I did not thank her, but will you do it for me.

And what am I going to read now--Dante by T.S. Eliot.

His affectionate

V.W

Dorothy Richmond

PENSION FRAMATHE
MOTZSTRASSE 52 (II)
BERLIN WILM.

March 30.

Dear Mr Eliot,

I answer your letter at once because you have suggested my reviewing the Wyndham Lewis book. I would like very much to see the book, but I am afraid that I could put no name to any review of Lewis's work, because I do not wish to renew the friendship or rekindle the enmity of Lewis, and whatever I do say about his book he will take personally. I have only known Lewis a very short time and in that time he chose to behave so badly to me, and so unnecessarily badly, that his behaviour can only be described as grotesque. He first of all asked me to give him the copyright of my early poems for his Enemy No 4, which as far as I can see he never had any intention of publishing, and then spent eight months explaining to me every few weeks that, in the next week he was going to publish them. At the end of that period he broke off all relations with me, and refused to answer any letters. When, after more than a year, I wrote politely asking if I might use my copyright he did not even reply to my letters. I cannot think why he ever met me, or heaped me with his 'favours' as the relationship was entirely begun by him: the only possible explanation is that he wanted copy for his character Pons in the 'apes of God' who has several of my external characteristics, I believe! But I think you will understand why I don't want to have anything more to do with Lewis. I think probably that someone who has studied medicine would be better able to deal with his book. I do really think that. Wyndham

As far as I can see Wyndham Lewis detests everyone, he hates people en masse and by inches. He seems to have detested me more than ~~most~~ he detests most people simply on account of my height: there is about a foot more of me to detest than of the average person. As a novelist he suffers because he never gets beyond hatred. As a philosopher I cannot judge him, but, from what I hear, he seems to be suffering from lack of Education in the elements.

What I would like to see better than Lewis's book, though I have no doubt that that is interesting, is your own pamphlet about Lonsdale. As you suggested sending me a book, would it be impertinent of me to ask for a copy of that, though I could not review it, either? But it would interest me greatly to see it as, when I have finished my book, I want to write some notes in my journal about Sir Lancelot Andrewes and, really, about Styles. Catholicism.

I am very interested to hear you speak about Beethoven. When I was last in Hamburgh I read all your poems through and it suddenly struck me then that you must know the late Quartets. That is why I mentioned them in my letter. Also I thought I found a parallel in the Fire Sermon — and specially in a line which I cannot remember ~~exactly~~ exactly about "a broken Coriolanus" — with the Lament Arietta, and that wonderful central Scene of Fidelio. Sometimes when I have been thinking that I cannot go on writing, or existing, because I have no conviction that there is a response to my separate life in the stream of life of the ~~cosmos~~ age around me, I have suddenly thought I could be saved by hearing "that Trumpet sounding off the Stage which seems to have signified Beethoven's resurrection. I have thought too that that trumpet corresponded to "if there were the sound of waters only" in your poem. One of the things that I remember always, ~~too~~ and which you may know of, too, is that when Beethoven first realized that his deafness was incurable he went away into the country in a state of despair. Then — the day after he had arrived in the country — he heard the very faint

mysterious trumpet call which is the first theme of the 1st Movement of the Eroica.

I suspected also a parallel between the Holderlin Hymn and the Quartet Opus 135 in F. Major. Are you conscious of that? I thought that the words "Muss es sein? Es muss sein" might specially appeal to you as they do to me, and so do also the words in gratitude for the recovery of former vigour over the 3d Movement of the A Minor, — because Beethoven's last work has a literary appeal: his music seems to me to be trying to break into the sphere of poetry. Also I think sometimes that Shakespeare's poetry in his very last period, especially in the Tempest, seems to be trying to become music. But such talk may be nonsense and anyhow is valueless.

I think that every day for two years now I have repeated to myself the theme of the last Movement of the A Minor Quartet. Beethoven has been too much my idol: his work symbolizes the hope that my writing may not consist simply in the repetition of a single performance, but that it may be the means by which I make a tremendous journey. But now I think that Beethoven's last work is too wrenching, it is too much an escape from life, it has too great an element of denial. So for this reason I think that I shall forget it.

We live very quietly here. ~~[illegible]~~ I hardly see anyone except Christopher Isherwood, and I am very glad always to be with him. I am writing my novel very hard, and I hope that it will be finished by May. This novel is very curious and I think that people may be surprised by it, because it is elaborately designed instead of being autobiographical and full of reportage like most first novels.

It is very kind of you to suggest printing some poems in the Autumn. I will let you have whatever I write in the Summer and then you may make your own choice. I hope that I shall have the

least to write poetry when the weather is a little better.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Spender.

Easter 1931.

Dear Tom,

I Believe that your are to have a Birthday soon, and I think that you will then be Four Years Old (I am not Clever at Arithmetic) but that is a Great Age, so I thought we might send out this

INVITATION
TO ALL POLLICLE DOGS & JELLICLE CATS
TO COME TO THE BIRTHDAY OF
THOMAS FABER.

Pollicle Dogs and Jellicle Cats!
Come from your Kennels & Houses & Flats;
Pollicle Dogs & Cats, draw near;
Jellicle Cats & Dogs, Appear;
Come with your Ears & your Whiskers & Tails
Over the Mountains & Valleys of Wales.
This is your ONLY CHANCE THIS YEAR,
Your ONLY CHANCE to - what do you spose? -
Brush Up your Coats and Turn out your Toes,
And come with a Hop & a Skip & a Dance -
Because, for this year, it's your ONLY CHANCE
To come with your Whiskers & Tails & Hair on
To
Ty Glyn Aeron
Ciliau Aeron -
Because your are INVITED to Come
With a Flue & a Fife & a Fiddle & Drum,
With a Fiddle, a Fife, & a Drum & a Tabor (A Musicle Instrument that makes a Joyful Noise)
To the Birthday Party of
THOMAS ERLE FABER!

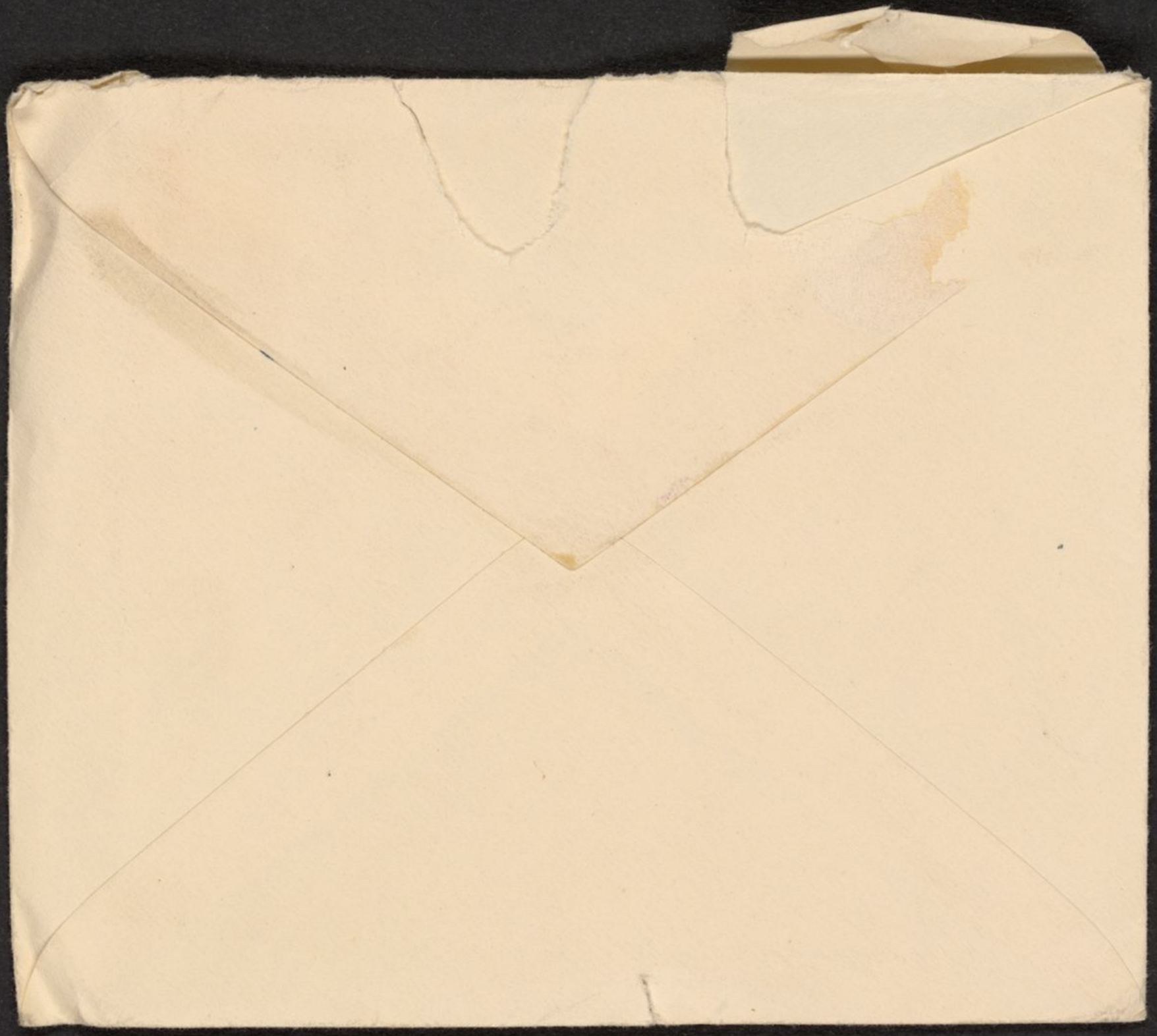
Oh But P.S. we mustn't send out this Invitation after All, Because, if ALL the Pollicle Dogs & Jellicle Cats came (and of course they all <u>would</u> come) then all the roads would be blocked up, and what's more, they would track Muddy Feet into the House, and your Mother wouldn't Like that at All, and what's More Still, you would have to give them All a Piece of your Birthday Cake, and there would be so Many that there wouldn't be any Cake left for <u>you</u>, and that would be Dreadful, so we won't send out this Invitation,
so no more for the Present from your
Silly Uncle

Miss Emily Hale.

