1889

Published by

Sheldon, Julie.
The Letters of Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Eastlake.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/72688.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/72688
Letter to John Murray  NLS Ms.42178

7 FitzRoy Square
3. Janry 1889
Dear Mr. Murray

I have to thank you for a very beautiful book. I delight in Caldecott’s art which truly fulfils Sir Charles’ definition of style “a form of art in which you miss nothing”. I am glad to see our old ballads thus honoured.

A new year is rather an awful thing at my age. I can only wish for a continuation of my present health – fortunately I have no longing to be nimbler – all that has had its time. But I do wish that one dear to you more restored! I never miss her in my prayers.

You will think me very idle when I own that only this morning am I opening Miss North’s MS.¹ The last two weeks are the busiest of the year to me, & Christmas cards are terrible responsibilities to acknowledge. I never send any.

With all good wishes to you & yours. I am ever yr’s truly
Eliz Eastlake

¹. Marianne North (1830–90), botanical illustrator. The manuscript is her Recollections of a Happy Life which she sent to Murray in 1888. In it Elizabeth would have read the following recollection: ‘I was sent to school at Norwich with Madame de Wahl, one of the three sisters of Lady Eastlake who had committed the folly of marrying Russian nobles while students at Heidelberg. She had lived to repent, and escaped after much trouble, bringing home to England a son and a daughter, whom she had to educate and bring up by her own earnings. She was very handsome; it was impossible not to love her, but school-life was hateful to me. The teaching was such purely mechanical routine, and the girls with one exception were uninteresting.’ Susan Morgan (ed.), Recollections of a Happy Life, Being the Autobiography of Marianne North (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p. 13.

Letter to A. H. Layard  NLS Ms.42172

7 FitzRoy Sqre
18 Janry 1889

It is more than time, dear Layard, to thank you for your kind answers & solutions of my troublesome questions, which were in time for my purpose. Now that the Q.R. is just out & ‘Venice’ safe in it
I am the more anxious to acknowledge the great help in more than one form which you have afforded me. Your books – Lorenzino, & Mr Hor: Brown's 2 vols I have sent to your home today. The Molmenti you gave me is in three pieces, & goes to the binder tomorrow. You doubtless know the pleasure one feels to put away the evidences of the labour that has been. But I shall not be quite easy till I know that you not positively condemn my partially heterodox opinions of the government of Venice, & that Mr Horatio Brown does not set me down for a presumptuous ignoramus – there is of course no such thing as an ignorama. Good Dr. Smith has turned down a few expressions rather more than I like, but I never quarrel with one so kind & careful.

Of course I have not been able to see the ‘Old Masters’ – open about a fortnight ago. Many of the Masters are not very old – especially poor Holl who died the other day.1 I hear diverse opinions about him, as seen en masse. I trust Mrs. Richard Boyle’s opinions most, & she is startled at the rapid transition from Rembrandt, Watteau (a beautiful painter) & Romney to what she calls Holl’s 19th century photography. At all events the poor man seems to have painted himself to death. She also expatiates on the ‘vulgarity’ of Leslie, Etty & Mulready. Etty is welcome, but the two others are only vulgar in subject. They have both fine qualities of art. Now the Grosvenor Gallery opens tomorrow.

The chief excitement of late has been the elections for the County Councils. I was sore pressed to go & put my mark – only a X – at a house up high steps & down a dirty narrow lane in order to help to bring in two gentlemen opposed by a billiard ball maker, & a green grocer. But I am happy to say that the two gentlemen were returned by a large majority, without my help. I hope the may help to solve the pauperising problem in London – which puzzles me more than ever, & which apparently one cannot justly judge without a certain hardening of the heart. My hard-hearted opinion is that the evil will not be met till the Poor of London bring up & treat their children better. As it is I believe that most of them – mothers as well as fathers – would sell them to the best bidder as soon as they are born! I hope Venetian parents are not come to that.

