GEORGE ELIOT

GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE, AS RELATED IN HER LETTERS AND JOURNALS. VOL. 3 (OF 3)

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CHAPTER XIV

The new year of 1867 opens with the description of the journey to Spain

Letter to Madame Bodichon, Jan. 1867, from Bordeaux.

We prolonged our stay in Paris in order to see Madame Mohl, who was very good to us; invited the Scherers and other interesting people to meet us at dinner on the 29th, and tempted us to stay and breakfast with her on the 31st, by promising to invite Renan, which she did successfully, and so procured us a bit of experience that we were glad to have, over and above the pleasure of seeing a little more of herself and M. Mohl. I like them both, and wish there were a chance of knowing them better. We paid for our pleasure by being obliged to walk in the rain

(from the impossibility of getting a carriage) all the way from the Rue de Rivoli – where a charitable German printer, who had taken us up in his *fiacre*, was obliged to set us down – to the Hôtel du Helder, through streets literally jammed with carriages and omnibuses, carrying people who were doing the severe social duties of the last day in the year. The rain it raineth every day, with the exception of yesterday; we can't travel away from it, apparently. But we start in desperation for Bayonne in half an hour.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 16th Jan. 1867, from Biarritz.

Snow on the ground here, too – more, we are told, than has been seen here for fifteen years before. But it has been obliging enough to fall in the night, and the sky is glorious this morning, as it was yesterday. Sunday was the one exception since the 6th, when we arrived here to a state of weather which has allowed us to be out of doors the greater part of our daylight. We think it curious that, among the many persons who have talked to us about Biarritz, the Brownings alone have ever spoken of its natural beauties; yet these are transcendent. We agree that the sea never seemed so magnificent to us before, though we have seen the Atlantic breaking on the rocks at Ilfracombe and on the great granite walls of the Scilly Isles. In the southern division of the bay we see the sun set over the Pyrenees; and in the northern we have two splendid stretches of sand, one with huge fragments of dark rock scattered about for the waves to leap over, the other an unbroken level, firm to the feet, where the hindmost line of

wave sends up its spray on the horizon like a suddenly rising cloud. This part of the bay is worthily called the Chambre de l'Amour; and we have its beauties all to ourselves, which, alas! in this stage of the world, one can't help feeling to be an advantage. The few families and bachelors who are here (chiefly English) scarcely ever come across our path. The days pass so rapidly, we can hardly believe in their number when we come to count them. After breakfast we both read the "Politique" – George one volume and I another – interrupting each other continually with questions and remarks. That morning study keeps me in a state of enthusiasm through the day – a moral glow, which is a sort of *milieu subjectif* for the sublime sea and sky. Mr. Lewes is converted to the warmest admiration of the chapter on language in the third volume, which about three years ago he thought slightly of. I think the first chapter of the fourth volume is among the finest of all, and the most finely written. My gratitude increases continually for the illumination Comte has contributed to my life. But we both of us study with a sense of having still much to learn and to understand. About ten or half-past ten we go out for our morning walk; and then, while we plunge about in the sand or march along the cliff, George draws out a book and tries my paces in Spanish, demanding a quick-as-light translation of nouns and phrases. Presently I retort upon him, and prove that it is easier to ask than to answer. We find this system of *vivâ-voce* mutual instruction so successful that we are disgusted with ourselves for not having used it before through all

our many years of companionship; and we are making projects for giving new interest to Regent's Park by pursuing all sorts of studies in the same way there. We seldom come indoors till one o'clock, and we turn out again at three, often remaining to see the sunset. One other thing I have been reading here which I must tell you of. It is a series of three papers by Saveney, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of last year, on "La Physique Moderne," an excellent summary, giving a glimpse of the great vista opened in that region. I think you would like to read them when you are strong enough for that sort of exertion.

We stayed three days in Paris, and passed our time very agreeably. The first day we dined with Madame Mohl, who had kindly invited Professor Scherer and his wife, Jules Simon, Lomenie, Lavergne, "and others" to meet us. That was on the Saturday, and she tempted us to stay the following Monday by saying she would invite Renan to breakfast with us. Renan's appearance is something between the Catholic priest and the dissenting minister. His manners are very amiable, his talk pleasant, but not distinguished. We are entertaining great projects as to our further journeying. It will be best for you to address *Poste Restante*, Barcelona.

Letter to Madame Bodichon, 2d Feb. 1867.