41. Brimmer Street

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.



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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

10 April 1931

My dear

I reread your last two letters after reading your dear note of the 28th March, which came yesterday (Thursday) and I felt more than ever annoyed with myself for my last letter but one, and dissatisfied with my very last. Even did I not, I should still always feel impelled every little while to say the same things over and over - to try feebly to express a little of my gratitude and thankfulness and humble adoration. And I want you to know that every letter has brought me increased and steadier happiness, and whatever you give me seems to me always far more than I expect or deserve. It is wonderful to feel humble and xxxxxx proud at once - both a humility and a pride that I have never known before - it is not two alternating feelings but all one feeling - I am sure you know what I mean.

humble

I hold the hope that in time, I shall have filled in an account of all the last fifteen years, in my letters - and that you will in time, do the same for me in yours - but one has to wait and let things come up as occasion suggests, and not try to write an autobiography! (P.S. I amwaiting to hear about Roxane). For there is too so much in present, is there not, my dear Lady, and that is the most important part of our life.

I am glad that my poor photographs are upstairs. I wait impatiently for mine - I don't know which I shall prize more, the You that will have been taken for me, but which I shall no doubt have to share with other friends and relatives, or the other that I have, my baby that I have taken possession of.

Questions: if you are reading, will you not sometimes tell me wh what, so that I may sometimes read the same book that you are n reading, at the same time. There is a very great deal of "standard" literature that I have not read, and should like to read with you. So may we discuss your programme (a programme is not so hard to draw up as it is to carry out!)

And tell me a few of the pieces of music that you like particularly, so that I may get them for myself on the gramophone.

And your spring costumes and hats??

I am very busy this week end with the first of a set of three radio talks on Dryden, which I am to give on Sunday afternoons. I rehearsed the first this morning, and it went quite well. Ab Also discussed at the British Broadcasting Co. a committee on Educational Subjects in their Programme, which I am to join. How easy it is to be put on committees! what with the English Church Union, and the English Review, and the B.B.C. and so on- unremunerative employment is very easy to get - and I could lee lecture every week - so long as I did not expect to be paid for it!

I shall write again by Tuesday - perhaps I shall have another letter, as you hold out hope of another (longer?) in a few days. You will read from this letter that I feel to-day peaceful and happy in the present, due to my dove.

Tom.

Times
L.S.

THOUGHTS AFTER LAMBETH

THOUGHTS AFTER LAMBETH. By T. S. ELIOT. Criterion Miscellany. No. 30. (Faber and Faber. 1s. net.)

The present pamphlet must rank with the best of the series known as "The Criterion Miscellany." It must also, in spite of its brevity, rank high in the list of Mr. Eliot's publications. In "The Waste Land" he expressed the last word of a bankrupt scepticism; in the essays "For Lancelot Andrewes" he acknowledged his acceptance of that long accumulation of the world's wisdom (and its other-worldly experience) which has gone into the making of the Christian religion. He could not rest in the first, and he seemed perhaps not entirely at home in the second; one read "For Lancelot Andrewes" with admiration, and yet with uneasy questions: Does he really mean what he says? Does he know what it implies? But such questions are silenced by this pamphlet. It shows his philosophy and religion in their maturity: he knows why he is a Christian and why he is an Anglican; he is familiar enough with his ground to compare it with the distant regions of other systems of thought and with the nearer fields of diverse forms of Christian thought. In his youthful scepticism he knew the satisfaction of throwing off prejudices; in mature thought he sees the consequences of emancipation. "What chiefly remains of the new freedom is its meagre, impoverished emotional life; in the end it is the Christian who can have the more varied, refined and intense enjoyment of life." That is the concise statement of a whole system of ethics. In the more theological portions he is anxious that the Episcopate should claim for its *raison d'être* something more than expediency, and he believes that the Anglican Church is justified in facing both ways, toward the Catholicism of Rome and the Evangelicalism of the Free Churches. He speaks of the Church of England as "the Catholic Church in England," and observes: "If England is ever to be in any appreciable degree converted to Christianity, it can only be through the Church of England"; a little earlier he says: "With all due respect, the Roman Church is in England a sect." There are several references to Rome, always kindly and respectful, yet leaving no doubt that the Anglican Communion contains some unique value which for him does not exist elsewhere.

Mr. Eliot is sufficiently at ease in Zion to mingle his praise with blame. He admires the section of the Bishops' Report dealing with "The Christian Doctrine of God," and regrets that it has been neglected by the popular Press for the sake of exploiting some of the more sensational subjects; but he does not hesitate to say that parts of the report seem to him "mere verbiage," and that in the section on "Youth and its Vocation" the Bishops seem to have been "listening to the ordinary popular drivel on the subject." There is no reason, he feels, for being apprehensive about the influence of Lord Russell or even Mr. Aldous Huxley, "for if youth has the spirit of a tom-tit or the brain of a goose, it can hardly rally with enthusiasm to these two depressing life-forcers." Yet his confidence in the choice that youth will make during the next few generations seems to be shaken by the concluding sentences:—

> The world is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the world from suicide.

It is probable that not a few of Mr. Eliot's admirers will miss this pamphlet; those who seek it out will find, in the course of his illuminating remarks on the Lambeth Conference, a peculiarly interesting revelation of his present trend of thought, his accustomed distinction of style and a generous portion of the wit which he too often holds in reserve.

Miss Emily Hale,

41. Brimmer Street

Boston

Mass.

U.S.A.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

14 April 1931.

My dove

Your letter of April 1st is a great delight to me - but each one that comes renders my happiness more substantial. For this letter, however, I can give three incidental reasons. First, I am happy to think that you have faults, or at least that you think you have faults - it would make me rather lonely to think that you were quite flawless, though the faults you indicate sound very vague and inchoate contrasted with my own. I should almost like to think that you occasionally Bust Out, and scratched people's faces, my Lamb, and threw objects about the room - I am not, however, aiming to lead you into temptation, as I couldn't anyway; and if you have Ill Humours to vent, then vent them on me, who am the worthiest object. But I think that your troubles with yourself are just those of any person of exceptional sensibility, emotional power, and intelligence, confined in too narrow an environment for their powers.

And secondly, I am always happy to have you let me enter a little farther into the intimacies of any and all of your sorrows. I have always known you to be a proud and reserved person, who would never ask for or even tolerate pity from the outside world, and would keep your troubles to yourself. I don't accuse you of adopting exactly that attitude towards me, lately; but I have felt that in your anxiety to spare me, and in your always putting the troubles of others before your own, you have been rather reticent. In the very fundamentals, my situation is at worst not a bit more unhappy or strained than your own, and in some ways is better - however, it will be a greater help to me if we may consider ourselves, in future, on a parity in these respects. And you will come to realise, I hope, that it is strengthening and steadying to me, to have you, if you will, even figuratively, have a good Cry on my shoulder. I have always wanted to be depended upon for things like that, which no one has ever depended upon me for, and it is something that I need and crave for my own sake.

Here I must break off for half an hour to interview a young man who can't get on with his family and wants in desperation to emigrate to South Africa....

...He is not going to South Africa at present, as his father is putting him into a solicitor's office; but the trouble is that he doesn't want to live at home and can't a ford not to. He says his father plays the wireless set all the evening, and he can't begin to think till eleven, and admitted that he read in bed (The Confessions of St.Augustine was the book) until three this morning - he looked it. I sometimes wonder with some of these young people whether it is really a kindness or not to encourage them.

Now, madam: I was thrilled to have even a snapshot of you, and that was another reason why this letter made me happy. The portrait is of course a LIBEL - I can say this firmly as by your own admission it was taken the day after I saw you, so I cannot be deceived - but I should like to have a copy of <u>every</u> photograph that has ever been taken of you in your life. The odd thing is that though it does you such injustice it is the Image of Edith Sitwell - anyone would think it was she - some would consider it not unflattering a comparison, as Edith is considered one of the handsomest women in London, and is, and was pourtrayed not long ago in "The Book of British Beauty"; but I do not consider it flattering to you to compare you with <u>anyone</u>. It is more like you if I look at it out of the corner of my eye, and just catch a particular aristocratic distinction that I identify. But I Hope the proper portrait will come soon.