I hope that you & Enid still hear of & from the Empress Frederick. She is perpetually in my thoughts. I remark that the conduct of the Prussians towards her & towards the noble Emperor has opened many eyes to the real baseness of German way & opinions. I am quite proud of havg been foremost in discovering their real character. I stood comparatively alone in that respect for long. You I remember, soon fraternized with me, & now I am no longer singular. Their doings in
South Africa are a proof of their overbearing ignorance, dishonesty & cruelty. Bismarck catches it now from our Press. Mrs Holford was telling me yesterday that she had met Herbert B. at the D: of Westminster’s, & never came across a more insolent & conceited prig. I shd like to toss Herbert Bismarck & Herbert Gladstone in one blanket & the two *Papas* in another. I must not venture to say more, or I shall shock even you!

You & Enid will soon be here I hope. London meanwhile has been detestable in atmosphere.

Ever Layard with love to Enid

Your’s ever truly

Eliz Eastlake

From family reasons I am about to purchase a head of my Father by Opie, & having no room for it I intend to offer the small Vandyck – companion to one in the Peel collection – to the Nat: Gal to purchase. I have too many family claims to give it. I shd offer it for less than Sir Chas gave for it.

1. Frank Holl (1845–88).

---

**Letter to A. H. Layard**

*NLS Ms.42172*

7 FitzRoy Sqr
6 Febry ’89

My dear Layard

I have been long.g to acknowledge your most kind letter – if I had not so many others to write, I should have done so by next post. In addition to wanting to thank you for the kind view you have taken of my “Venice” I burned to tell you that I found you out in the Q. Review at once. The general style set me on the scent, & then the adroitness with which you soon brought yr subject to Venice, & then to the Nat Gal! Of course D’Israeli’s intimacy with yr Uncle & Aunt was in itself a suff: testimony. I hear it praised by everyone – the public divided between you & Lord Lamington, that “it reads like a novel” &c. I am sure good old Dr. Wm. Smith is greatly obliged to you.

On my part I am only glad not to have given the young man who you say is so good looking, no offence. Had I seen him I daresay I shd have been more laudatory! As for “that little trickle of gall against the Germans” I was afraid I had toned it down too much! Nothing increases my self respect more that the steady, unflinching way in which I have talked & written against them upon every decent opportunity.¹ A great
compliment has been paid me of late – of which alas! I am undeserving. That late article in the Contemporary about Bismarck has been attributed to me. Would that I could have written anything with such power! But I am sure it is my rather notorious dislike of the Germans that has obtained me the compliment. You must have seen the article – if not, you will when you come. & I trust our dear Empress has seen those concluding passages which encourage her to take ‘a noble revenge’. I sometimes wonder what will pull our England down and whether it will ever decline as other countries have done. Our antecedents differ from those of all other European states – present & past. Our higher orders have never oppressed the lower ones – indeed have protected them. There is no chasm between classes, we have an enlightened national church. Other causes seem to me trifling in comparison. With all mistakes, follies & stupidities, England never, to me, seemed to stand higher. There is one universal mania to do good, in some form or other. Not that I include your friend Gladstone in this sweep – all he thinks of is to do good to himself.

I am interested in what you say of Sir R. Morier. I have known him & considered him a vain man & a tuft hunter.²

I have mentioned my wish to part with the little Vandyck to Gregory, & have written to Sir Frederick Burton – who promises to call & look at it. Gregory told me a delicious anecdote about Burton which I shall not forget. But you are both bewitched by him! My Opie of my father I expect today.³ With kindest love to Enid – ever your’s truly Eliz Eastlake

1. Letter from Austen Henry Layard to Elizabeth from Venice, 23 January 1889, NLS Ms.42338: ‘I have read your Article with interest, pleasure and profit. My dear friend Horatio Brown is delighted with your kind mention of him, and as yet, I have heard no criticism from him. I did not tell him that you were the author of the Article, but he said at once “no one but Lady Eastlake could have written it”. Why he should have said so I cannot tell you. I should not have had the slightest difficulty in tracing to its source that little trickle of gall, which is so copiously and so justly turned occasionally upon our friends the Germans … I am quite ready to give a hand with you to the tossing in blankets of the Bismarcks and Gladstones, old and young. The German Prussian is a brute and has always been one – and Bismarck is the very type of the race’.