Are you astonished to see our whereabouts? We left Biarritz for San Sebastian, where we stayed three days; and both there and all our way to Barcelona our life has been a succession of delights. We have had perfect weather, blue skies, and a warm

sun. We travelled from San Sebastian to Saragossa, where we passed two nights; then to Lerida for one night, and yesterday to Barcelona. You know the scenery from San Sebastian to Alsasua, through the lower Pyrenees, because it lies on the way to Burgos and Madrid. At Alsasua we turned off through Navarre into Aragon, seeing famous Pampeluna, looking as beautiful as it did ages ago among the grand hills. At Saragossa the scene was thoroughly changed; all through Aragon, as far as we could see, I should think the country resembles the highlands of Central Spain. There is the most striking effect of hills, flanking the plain of Saragossa, I ever saw. They are of palish clay, washed by the rains into undulating forms, and some slight herbage upon them makes the shadows of an exquisite blue.

These hills accompanied us in the distance all the way through Aragon, the snowy mountains topping them in the far distance. The land is all pale brown, the numerous towns and villages just match the land, and so do the sheepfolds, built of mud or stone. The herbage is all of an ashy green. Perhaps if I had been in Africa I should say, as you do, that the country reminded me of Africa; as it is, I think of all I have read about the East. The men who look on while others work at Saragossa also seem to belong to the East, with a great striped blanket wrapped grandly round them, and a kerchief tied about their hair. But though Aragon was held by the Moors longer than any part of Northern Spain, the features and skins of the people seem to me to bear less traces of the mixture there must have been than one would

fairly expect. Saragossa has a grand character still, in spite of the stucco with which the people have daubed the beautiful small brick of which the houses are built. Here and there one sees a house left undesecrated by stucco; and all of them have the fluted tiles and the broad eaves beautifully ornamented. Again, one side of the old cathedral still shows the exquisite inlaid work which, in the *façade*, has been overlaid hideously. Gradually, as we left Aragon and entered Catalonia, the face of the country changed, and we had almost every sort of beauty in succession; last of all, between Monserrat and Barcelona, a perfect garden, with the richest red soil – blossoms on the plum and cherry trees, aloes thick in the hedges. At present we are waiting for the Spanish hardships to begin. Even at Lerida, a place scarcely at all affected by foreign travellers, we were perfectly comfortable – and such sights! The people scattered on the brown slopes of rough earth round the fortress – the women knitting, etc., the men playing at cards, one wonderful, gaudily dressed group; another of handsome gypsies. We are actually going by steam-boat to Alicante, and from Alicante to Malaga. Then we mean to see Granada, Cordova, and Seville. We shall only stay here a few days – if this weather continues.

Letter to Frederic Harrison, 18th Feb. 1867, from Granada.

Your kind letter, written on the 5th, reached me here this morning. I had not heard of the criticism in the *Edinburgh*. Mr. Lewes read the article, but did not tell me of the reviewer's

legal wisdom, thinking that it would only vex me to no purpose. However, I had felt sure that something of that sort must have appeared in one review article or another. I am heartily glad and grateful that you have helped justice in general, as well as justice to me in particular, by getting the vindication written for the *Pall Mall*. It was the best possible measure to adopt. Since we left Barcelona, a fortnight ago, we have seen no English papers, so that we have been in the dark as to English news.

Were you not surprised to hear that we had come so far? The journey from San Sebastian by Saragossa and Lerida turned out to be so easy and delightful that we ceased to tremble, and determined to carry out our project of going by steamer to Alicante and Malaga. You cannot do better than follow our example; I mean, so far as coming to Spain is concerned. Believe none of the fictions that bookmakers get printed about the horrors of Spanish hotels and cookery, or the hardships of Spanish travel – still less about the rudeness of Spaniards. It is true that we have not yet endured the long railway journeys through Central Spain, but wherever we have been hitherto we have found nothing formidable, even for our rickety bodies.

We came hither from Malaga in the *berlina (coupé)* of the diligence, and have assured ourselves that Mr. Blackburne's description of a supposed hen-roost, overturned in the Alameda at Malaga, which proved to be the Granada diligence, is an invention. The vehicle is comfortable enough, and the road is perfect; and at the end of it we have found ourselves in one of

the loveliest scenes on earth.

We shall remain here till the 23d, and then go to Cordova first, to Seville next, and finally to Madrid, making our way homeward from thence by easy stages. We expect to be in the smoky haze of London again soon after the middle of March, if not before.