Thank you for telling me about Richards' talk. Evidently he has not got the swing of things yet, for the manner which holds the undergraduates of Cambridge (Eng.) spellbound didn't seem to come off! He is very much the Don, though he would hate to be told so; and very much the Don of Cambridge (Eng.) though he would hate still more to be told that. There is something a little desiccated and overintellectualised about him ~~xxxxxxx~~ but he is a good fellow, though his theorising becomes too technical for its own good. Remember that he does not know so much about <u>me</u> as you do, and don't be too hard on his opinions. I heard from Aunt Susie that he was to meet the Wolcotts - which seemed to me perfectly incongruous - no one cares less about Fashion - if they are Fashion - than he does; however, it will help to document him about Boston. I await your comments on the tea party with anticipations of amusement. By the way, I understand that the Hinkleys are coming here in the autumn.

Now I must stop for lunch at the club - and will write again before the end of the week and include a short chronicle of this week and the last.

Je te prie d'agréer l'expression de ma vive reconnaissance,
et je t'envoie ci-inclus un bon baiser respectueux.

Tom

THE CRITERION

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

EDITED BY T. S. ELIOT

TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 9543
TELEGRAMS: FABBAF, WESTCENT, LONDON

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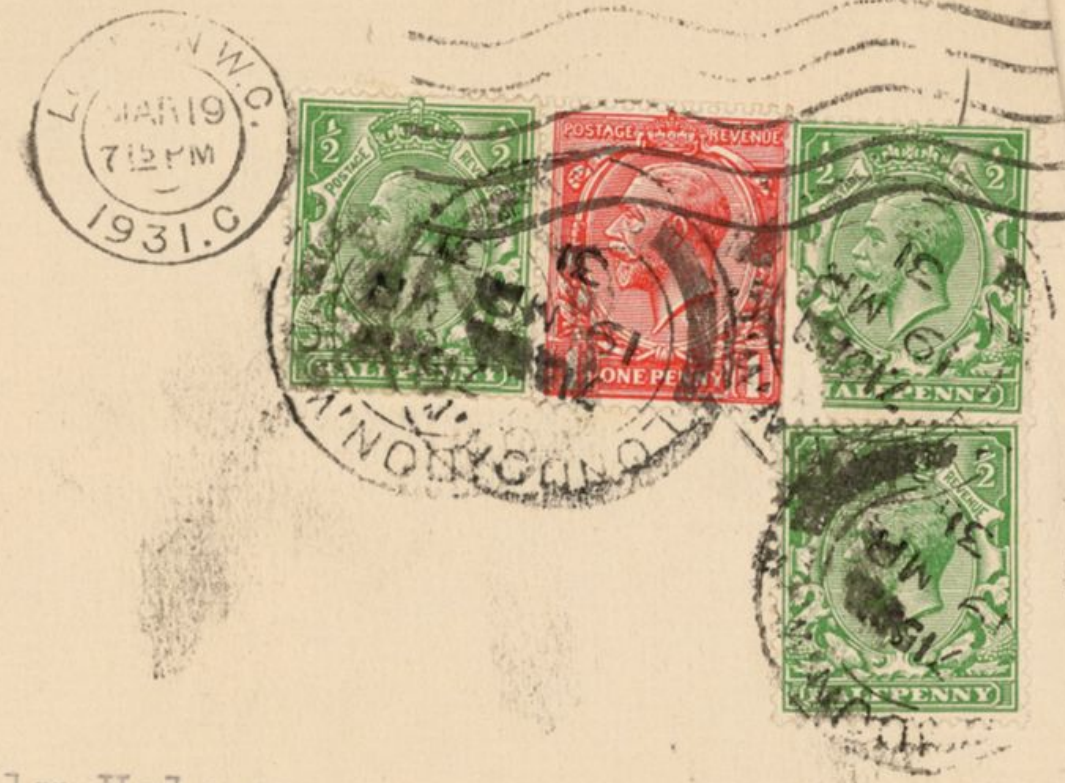
LONDON, W.C. 1



Miss Emily Hale,

41, Brimmer Street,

BOSTON, Mass.,

U.S.A.

DEAR UNCEL Tom

IS THE LILLY CAT LIKE A LILY ? A MERY WHIT. I SUPPOSE IT IS ISN'T IT? HAS IT GOT PECELS(?) LIKE STARS IN THE SKY. And LIKE SWANS IN THE POND LIKE SILVER WA ter LILIES GREW IN PONDS AND LAKS.

LOVE FROM DICK

P.S. Enclosed please find 1 camp bed!

56-4-17
50-6-7

5-18-4
1 15-0

4-3-4

Hampstead 4839.

7, Oak Hill Park,
Hampstead,
N.W.3.

Dear Uncle Tom -
I love all the letters & the pictures that you send me.
Has your cat really got Tom on it? Mine has.
Is your kitten a Big Brave Cat now? I would like to see your cat - and Dick's got a cold, and he's got a temperature, and Billy's been chased all the morning by Tinker.
Dear Tom are those really

four dogs?

It snowed this morning.

Some birds are on the trees.

We feed them every day, &

we feed the stags too – and

nothing else.

Love from Tom.

(who thinks this is the

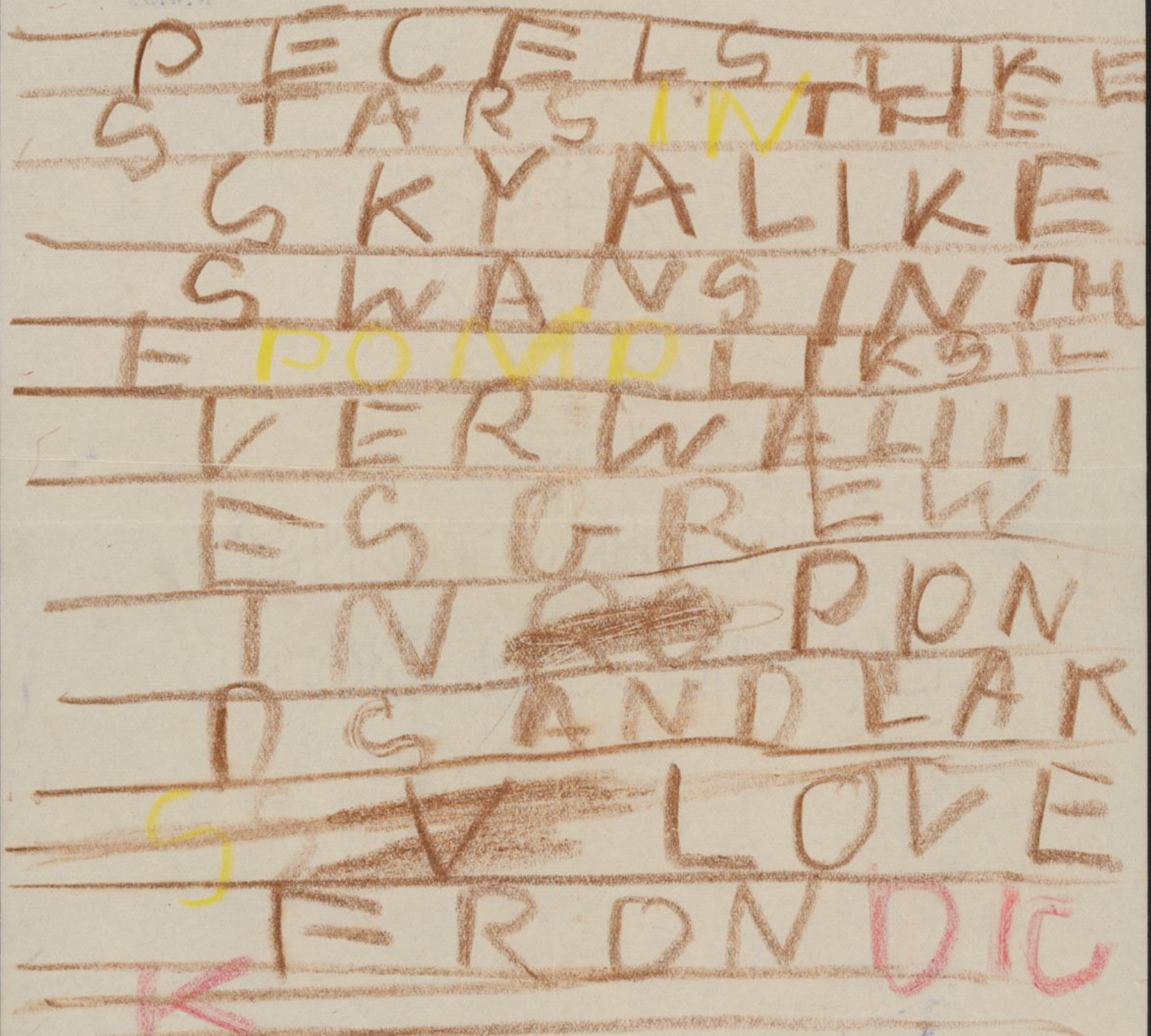
longest letter he has ever

"written"!) Dictated & unedited.