2. Sir Robert Morier (1826–93), diplomat with many German, Austrian and Russian postings. A tuft hunter is a toady, someone who tries to curry favour with the nobility for personal advancement or gain.

3. The current whereabouts of Opie’s portrait of Dr Rigby are unknown. The painting was last traced to the possession of Claud Eastlake Smith (d. 1944).
7 FitzRoy Square
18 April 1889
Dear Miss Cobbe

You have been so kind as to send me your collected writings on that
dreadful subject which has occupied your mind so painfully & yr pen
so bravely & powerfully for long. It is no slight thing to have produced
such a work. Providence appointed you to do it. There is no one else
who so combines the right thought & the right manner. Few women
have the gift & humour – none, I ever knew or heard of, possess it in
the degree that you do. Thus you command the weapons & argument
at both ends. No candid mind can fail to be struck with the moral
ingenuity as well as humanity & rectitude of your pleas. Painful only
in one sense, as showing the depths of yr own tortured heart from
which they have been drawn. Indeed next to the poor animals I find
myself feeling for you who suffer so much for them! But you will
not have suffered in vain – for it is as sacred a course as ever a noble
philanthropist took up. How it helps to convince one that there must
be another life both for the animal sufferers & his human defender. In
reading Butler’s analogy again just now I find to my surprize & gladness
signs of his holding that hope for the animal. How I wish I were
able to do anything! but at my age the pen is falling from my hand. I
once suggested to kind Dr. Wm Smith to have the subject treated in
the Quarterly. He negatived the idea, but said he had been struck on
reading the Royal Commission with the utter absence of all feeling of
humanity & compassion.

Nor can I close this epistle without a tribute to yr “Science in
Excelsis” which is simply perfect.1 But you will have better tributes than
mine. All I can do is to speak the truth whenever I can as to the worse
than uselessness, the misleading of the diabolical practice. The public
ought to withdraw all support from the Hospitals where it is practiced.

With my deep & affte respect, believe me, dear Miss Cobbe
Ever yrs truly
Eliz Eastlake

7 FitzRoy Square
Decr 1. ’89
Dear Layard

You say rightly in your letter of the 22nd Nov, that you do not think you owe me a letter – all the more kind of you to send me one so interesting & full. One of the many advantages I owe you in having allowed me to occupy you home is the power it has given me to see you & dear Enid there, & also the friends who visit you. I can vividly see your Princes & Princesses in the rooms I know so well, further beautified as they now are. All is most interesting. Did you succeed in making the Princess of Wales talk? I hear that the dinners given by the Duke & Duchess of Fyfe, are, in the language of the day ‘ghastly dull’. I rather wonder what, beside an inanimate, ignorant young girl, he has got in his Princess.

Your account of our Princess Fred: interests me most of all. She is never long out of my thoughts. She says what must be quite true that some of her pleasantest hours are owing to you two. You know my opinion of Germans, & I can imagine the welcome contrast she finds in your company, especially in this time of sorrow & depression. She is brave to do all she does, & especially to have undertaken this voyage. I trust the young Sophia is in good hands. I am glad the remaining Psses keep up the tradition of ‘Aunt Enid’. How it would shock the Germans! Altogether the chapter of the Empress’ treatment in Berlin from the first day she placed her young foot there is a disgraceful one & will come out some day.

The torrent of rain that have flooded Italy have been unknown here. Upon the whole the autumn has been fine & dry, & gorgeous in tints. Now we are havg cold, tho’ not severe, with find sun.

I have at last brought my Czartoriski article to a conclusion, & am improving the proofs at my leisure. I think I told you before that my reading for it has given me the lowest possible opinion of the Polish race – vain, frivolous, boastful, & cruel – they had not a single quality, unless perhaps a reckless bravery, which fitted them to rule. They richly deserve their subjection,& in the nature of things, were predestined to the position they now occupy, & will for ever occupy. Czartoriski was a poor thing, with no political capacity, to my view, he was no real patriot, but only one of a shortsighted caste, who wanted time to roll back & restore them to powers of tyranny. How ungrateful, too, to that real patriot, philanthropist, & hero, Alexander Ist, of whom his posterity
has made too little! He was a man after my own heart – a compound of Prince Albert, the Emperor Frederick, & himself, & good looking too. I have not heard from dear old Dr. Smith what he thinks of the article, but have reason to believe he does not think it worse than usual.