I wish I could believe that you were all having anything like the clear skies and warm sun which have cheered our journeying for the last month. At Alicante we walked among the palm-trees with their golden fruit hanging in rich clusters, and felt a more delightful warmth than that of an English summer. Last night we walked out and saw the towers of the Alhambra, the wide Vega, and the snowy mountains, by the brilliant moonlight. You see, we are getting a great deal of pleasure, but we are not working, as you seem charitably to imagine. We tire ourselves, but only with seeing or going to see unforgetable things. You will say that we ought to work to better purpose when we get home. Amen. But just now we read nothing but Spanish novels – and not much of those. We said good-bye to philosophy and science when we packed up our trunks at Biarritz.

Please keep some friendship warm for us, that we may not be too much chilled by the English weather when we get back.

Letter to John Blackwood, 21st Feb. 1867.

We are both heartily rejoiced that we came to Spain. It was a great longing of mine, for, three years ago, I began to interest myself in Spanish history and literature, and have had a work lying by me, partly written, the subject of which is connected

with Spain. Whether I shall ever bring it to maturity so as to satisfy myself sufficiently to print it is a question not settled; but it is a work very near my heart. We have had perfect weather ever since the 27th of January – magnificent skies and a summer sun. At Alicante, walking among the palm-trees, with the bare brown rocks and brown houses in the background, we fancied ourselves in the tropics; and a gentleman who travelled with us assured us that the aspect of the country closely resembled Aden, on the Red Sea. Here, at Granada, of course, it is much colder, but the sun shines uninterruptedly; and in the middle of the day, to stand in the sunshine against a wall, reminds me of my sensations at Florence in the beginning of June. The aspect of Granada as we first approached it was a slight disappointment to me, but the beauty of its position can hardly be surpassed. To stand on one of the towers of the Alhambra and see the sun set behind the dark mountains of Loja, and send its after-glow on the white summits of the Sierra Nevada, while the lovely Vega spreads below, ready to yield all things pleasant to the eye and good for food, is worth a very long, long journey. We shall start to-morrow evening for Cordova; then we shall go to Seville, back to Cordova, and on to Madrid.

During our short stay in Paris we went a little into society, and saw, among other people who interested us, Professor Scherer, of whom you know something. He charmed me greatly. He is a Genevese, you know, and does not talk in ready-made epigrams, like a clever Frenchman, but with well-chosen, moderate words,

intended to express what he really thinks and feels. He is highly cultivated; and his wife, who was with him, is an Englishwoman of refined, simple manners.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 10th Mch. 1867, from Biarritz.

At Biarritz again, you see, after our long, delightful journey, in which we have made a great loop all round the east and through the centre of Spain. Mr. Lewes says he thinks he never enjoyed a journey so much, and you will see him so changed – so much plumper and ruddier – that if pity has entered much into your regard for him he will be in danger of losing something by his bodily prosperity. We crowned our pleasures in Spain with the sight of the pictures in the Madrid gallery. The skies were as blue at Madrid as they had been through the previous part of our journeying, but the air was bitterly cold; and naughty officials receive money for warming the museum, but find other uses for the money. I caught a severe cold the last day of our visit, and, after an uncomfortable day and night's railway journey, arrived at Biarritz, only fit for bed and coddling.

Journal, 1867.

March 16.– This evening we got home after a journey to the south of Spain. I go to my poem and the construction of two prose works – if possible.

Letter to John Blackwood, 18th Mch. 1867.

We got home on Saturday evening, after as fine a passage from Calais to Dover as we ever had, even in summer. Your letter was

among the pleasant things that smiled at me on my return, and helped to reconcile me to the rather rude transition from summer to winter which we have made in our journey from Biarritz. This morning it is snowing hard and the wind is roaring – a sufficiently sharp contrast to the hot sun, the dust, and the mosquitoes of Seville.

We have had a glorious journey. The skies alone, both night and day, were worth travelling all the way to see. We went to Cordova and Seville, but we feared the cold of the central lands in the north, and resisted the temptation to see Toledo, or anything else than the Madrid pictures, which are transcendent.

Among the letters awaiting me was one from an American travelling in Europe, who gives me the history of a copy of "Felix Holt," which, he says, has been read by no end of people, and is now on its way through Ireland, "where he found many friends anxious but unable to get it." It seems people nowadays economize in nothing but books. I found also the letter of a "Conveyancer" in the *Pall Mall*, justifying the law of "Felix Holt" in answer to the *Edinburgh* reviewer. I did not know, before I was told of this letter in reply, that the *Edinburgh* reviewer had found fault with my law.