Hampstead 4839.

7, Oak Hill Park,
Hampstead,
N.W.3.

DEAR UNCEL
TISTH LILLY
CAT LIKE A
LILY AMER
Y WHIT IS
SUPOSITIS
ISNT IT HO
HAS IT GOT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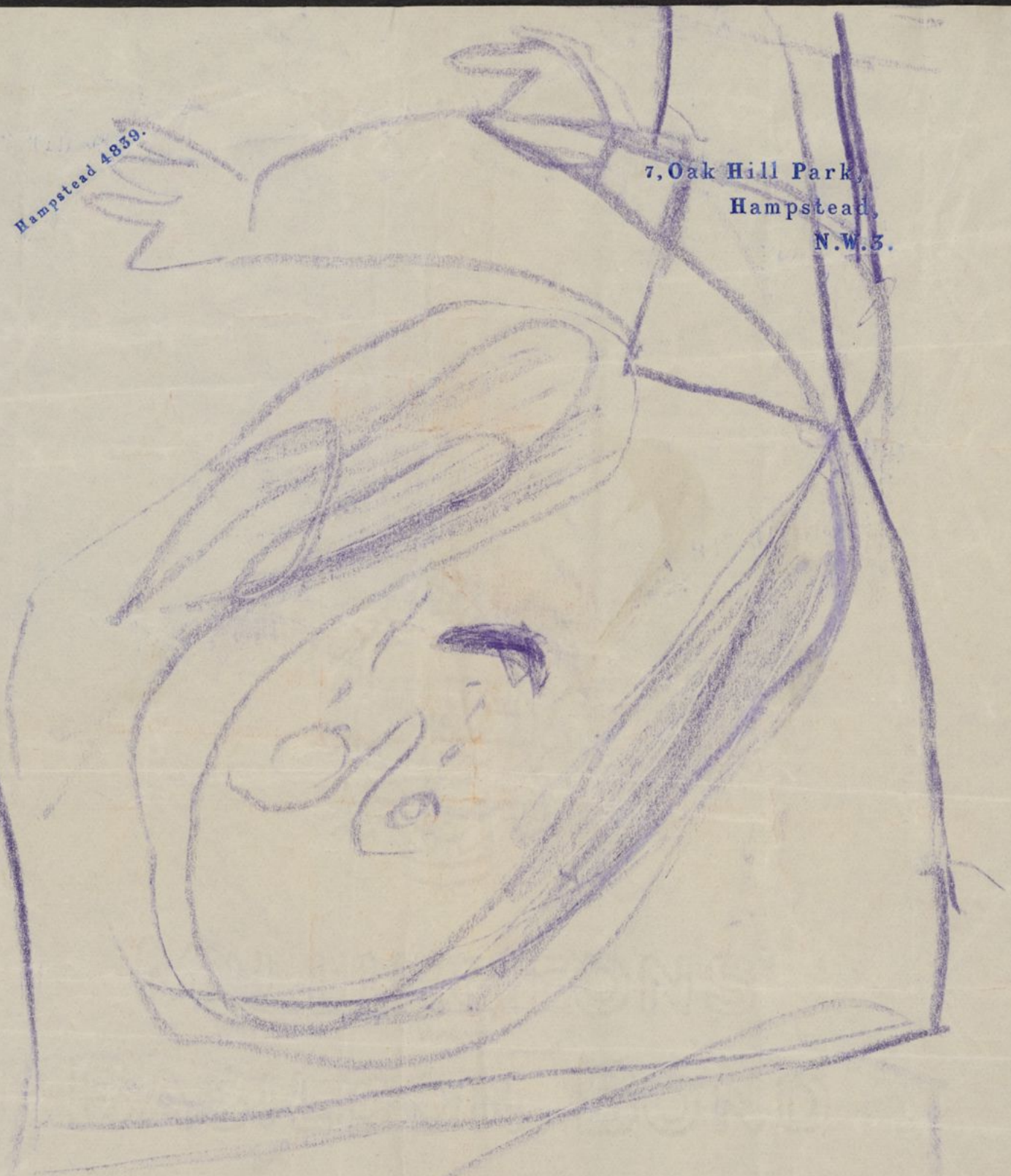
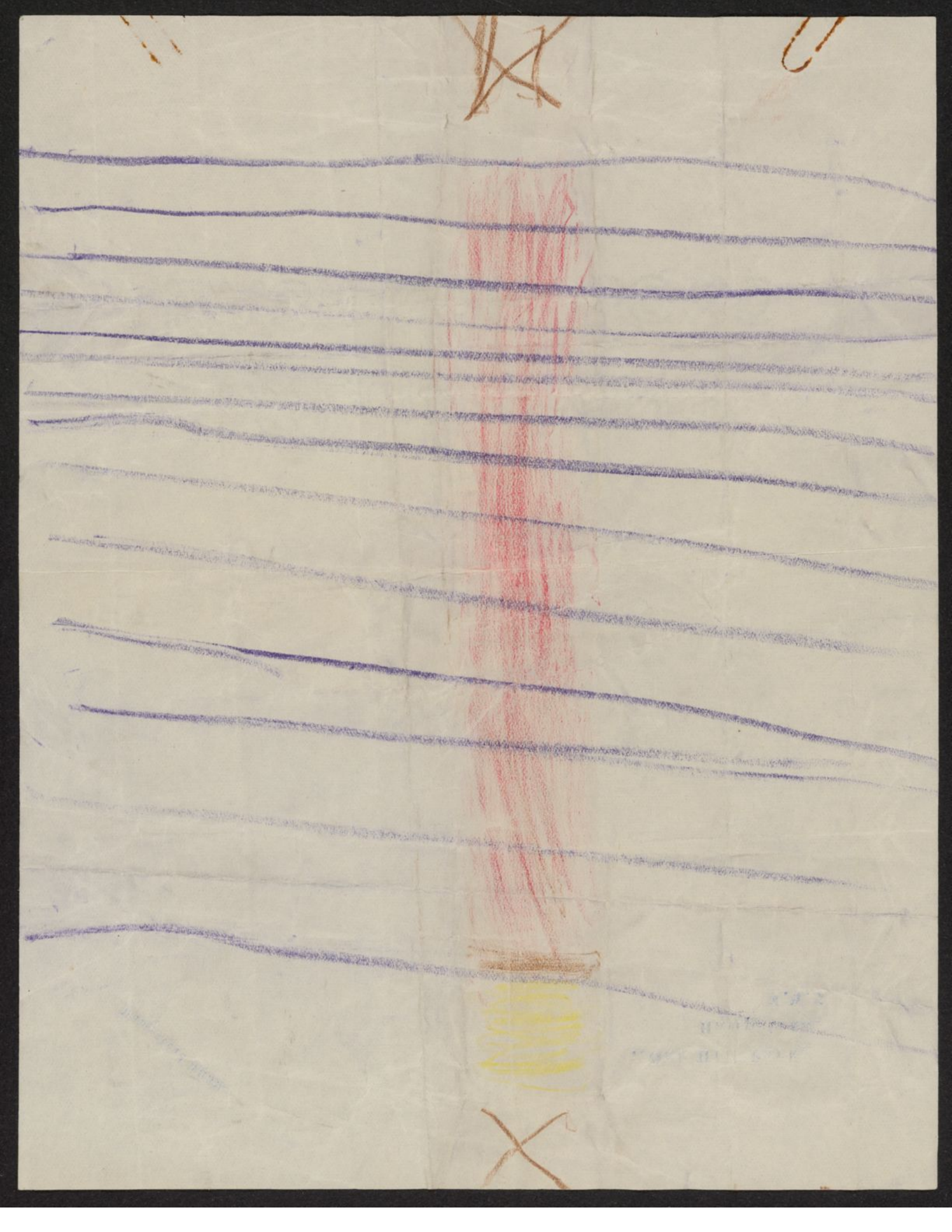
Hampstead 4839.

7, Oak Hill Park,
Hampstead,
N.W.3.





THE PALACE,

CHICHESTER.

6th March, 1931.

My dear Mr. Eliot,

It was most kind of you to send me "Thoughts after Lambeth". I have read it with delight. It seems to me most admirable and certainly an improvement on the first draft. I can quite understand the difficulty of this genre. I hope it will sell, and I hope it will reach many non-Churchmen but also Churchmen who want their vision of Lambeth and the Church of England a little enlarged and a little directed.

Yours ever,

George Chichester:

BISHOPTHORPE,

YORK.

4 March, 1931.

My dear Eliot,

I am very grateful to you for sending me your pamphlet in its final form. I am in almost complete agreement with all you say, and I think the pamphlet will do great good.

The main point is what you so well emphasize, namely, that the deliverance of a Lambeth Conference is not the codifying of canon law list, but the indication of the directions of spiritual movement within the Anglican Communion.

Yours sincerely,

William Ebor:

PENSION GRAMATKE, B E R L I N - W I L M E R S D O R F , MOTZSTRASSE 52 III.

Feb 18.

Dear Mr Eliot.