Like you I am much grieved at the death of John Ball. He is associated with pleasant hours in the Past. You & I have met at dinner at his table. I have known both his wives – the little Italian soon after she came. I have written to poor Mrs Ball, but forbade her answer to me at least for the present. I hear that she felt utterly unprepared for his death – most wives do! I can do little nowadays for old acquaintances, but I shall endeavour to keep in touch with her.

In Lady Bagot I find unexpectedly an old friend of Enid’s. I liked her much, but unfortunately I don’t know her address, or whether she lives in London, so unless she is good as to come to me again I fear we shall not meet.

Today I have had Chas Eastlake here, who told me some good news, wh: I am not allowed to repeat. I see good old Thomson Hankey occasionally, who kindly comes to me. He is a little deaf & suddenly had become much worse, which distressed him. He was afraid he shd have to give up his little dinners of six friends at a time. However, I sent to enquire for him last eveng & received word that the deafness had much gone off. He bears the loss of the dear good wife of 50 years very bravely, but flinches from going back to the country house in Kent, & assures me that remaining in London this autumn was very pleasant & sociable. I shall perhaps try that if I live another year, for the move into the country tried me much last time. I was much interested in yr avant dernièr letter of Septr. 22nd with your account of the Vaudois Bicentenary, & your climb up the hill, & anglo-french speech. & this reminds me of a dreadful loss I have had which you alone can repair. I had taken the greatest care of yr pamphlet on the result of yr search with the Venetian & Roman archives on the subject of the massacre of St Bartholomew. I had it out for some purpose, & a friend coming in, Lady Juliana Walker, took it up & became so interested that I let her carry it off, adding as she took it, “I know I can rely upon you to return it safe”. The next morn she wrote me a heartbroken letter that she had in some way dropped it out of her muff, & that it was gone beyond recovery! Is there any hope that you can ever spare me another?

I shall be sure to send for ‘l’homme d’autrefois’. I wd read anything that dear, noble woman recommended.

I am sorry you have had to entertain yr beloved friend, the unworthy Director of the Nat: Gal: It is just like him to get two Tuccarelli’s which he could just as well have picked up in England. He has never
obtained a ‘capo d’opera’ from the gallery, only second rates at first rate prices, wh: he considers the essential thing.

Give Enid my best love. I know how she must enjoy reading to you, & believe me dear Layard

Ever yr’s truly Eliz Eastlake

Tell Enid I see something of her friend old Mrs Hamilton.

Letter to John Murray  NLS Ms.42178

7 FitzRoy Square
8. Decr ‘89
Dear Mr Murray
Since I had the pleasure of seeing you yesterday I have been thinking of this proposed tribute to Layard. From what you & Ph: Hardwick have said & written I feel convinced that the bust in question is hardly worthy of royal patronage, & therefore I have suspended my proposed letter to Sir Theodore Martin. I make no doubt that the subscription as now proposed is pretty well filled up by this time & the position of the bust in the Hugenot Hospital will be, as far as it goes, appropriate. But his Hugenot descent does not embrace Layard’ claim on his English compatriots. You will judge whether it would not be desirable to get Layard to sit, on his return here in the Spring, to some first rate sculptor, raise a suff: sum among his numerous friends & present it to the B: Museum for the Assyrian room. I hardly think this smaller subscription for an inferior bust will stand in the way – tho’ perhaps rather unfortunate. But the scheme was got up without my knowledge – & I was only asked to touché up a miserable sketch of a circular about him, which I entirely replaced by the present circular, except the last few paragraphs. I was assured by non-connoisseurs that the bust was very fine, its not being so makes all the difference. At the same time it is perhaps good enough for its Hugenot destination.

Will you kindly turn this over in your mind. It is as well to make no mistakes & it will be no affront to good Mrs. Hamilton to have another bust for another place.