Journal, 1867.

March 21.– Received from Blackwood a check for £2166 13*s.* 4*d.*, being the second instalment of £1666 13*s.* 4*d.* towards the £5000 for "Felix Holt," together with £500 as the first instalment of £1000 for ten years' copyright of the cheap edition of my

novels.

Letter to John Blackwood, 21st Mch. 1867.

Your letters, with the valuable enclosure of a check for £2166 13*s.* 4*d.*, have come to me this morning, and I am much obliged to you for your punctual attention.

I long to see a specimen of the cheap edition of the novels. As to the illustrations, I have adjusted my hopes so as to save myself from any great shock. When I remember my own childish happiness in a frightfully illustrated copy of the "Vicar of Wakefield," I can believe that illustration may be a great good relatively, and that my own present liking has no weight in the question.

I fancy that the placarding at railway stations is an effective measure, for Ruskin was never more mistaken than in asserting that people have no spare time to observe anything in such places. I am a very poor reader of advertisements, but even I am forced to get them unpleasantly by heart at the stations.

It is rather a vexatious kind of tribute when people write, as my American correspondent did, to tell me of one paper-covered American copy of "Felix Holt" brought to Europe and serving for so many readers that it was in danger of being worn away under their hands. He, good man, finds it easy "to urge greater circulation by means of cheap sale," having "found so many friends in Ireland anxious but unable to obtain the book." I suppose putting it in a yellow cover with figures on it, reminding one of the outside of a show, and charging a shilling for it, is

what we are expected to do for the good of mankind. Even then I fear it would hardly bear the rivalry of "The Pretty Milliner," or of "The Horrible Secret."

The work connected with Spain is not a romance. It is – prepare your fortitude – it is – a poem. I conceived the plot, and wrote nearly the whole as a drama in 1864. Mr. Lewes advised me to put it by for a time and take it up again, with a view to recasting it. He thinks hopefully of it. I need not tell you that I am *not* hopeful, but I am quite sure the subject is fine. It is not historic, but has merely historic connections. The plot was wrought out entirely as an incorporation of my own ideas. Of course, if it is ever finished to my satisfaction, it is not a work for us to get money by, but Mr. Lewes urges and insists that it shall be done. I have also my private projects about an English novel, but I am afraid of speaking as if I could depend on myself; at present I am rather dizzy, and not settled down to home habits of regular occupation.

I understand that the conveyancer who wrote to the *Pall Mall* is an excellent lawyer in his department, and the lecturer on Real Property at the Law Institution.

If a reviewer ever checked himself by considering that a writer whom he thinks worth praising would take some pains to know the truth about a matter which is the very hinge of said writer's story, review articles would cut a shrunken figure.

Journal, 1867.

May 5.– We went to Bouverie Street to hear the first of a

course of lectures on Positivism, delivered by Dr. Congreve. There were present seventy-five people, chiefly men.

May 11.– We had Mr. and Mrs. Call to dine with us, and an evening party afterwards.

May 12.– We went to hear Dr. Congreve's second lecture. The morning was thoroughly wet; the audience smaller, but still good.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 13th May, 1867.

Yesterday we went to the second of a course of lectures which Dr. Congreve is delivering on Positivism in Bouverie Street. At the first lecture on the 5th there was a considerable audience – about seventy-five, chiefly men – of various ranks, from lords and M.P.'s downwards, or upwards, for what is called social distinction seems to be in a shifting condition just now. Yesterday the wet weather doubtless helped to reduce the audience; still it was good. Curiosity brings some, interest in the subject others, and the rest go with the wish to express adhesion more or less thorough.

I am afraid you have ceased to care much about pictures, else I should wish that you could see the Exhibition of Historical Portraits at Kensington. It is really worth a little fatigue to see the English of past generations in their habit as they lived – especially when Gainsborough and Sir Joshua are the painters. But even Sir Godfrey Kneller delights me occasionally with a finely conceived portrait carefully painted. There is an unforgetable portrait of Newton by him.

Journal, 1867.

May 27.– Went with G. to the Academy Exhibition.

May 29.– Went to the Exhibition of French Pictures – very agreeable and interesting.

Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor, 30th May, 1867.