The above is my address. I shall almost certainly stay here till the end of April, as I have vowed I shall not leave this room till I have finished my book, and I cannot hope for it to be ready till then.

I send two poems. They give me very little satisfaction, so, if you dislike them, please destroy them at once. I have neglected poetry lately for this book, but I hope that in April I shall be able to turn to it again.

There is no news, except of a most dismal nature. Berlin, which was rather rowdy in December, has now settled down into a "more dreadful calm." Everyone talks and thinks of nothing but money. The only thing that consoles me at all is to have ascertained that Wyndham Lewis in his articles on the Nazis was completely wrong in almost all everything that he said. I don't know why it is, but I find that reflection very ~~infuriating~~ consoling.

Every day I see Christopher Isherwood, for which I am very happy. We have put all our hopes on the healing effects of the sun, when it appears, in two months. We have planned that we shall get a boat, and then live rent-free all the summer going on Lakes and down canals, until, apparently, we shall reach Marseilles.

Meanwhile, I work hard at my book. The work in itself is a pleasure, though it is a pleasure which I rather dread. In

dead, sometimes, when I wake up in the morning and think 'Now I shall write', I do my utmost to go to sleep again, or, if I have returned home from being out-of-doors, I will lie down and try to sleep in order to avoid writing. But I am never successful in sleeping, so I write.

Besides walking, I spend hours walking about Berlin, which always amuses me. We are nearly always out in the evenings, often to go to the cinema; and sometimes I go to Concerts. I have a passion for classical music, particularly for ~~Beethoven~~ Late Beethoven, and, of that, particularly for the five last quartets.

You asked me to write, so I hope that all these rather domestic details will not bore or surprise you. If you see Herr Read, could you tell him that I was off in Hamburg for four days, and that there I was a guest and so occupied that it was impossible for me to see his friend who has a Quartet of daughters. If he or you know anyone really nice and fairly human in Berlin I would be very grateful for an introduction, as I only know two people here: of them, one leaves for Russia on Monday, and the other, Christopher Isherwood, is quite likely to go away soon. But I rather dread German intellectuals, as they always demand that one should act some rôle to them. Indeed I think that Curtius is about the only intelligent German I have met whom I like. With Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

Stephen Spender.

BISHOPTHORPE,

YORK.

4 March, 1931.

My dear Eliot,

I am very grateful to you for sending me your pamphlet in its final form. I am in almost complete agreement with all you say, and I think the pamphlet will do great good.

The main point is what you so well emphasize, namely, that the deliverance of a Lambeth Conference is not the codifying of canon law list, but the indication of the directions of spiritual movement within the Anglican Communion.

Yours sincerely,

William Ebor:

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

POET ✦ EDITOR ✦ CRITIC

And who, pray, is She?

• • •

"This poet has music and emotion and distinction of utterance."—N. Y. Herald-Tribune.

• • •

—Nicholas Muray

Lectures for the spring of nineteen-thirty-one

Management, WILLIAM B. CHRISTE

P. O. Drawer 2043

Hartford, Connecticut

SINCE the publication of her first book of verse in 1922 Miss Taggard has been in the front rank of contemporary poets. Allen Tate said in the NATION after reading her third volume in 1926 that she "is one of the four or five women poets . . . who have won a dignified popularity, and she is particularly distinguished in having written consistently better than any of them."

That this is soberly true and not mere flattery has been verified in the four years since. Reviewing her collected verse (Knopf 1928) in the N. Y. Herald-Tribune BOOKS, Newton Arvin wrote "Miss Taggard very quickly ceased to be a 'promising' writer . . . Her achievement is already as mature and final as it needs to be."

Last summer Miss Taggard gave the literary world the results of almost ten years of research about one of the greatest American poets — her book "The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson"; here is a typical comment: (The BOOK REVIEW DIGEST) "Miss Taggard's critical biography accomplishes what is little less than a miracle of deliverance. Here for once Emily Dickinson has escaped her kin and met her kind."

These are but fragmentary evidence of her industry and talent. She has published ten books in the past eight years; written articles or fiction for such magazines as the Century, Bookman, New Republic, Saturday Review of Literature, The Nation, and is a regular contributor to the N. Y. Herald-Tribune BOOKS. Her poetry is included in all standard anthologies of contemporary verse.

Miss Taggard was born in Washington state from where she went as a child to Honolulu. She grew up in Hawaii and there attended Oahu College after which she returned to the states and graduated from the University of California. She has travelled largely in this country, lived abroad and lectured in many cities. She now lectures in the Department of English Literature at Mount Holyoke College. Her wide experience as a poet, critic, editor and teacher have given her an unusual background for public speaking. She is not unique; she is human.

We take great pleasure in presenting

MISS GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

POET ~ EDITOR ~ CRITIC

• • •

Lectures for the spring of nineteen-thirty-one

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The Life and Writings of Emily Dickinson with Readings from Her Poetry

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Personal Representative, Miss Genevieve Taggard, 1931. Dates, terms and further information concerning the above lectures will be sent on request.

PUBLISHED BOOKS

EDITED:

With George Sterling and James Rorty, CONTINENT'S END, An Anthology of California Verse. Book Club of California, 1924 San Francisco
MAY DAYS, An Anthology of Masses-Liberator Verse With an Introduction Boni and Liveright, 1925 New York
The UNSPOKEN and OTHER VERSES by Anne Bremer With an Appreciation Nash, 1927 San Francisco
CIRCUMFERENCE, Varieties of Metaphysical Verse 1456-1928. Covici Friede, 1929

POETRY:

FOR EAGER LOVERS, Seltzer, 1922 New York
HAWAIIAN HILLTOP, Gelber, 1923 San Francisco
WORDS FOR THE CHISEL, Knopf, 1926 New York
TRAVELLING STANDING STILL, Knopf, 1928 New York and London

BIOGRAPHY:

The LIFE and MIND OF EMILY DICKINSON Knopf, 1930 New York and London

• • •

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Poetry Society of America

• • •

See: Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 18; Page 114 and Who's Who in America, 1930

Miss Emily Hale.

41. Brimmer Street,

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

Stenbrook May 1st

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

20 April 1931.

My Dear.

I was very vexed on Friday - though also made happy by the arrival of your letter of April 9th. I had intended to have a free morning to write in answer of everything unanswered in your two previous letters - and I did not expect another letter on that day, after having a lovely letter on Monday - and I persuaded myself that it was all for the best, because if I got another letter there wouldnt be time to answer the old and the new - but a new letter came - but also two more unexpected visitors - one of the usual young men with an introduction wanting to become a journalist or a publisher - the other a slightly older young man who is an intelligent critic to be encouraged, and is a lonely schoolmaster in Northumberland and needs intellectual conversation - and bythe time they were done with it was time to go out to lunch with Siepmann to discuss the future of British Broadcasting - and as it was Friday I was in a particular temper, indeed. And after a tiring weekend I have two more waiting downstairs, of the same two types - and then must lunch with Bruce Richmond, the editor of the Times Literary Supplement, and then must hurry home to write the last of my three talks on Dryden for the Broadcasting. - I dont think I have mentioned them -three talks on successive Sundays at 5 o'clock, got up in a great hurry; but the seem to have gone off fairly well so far, and I get twelve guineas each. I enclose a much abbreviated report of the first, from the "Listener".

I shall not post this to-day, but will keep it locked up and finish it tomorrow. So now I will interview Sherard Vines, Professor of English at Hull University, and then Mr. Reeves, who is coming down from Cambridge in June, and wants to be a publisher; and I shall talk to the former about poetry and criticism, and I shall question the latter and give him the usual discouraging advice; and then if I I have a few minutes before going out to lunch I shall add a few more words to this letter.

- It is just on one o'clock, and the interviews went off exactly as expected - and this letter must wait till Tuesday morning; but I really hope to have the whole morningto myself, and perhaps use it all for this letter. Good night, my dear.

Tuesday April 21st: I believe I shall really have an uninterrupted hour. So to begin with, I shall thank you for your sweet Easter card - which shall stand on my mantelpiece here until Christmastide, when I hope I may have another to replace it for the season. Next I thank you for your gentle (but firm) admonitions - and also for those given unconsciously, and by example. You are right about "stubbornness of will". It is only within the last three years, I think, that I have learned that one cannot live on will and pride - one must subdue will and humble (not humiliate, for humiliation is merely a disease of pride) humble one's pride. So far as whisky goes! I have found lately that self-improvement, up to a point, is helped, and not so far as that goes, wrongly, by mixed motives. I mean that when has arrived at a point of self control at which one is perfectly "respectable" - at which one is sure that the average ordinary decent person would consider one perfectly correct - then one powerful motive has done all that it can do, and further progress depends on sticking to those ideals which are above most of the ordinary decent people one knows. The ideal, of course, is not to depend upon anything) not on stimulants, not on tobacco (I don't mean total abstinence in either case), not on drugging oneself with work or power or outside activities, but to depend upon nothing but the absolute essentials of a good life - which must always include for me my most intimate personal relations. I wonder if I shall ever get there!