Ever your’s truly
Eliz Eastlake
Letter to A. H. Layard  

7 FitzRoy Sqre  
13. Decr. '89  
My dear Layard  

You are very good indeed. I received yr Massacre of St. Bartholemew on Wednesday evening, & the photograph of Ca’ Capello yesterday morning. So I am rich & very grateful to you. Poor Lady Juliana Walker had not forgiven herself since losing the first copy of the Massacre which you gave me – so I immediately relieved her mind. Ca’ Capello looks charmingly in the new coat you have given her. I have followed the line of windows with melancholy pleasure, knowing so well the rooms they represented. I say ‘melancholy’ for all past pleasures have a certain mournfulness, & my time under your roof was interesting & peaceful, & I can’t return again, tho’ you are kind as to wish it. My place for the small rest of my life is in this old home, which could tell a good deal of weal & woe & where I have now been 40 years. I first met you I think in 1851.  

Your letter prepared me for the death of Browning which appears in today’s Times. I knew him tolerably well, & liked him better than his works. He had a peculiar set of readers who adored him – Ld Coleridge & his family were among those. There are always peculiar admirers for peculiar writers, painters, clergymen &c. I suspect very few quotations from Browning have got into general use. I don’t know one. I knew Mrs. Browning slightly – he certainly showed taste there. She was so interesting a woman that half an hour of her company gave one much to remember. His illness & death in the splendid Palazzo Rezzonico shows how his son has got on in the world. Browning was happy not to have lived to extreme old age – there is extra death in that.  

I omitted to ask you in my last letter what your Q.R. labours were upon. I shall get it out of dear old Dr. Smith when I next see him. He was here last Sunday looking particularly well. Mr Murray was here shortly before & expressed his opinion that Mrs. Smith was “fond of champagne”. I trust this is a calumny.  

I have read the life of the “Grand Dame Polonaise” indeed I have inserted it among my headings. That alone I think would tell what Poland has been. The Poles – at least the caste which fancied they represented the Country – may have been heroic, if rashness & foolhardiness represent heroism, but they certainly were not ‘patriotic’. There are excellent articles on Poland in the Réone Francaise by a M: Leroy-Beaulieu.’ says, of their insurrections, “C’étad de l’héroisme;
ce on’êtart pas du patriotisme” – but, however, I shall enjoy to get yr criticisms when you have read the wretched article.

You were sure to defend yr beloved Knight of Trafalgar Square. But if pictures are so dear now that is exactly his line. Mediocrity at high prices are his special delight. I suppose the Lucarelli’s cost thousands.

Pray thank Enid for me for Lady Bagot’s address. I envy her reading aloud. You ought to sit & do some handiwork, as Lord Sherbrooke does when read to. I am happy in havg Miss Lewin’s company now, but expect to spend a lonely Christmas.

Ever dear Layard with renewed thanks

Yrs very truly

Eliz Eastlake


2. Sir Frederick Burton.

---

Letter to A. H. Layard

NLS Ms.42173

7 FitzRoy Sqre
5. Janry 90

My dear Layard

The poor Postmen have never been so overpowered of late in bringing every form of good wishes – in the shape of picture cards, letters, notes, photographs, books, pamphlets, Devonshire cream, flowers &c. & the burden of acknowledg.g them all has been so proportionably great that I find your kind letter, & the photograph of the Ca’ Capello still unthanked for. By dint of writing batches of letters & notes – a dozen at a time – I have diminished my debts & am thankful now to recreate myself by thanking you for both letter & photograph. The latter arrived a little battered but otherwise unhurt, & I am now sending it to a great place in Oxford Street to be mounted & also to have a small one taken from it – to send to a young lady, now happily married & settled in Ceylon, who was with me in your house, & much craves a picture of it.

I lost no time in getting from London Library ‘L’homme d’autrefois’ recommended by our Empress Fred: I have been much interested in it. It follows well upon the books I have been studying of late. One remark in a letter from le Marquis Costa to his wife, being à propos of a young french officer of note, qui s’appelle Buonaparte about 1797. There is no end to the tremendous interest of that time & that of the preceding