As for frankness, I should have no satisfaction in my relations with you if I felt that I was creating, or allowing you to hold, an in any way flattering picture of myself. If may well be, because complete honesty with oneself is very hard and long to come by, that I do this to some extent unconsciously; but I must certainly reveal all of my faults that I am conscious of; and that helps me to become conscious of the rest. And on the other hand, there is a great relief and happiness in revealing to you all my conscious blemishes; it is a great relief to feel humble.

I doubt if I can get to Halifax's; if I can get one week end this spring I shall probably go to Corpus (Cambridge) where I have several friends whom I want to see: Spens (the Master), Kenneth Pickthorn, and Charles Smyth; and Edwyn Hoskyns whom I have never met. But as rest and recreation, a weekend is almost more trouble than it is worth; and the important is to get away for a week or two alone into some quiet retreat. But for the present, I must only wait and wonder what will happen. However, I am not at all in bad health at present, so there is no cause for worry.

This typewriter gets very tipsy at the end of a page.

Now about yourself for a change. As for the "certain incidents in the past", I know you don't want to refer to them again, but I must say say two things. First, what you add in your letter of the 9th was perfectly obvious to me from the first letter, and there is nothing at all repellant about it - you are mistaken, and are I think confusing the natural (perfectly natural!) feelings of human beings with conscious cultivation of them in the wrong direction. Of course to find out anything about oneself, even to find out one's normal human nature, is "terrifying"; but how can one make any spiritual progress without this understanding? Of course the things that one is ashamed of go to make up one's development. But at the same time, even with the things one is rightly ashamed of, one must get to the point at which one ceases to feel shame - at which one can look back on them without a twinge, because one has wholly detached them from oneself. I have ceased to feel any emotion of shame whatever about certain discreditable incidents in my past; I think it is quite right that I should profit spiritually even by my sins. The only regrets that still torment me are the regrets for errors of mine which have inflicted permanent injury upon others: and I don't see how I can dispose of such regrets, this side of eternity.

Now and again I perceive fairly clearly, that if circumstances had protected me against my own weaknesses and faults and folly, so that I had had an ordinary successful life like many men I have known, I should have gone through my whole life without any real self-knowledge or any real development. I refer to myself only, not to any others; for me it was perhaps necessary to find out that life really can be as infernal as the worst nightmares of a Dostoyevski novel.

I must confess that now I have one new struggle with myself, but one worth having and worth winning; I know I must not think much about you in the way of daydreaming; but I am perfectly conscious of that, and that consciousness is the first thing.

Your comments on the teaparty suggest to me a long comparison between Barbara and one of my friends, to the advantage of the latter - which I shall (must I mean) reserve for my next letter - it's partly that I want to work out of myself a certain aversion that I feel, and dont like to feel, towards Babbara.

I am worried about your finances, you speak of them so stoically. I wish you would let me know if you can what your ultimate position will be: I mean, will you always have to earn a living, or is there any eventual prospect of even a modest competence to free you completely from anxiety?

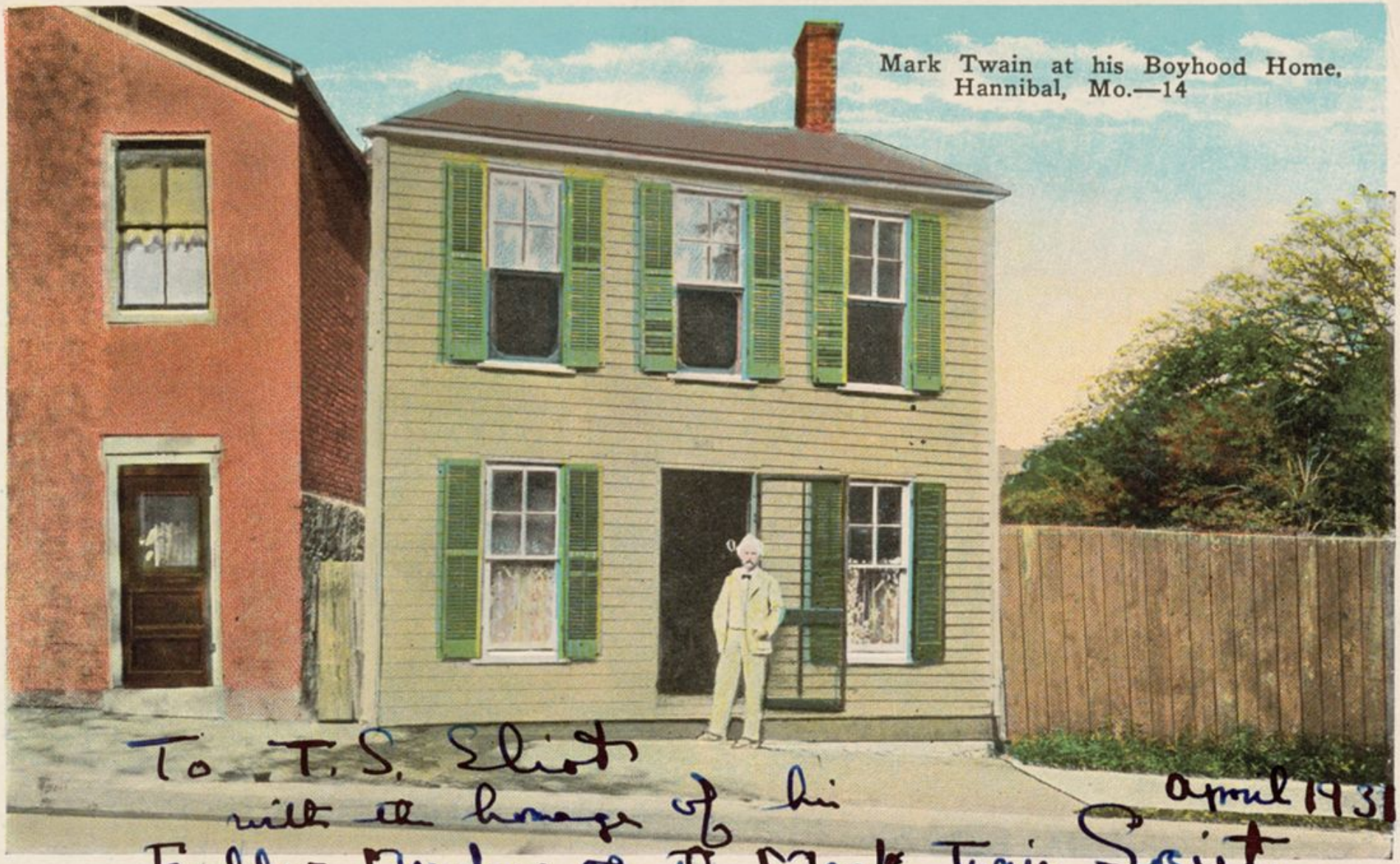
I shall think of your play on the 6th of May and the following days. I don't know "Hay Fever", but I shall get a copy; I have a dislike of Noel Coward - I saw one play called "The Queen was in the Parlour" which seemed to me a piece of rather repulsive and unedifying sensationalism. All the more reason for finding out what you are playing.

And I shall get you the other photograph which you were to have had. I don't like it (it exhibits the Eliot Nostril, which looks as if it was trying to take in twice as much air as other people's) but some thought it the best.

I shall write to Penelope, but without mentioning the appendicitis.

With humble devotion

Tom



To T. S. Eliot
with the homage of his
Fellow Members of the Mark Twain Society
April 1931

2003

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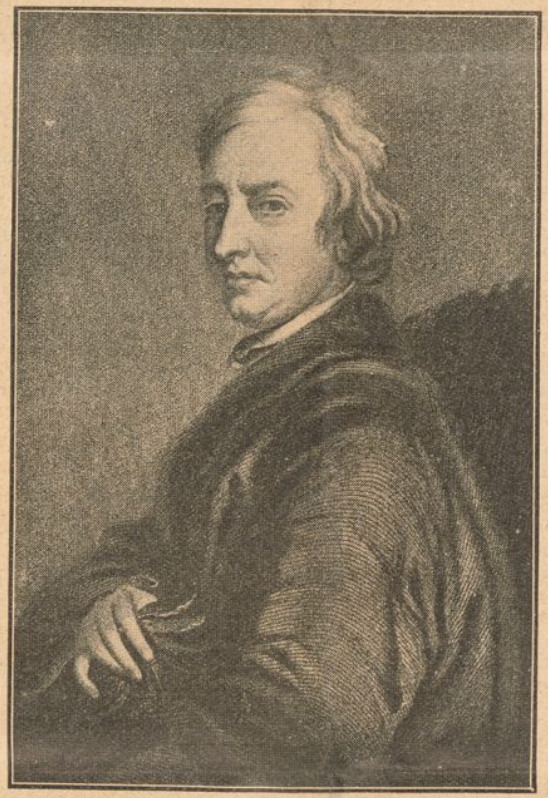
John Dryden—I

The Poet who Gave the English Speech

By T. S. ELIOT

Mr. Eliot, author of 'Homage to John Dryden', offers a revaluation of the work and influence of the poet whose tercentenary is being celebrated this summer

DRYDEN'S position in English literature is unique. Far below Shakespeare, and even below Milton, as we must put him, he yet has, just by reason of his precise degree of inferiority, a kind of importance which neither Shakespeare nor Milton has—the importance of his *influence*. It is this nice question of influence that I wish to investigate first, in relation to what I may call the 'literary dictator', that is, in our history, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Samuel Johnson and in his way, Coleridge. Are we to say that poets like Shakespeare and Milton were without influence? Certainly not, but 'influence', in the sense in which we can cope with the term, is something more limited. The disproportion between Shakespeare and his immediate followers, among the dramatists, is so great that the influence of Shakespeare is a trifling thing in comparison with Shakespeare himself; and as for Milton, that was so peculiar a genius that although he had plenty of mimics during the eighteenth century, he can hardly be said to have any followers. For 'influence', as Dryden had influence, a poet must not be so great as to overshadow all followers. Dryden was followed by Pope, and, a century later, by Samuel Johnson; both men of great original genius, who developed the medium left them by Dryden, in ways which cast honour both on them and on him. It should seem then no paradox to say that Dryden was the great influence upon English verse that he was, because he was *not* too great to have any influence at all. He was neither the consummate poet of earlier times, nor the eccentric poet of later. He was happy both in his predecessors and in his successors. A hundred years is a long time for the stamp of one man to remain on a literature; poets' influence and reputation cannot last so long in our days, and that makes Dryden a central, a typical figure in English letters. He is in himself the Malherbe, the Boileau, the Corneille, and almost the Molière (almost, because Congreve refined and surpassed him in comedy) of the seventeenth century in England; and to him, as much as to any individual, we owe our civilisation.



John Dryden

As a figure, there is nothing picturesque about the man John Dryden. He came of a small county family like hundreds of others; he had, for a man of his origins, no great worldly advantages; he married a lady of superior rank, who brought him no exceptional advantage either, and apparently little domestic happiness. He was an ordinary-seeming, florid countryman, whose manners, according to the next and more refined generation, were not of the most polished. We do not know whether it was by the brilliance of his conversation that he was the great figure of Wills' Coffee House for all the hours that he passed there every day; but there he was admired by minor men of letters, and courted by bluestocking noblemen. If not because of his powers of talk, in an age when men talked and drank for more hours a day than they do now, and when they wrote, wrote at higher speed than we can, then it was because they all recognised that Dryden could do everything that they would have liked to do, and because what he wrote did not exceed the scope of their comprehension.

Being so completely representative, Dryden not only formed the mould for the next, but himself derived very clearly from the last. In his work there is nothing unexpected, no new element with unknown properties. As a poet, Dryden came to resolve the contradictions of the previous period, and select from it the styles which were capable of development. His first verse, though clever enough of its kind to earn ready commendations, is distinctly bad. It is encumbered with all the late metaphysical conceits which he was himself to destroy. Cleveland and Benlowes are lightfooted by comparison; for they traced their patterns with conviction; and of the early verses of Dryden one can only say that they are by a man doing his best to talk an idiom alien to him: but for sudden flashes of wit and sense here and there, one would say that their author could never be a poet. It used to be thought that the poetic styles of Dryden and Pope were artificial. One has only to compare them with the style of Dryden's immediate predecessor, Abraham Cowley, to prove the contrary. Dryden became a great poet because he could *not* write an artificial style; because it was intolerable to him; because he had that uncorruptible sincerity of word which at all times distinguishes the good writer from the bad, and at critical times such as his, distinguishes the great writer from the little one. What Dryden did, in fact, was to reform the language, and devise a natural, conversational style of speech in verse in place of an artificial and decadent one.

It is not irrelevant to compare the operation of Dryden with that of Donne. Donne likewise was a reformer of the language. This is not so immediately apparent in Donne's case, for his career is overlapped by the Elizabethan dramatists, who were still, after Shakespeare, exploring the possibilities of dramatic blank verse. But consider that Shakespearian blank verse was soon to expire with the set phrases of Shirley and others, that it had nearly gone its course, and consider what the lyric verse of Shakespeare's time was. It was essentially verse for music; therefore its intellectual content and its range of emotion was restricted. The songs of Shakespeare gain a great deal—perhaps this has not been enough remarked—by their dramatic position in the plays: a song like 'Full fathom five' is suffused by the meaning and feeling of the passage in which it occurs; the songs of Shakespeare are not interludes or interruptions, but part of the structure of the plays in which they occur. Observing this attribute, we can say that for lyric verse there was very little

future, had it not been for Donne. Donne did away with all the stage properties of the ordinary lyric verse of the Elizabethans; he introduced into lyric verse a style of conversation, of direct, natural speech; and this was a revolution comparable to the development of blank verse into a conversational medium, from Kyd to the mature Shakespeare. And by this innovation Donne gave to the Caroline poets a vehicle which they would hardly have been able to devise for themselves.

By the time when Dryden began to write, the vigour of the style initiated by Donne had quite gone: the natural had become the artificial. For there is not, in verse, any wholly objective distinction between the natural and the artificial style. Whether a style is natural is whether it is natural to the man who writes it. It is harder to be natural than to be artificial; it requires a great deal more work, and is painful and unpleasant, because sincerity is always painful and unpleasant. Dryden did the work, and experienced, no doubt, the pain and unpleasantness, and he restored English verse to the condition of speech.

Now when we say 'conversational', or the quality of spoken language in verse, we are inclined to limit it to certain kinds of conversation, perhaps more particularly of an intimate nature; so it is easier for us to perceive this naturalness in Donne than in Dryden. But we have to consider what are the essentials of good speech. At no time, I know, are the written language and the spoken language identical. Obviously they cannot be: if we talked extempore exactly as we write no one would listen, and if we wrote exactly as we talk no one would read. But speech can never divorce itself beyond some point, from the written word, without damage to itself; and writing can never beyond some point alienate itself from speech, without self-destruction. Now Dryden's couplets may not seem at first sight to echo our own way of speech. That may be partly because the standards of good English in conversation were higher then, and partly because the spoken word, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, meant much more public speech than it does to us; it meant oratory and eloquence. In the time of Dryden speech was rather speech in public than in private; and Dryden helped to form a language for generations which were prepared to speak, and to listen, in public.

There are, of course, three main divisions of Dryden's verse, apart from the verse of the heroic plays: the satires, the songs, and the translations. Now one of the good offices of Dryden in his satires is this: to show us that if verse should not stray too far from the customs of speech, so also it should not abandon too much the uses of prose. Everyone knows the verses of 'Mac Flecknoe' and the more varied if less sustained satire of 'Absalom and Achitophel'; I should like here to mention rather those two pieces of sustained reasoning in verse, 'Religio Laici' and 'The Hind and the Panther'. Here are two poems which could no more have been written in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth, for they are poems of religious controversy. Other poets, before Dryden, had philosophised in verse. But in 'The Hind and the Panther' for the first time and for the last is political-religious controversy elevated to the condition of poetry. However one views these differences now, one cannot but appreciate the characterisation of the Church of England, under the guise of the Panther, which Dryden draws, after his conversion to Rome:

> Thus, like a creature of a double kind,
> In her own labyrinth she lives confined.
> To foreign lands no sound of her is come,
> Humbly content to be despised at home.
> Such is her faith, where good cannot be had,
> At least she leaves the refuse of the bad.
> Nice in her choice of ill, though not of best,
> And least deform'd, because reform'd the least. . . .
> A real presence all her sons allow,
> And yet 'tis flat idolatry to bow,
> Because the Godhead's there, they know not how. . . .
> What is 't those faithful then partake or leave?
> For what is signified and understood,
> Is, by her own confession, flesh and blood.
> Then, by the same acknowledgment, we know
> They take the sign, and take the substance too.
> The lit'ral sense is hard to flesh and blood.
> But nonsense never can be understood.

This is not, when analysed, convincing theological argument—Dryden was no theologian—but it is first-rate oratorical persuasion; and Dryden was the first man to raise oratory to the dignity of poetry, and to descend with poetry to teach the arts of oratory; and to do any one thing with verse better than anyone else has done it, at the same time that one is the first to attempt it, is no small achievement. But it is not only by biting passages like this that a poem of Dryden's succeeds, but by a perfect lifting and lowering of his flight, in a varied unity without monotony. Take the beginning of the earlier and inferior of the two poems, 'Religio Laici', the passage attacking the principles of deism:

> Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
> Is Reason to the soul; and as on high
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day.
> And as those nightly tapers disappear
> When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
> So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
> So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.

This, if I am not greatly mistaken, is first-rate poetry not incomparable to Lucretius—of whom, by the way, Dryden by a few passages proved himself the most worthy translator into English of any time. And the same vein is repeated, with still greater power, in 'The Hind and the Panther':

> But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
> For erring judgements an unerring guide!
> Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
> A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
> O teach me to believe Thee thus concealed,
> And search no farther than Thyself revealed;
> But her alone for my director take,
> Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake!
> My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires;
> My manhood, long mislead by wandering fires,
> Followed false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
> My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
> Such was I, such by nature still I am;
> Be Thine the glory, and be mine the shame!

Anyone who to-day could make such an exact statement in verse of such nobility and elegance, and with such originality of versification and language, might well look down upon his contemporaries. We are very far, here, from the smoothness of Waller or Denham. The surface is equally polished; but the difference is between the smooth surface of a cake of soap and the smooth surface of a piece of sculpture conceived and finished by a master.

Of Dryden's verse translations I will only say here that they are more or less satisfactory, naturally, according to Dryden's sympathy with the original, and that perhaps his translations from Lucretius are the most inspired. All are of the best workmanship. Their importance, however, in considering Dryden's place then and now, is this: that it was by his translations, almost as much as by his original poems, that Dryden helped to form our modern English tongue. It is no inconsiderable service to a language to demonstrate that great poetry of other languages and times can be translated into the speech which we use daily, and remain great poetry.

The main point, which I wish to drive home, about Dryden is this: that it was Dryden who for the first time, and so far as we are concerned, for all time, established a *normal* English speech, a speech valid for both verse and prose, and imposing its laws which greater poetry than Dryden's might violate, but which no poetry since has overthrown. The English language as left by Shakespeare, and within much narrower limits, by Milton, was a language like the club of Hercules, which no lesser strength could wield; so I believe that the language after Shakespeare and Milton could only have deteriorated until some genius appeared as great as they—or indeed, greater than they: for the language would have been quickly in far worse case than that in which Shakespeare found it. It was Dryden, more than any other individual, who formed a language possible for the mediocrity, and yet possible for later great writers to do great things with.

And what Dryden accomplished was no by-product and no accident. Never was there a worker more conscious of what he was attempting. His theories were all theories directed to what the poet could *consciously* attempt. His essays are his conscious thoughts about the kinds of work he was doing; he uttered no metaphysical speculations, he was no prophet or teacher. I can think of no man in literature whose aims are so exactly fulfilled by his performance; and in the whole vineyard no labourer who more deserved his hire.

Miss Emily Hale.

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Boston Mass.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

22 April 1931.

Emily dear -

(I am glad that I got off a long letter to you yesterday, so that it was uncomplicated by this).

This will be short, but I must thank you at once for your perfectly lovely letter of the 14th. You will have had by now several letters since my agonised one, and I hope that by this time you are more assured about me again. I had hoped that my second letter would reach you quickly. But I am glad to get this letter for one reason, that I have been apprehensive about the effect of my outburst of weakness, and it is a relief at least not to be any longer in suspense.

Please, please, forgive me for distressing you - of course I know that you do! but that doesn't prevent me from wanting to beg it again most humbly. I am very much ashamed of my egotism - I don't mean merely my expression of egotism, but of my feelings. I do know how difficult this letter was for you to write, and I cannot express my gratitude and worship. Be sure that far from hurting me, your letter has brought me nothing but help and equilibrium - what no word from anyone but you could give; and I am only miserable at having put such burdens upon you.

I cannot answer your letter now - I must wait. Surely no one but myself can have had the opportunity to know fully what a wonderful person you are.

Tom

Miss Emily Hale,

41. Brimmer Street.

Boston Mass.

U.S.A.

ans. May 2nd.

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24 RUSSELL SQUARE

LONDON, W.C.1

27 April 1931.

Dear Dove,

I can only begin a letter to you to-day; I shall continue it to-morrow, and then it must be sent off whether it is finished or not, because there is always supposed to be a mail out on Tuesday afternoons. I had hoped for a clear morning this day (Monday); but yesterday afternoon - just as I was bustling off to deliver my thrid and last broadcast talk on Dryden - James Joyce rang up and announced his sudden presence in London - so this morning I trotted off early to see him at the Belgravia Hotel - there are few people for whom I would do as much - but I have always liked Joyce and furthermore I consider him so much more important a person than myself, whose shoelaces (qua writer of English) I am unworthy to untie etc. I had to spend the morning with him, and only arrived here at 12:15, having a lunch engagement with Christopher Dawson and Douglas Jerrold at 1:15. I found Joyce able to see much better than a year ago, and able to walk about without guidance and to write legibly, which is a great deal for him, but cursing the wet English weather, and staying as near to Victoria Station as possible so as to get back quickly to France if the weather doesn't improve. Otherwise he intends to stay in London for a month or so until his son finds him a new flat in Paris.

But I shall mention Joyce again from time to time. Your dear letter of the 17th arrived this morning, before I have answered the other - how very good you are to me, I hope to make you realise all the joy and delight and strengthening each letter brings. I am relieved to have heard from you after receiving my next letter to the deplorable one. So now I will wish my Bird good-night, though it is just lunch time (and breakfast time for her - I hope doves breakfast well), and recommence tomorrow.

April 29th WEDNESDAY. Now I can go on for a bit! Nothing much has happened meanwhile, except that the Joyces have taken a flat in Kensington for a year, and I am trying to find out for him about a "biography" of him which is announced, and about which he was not consulted and is therefore incensed; and Frank Morley has returned from New York, of which I am glad, and the Fabers return from Wales tomorrow (No, Tom was not named for me, but I am his god-father nevertheless - I have just got him Lear's Nonsense Book, not the Limericks but the songs).

Although the Dryden is done with, thankfully, I am still rushed, with an essay on Pascal to be written by next Monday if possible as Introduction to an Everyman Library edition of the Pensées; I knew almost nothing about the subject, but took it on in order to learn, and have become quite absorbed in that extraordinary character; I hope it will be a good essay. (Although I have written no verse, I have been told that my prose in the last six months is better written than any before, which is encouraging - and an unconscious compliment to You).

I have not yet got my "Hayfever" text, but hope to have it before the performance. I had a mad idea of cabling flowers - but did not know where to - and then I reflected that it might be more an annoyance or embarrassment than a pleasure to have an anonymous bunch of sweet peas appear - so abandonded the project, reluctantly. I hope you do not overtire yourself, though I am glad you should get away at times; I have not heard of the Landons before. - I am sorry about scents, but imagined that they would be prohibitively expensive in America; perhaps some day I may see you in Paris and see what Caron or Guerlain can do in that way - I should love to see you lunching at Foyot or Voisin or even at the Nymphes du Luxembourg looking over the Gardens or at Letessier's in the Avenue Victor-Hugo or the Taverne Perigourdine with a paté and a petit vin mousseux de Saumur _ I like to chatter sometimes and that is my mood this morning - I shall write more seriously on Friday, on which day, I hope you will be having your picture done as I am very impatient- I should like to have two poses, please, if possible. It makes me happy to think of mine being dignified with a leather frame in your room upstairs. I may go to Corpus (Cambridge) for a weekend at the end of May - otherwise - but that is for Friday. There is a reproduction of a drawing of me by Wyndham Lewis several years ago - the original in the possession of Sydney Schiff Esqre. - which I am trying to find for you. Your Easter Card is on my mantel here , among a photograph of W.Force Stead (who wrote the sad letter) one of Tom Faber, one of Irene Fassett (my first and best secretary, now dead) and one of Bonamy Dobrée's country house in Norfolk. What a Silly letter this has been: bust you must allow me to be trivial at times, as I am sometimes sombre; O my dear, my Turtle, my dear -

Tom.

MENDHAM PRIORY,
HARLESTON,
NORFOLK.

27th April, 1931.

Dear Tom,

Your last was, if I may say so, the best of all. You must have them printed, as they are; they don't need any alteration. It was not only what you said that I liked particularly, but your own prose, at which I sat ébahi.

I pray you not to listen to my biographical dither on Defoe. I have already had my reward, in the form of a letter from a spinster name o' Cruso!

If you would like to see the learned work of Erramun Etcheberrigeray, I daresay I could borrow it for you from the Syndicat d'Initiative et de Régionalisme Basque. I will buy it for you if I wim the Irish Sweep.

I shall not be in London next week, for I shall be in Paris . But I shall be in London the week after.

I apologise for bad spacing, but I am undergoing an attack of vaso-motor rhinitis.

Yours

Bunny

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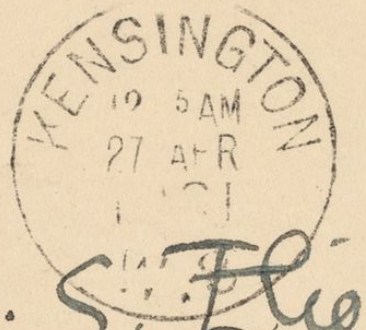
25.4.31

I shall be most pleased to
come in next Wednesday: it
will be a pleasure to see
you again, & to meet
yr friends of the "Criterion".

W. Rothenstein

Did I send you ever
his book of portrait
drawings, including
one of me? If not,
I will.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SE



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Tuesday 28 April
1931.

Emily dear.

This is merely to explain that I started a letter yesterday, having no time to finish it, & this morning had only ten minutes to myself - I came back late this afternoon, only to find

to catch the mail boat, remind
you meanwhile that you are never
away from my thoughts.

Yours Tom.

that I had left my
keys behind + could
not open the drawer
in which I had locked
the unfinished letter.
So I will finish it
tomorrow, when I hope
for a charming.
This morning, what there
was of it, devoted to
BBC (broadcasting
business. Excuse this
scrawl. It is only