I do sympathize with you most emphatically in the desire to see women socially elevated – educated equally with men, and secured as far as possible, along with every other breathing creature, from suffering the exercise of any unrighteous power. That is a broader ground of sympathy than agreement as to the amount and kind of result that may be hoped for from a particular measure. But on this special point I am far from thinking myself an oracle, and on the whole I am inclined to hope for much good from the serious presentation of women's claims before Parliament. I thought Mill's speech sober and judicious from his point of view – Karslake's an abomination.

À propos of what you say about Mr. Congreve, I think you have mistaken his, or rather Comte's, position. There is no denial of an unknown cause, but only a denial that such a conception is the proper basis of a practical religion. It seems to me pre-eminently desirable that we should learn not to make our personal comfort a standard of truth.

Journal, 1867.

June 1 (Saturday). – Wrote up to the moment when Fedalma appears in the Plaça.

June 5.– Blackwood dined with us, and I read to him my poem down to page 56. He showed great delight.

June 26.– We went to Niton for a fortnight, returning July 10.

July 16.– Received £2166 13*s.* 4*d.* from Blackwood, being the final instalment for "Felix Holt," and (£500) copyright for ten years.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 28th July, 1867.

Again we take flight! To North Germany this time, and chiefly to Dresden, where we shall be accessible through the *Poste Restante*. I am ashamed of saying anything about our health – we are both "objects" for compassion or contempt, according to the disposition of the subject who may contemplate us.

Mr. Beesley (I think it was he) sent us Dr. Congreve's pamphlet last night, and I read it aloud to George. We both felt a cordial satisfaction in it. We have been a good deal beset by little engagements with friends and acquaintances lately, and these, with the preparations for our journey, have been rather too much for me. Mr. Lewes is acting on the advice of Sir Henry Holland in giving up zoologizing for the present, because it obliges him to hang down his head. That is the reason we go inland, and not to the coast, as I think I hinted to you that we expected to do.

You are sympathetic enough to be glad to hear that we have had thoroughly cheerful and satisfactory letters from both our boys in Natal. They are established in their purchased farm, and are very happy together in their work. Impossible for mortals to have less trouble than we. I should have written to you earlier

this week – for we start to-morrow – but that I have been laid prostrate with crushing headache one half of my time, and always going out or seeing some one the other half.

Farewell, dear. Don't write unless you have a real desire to gossip with me a little about yourself and our mutual friends. You know I always like to have news of you, but I shall not think it unkind – I shall only think you have other things to do – if you are silent.

Journal, 1867.

July 29.– We went to Dover this evening as the start on a journey into Germany (North).

Oct. 1.– We returned home after revisiting the scenes of cherished memories – Ilmenau, Dresden, and Berlin. Of new places we have seen Wetzlar, Cassel, Eisenach, and Hanover. At Ilmenau I wrote Fedalma's soliloquy after her scene with Silva, and the following dialogue between her and Juan. At Dresden I rewrote the whole scene between her and Zarca.

Oct. 9.– Reading "Los Judios en Espâna," Percy's "Reliques," "Isis," occasionally aloud.

Oct. 10.– Reading the "Iliad," Book III. Finished "Los Judios en Espâna," a wretchedly poor book.

Oct. 11.– Began again Prescott's "Ferdinand and Isabella."

Oct. 19.– George returned last evening from a walking expedition in Surrey with Mr. Spencer.

This entry is an interesting one to me, as it fixes the

date of the first acquaintance with my family. Mr. Herbert Spencer was an old friend of ours, and in the course of their walk he and Mr. Lewes happened to pass through Weybridge, where my mother at that time lived. They came to dinner. Mr. Lewes, with his wonderful social powers, charmed all, and they passed a delightful evening. I was myself in America at the time, where I was in business as a banker at New York. My eldest sister had just then published a little volume of poems,[1] which was kindly received by the press. On the invitation of Mr. Lewes she went shortly afterwards to see George Eliot, then in the zenith of her fame; nor did she ever forget the affectionate manner in which the great author greeted her. This was the beginning of a close friendship between the families, which lasted, and increased in intimacy, to the end. Mr. Spencer, in writing to tell me that it was he who first made Mr. Lewes acquainted with George Eliot, adds, "You will perhaps be struck by the curious coincidence that it was also by me that Lewes was introduced to your family at Weybridge and remoter issues entailed."

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 20th Oct. 1867.

Before I got your letter I was about to write to you and direct your attention to an article in the forthcoming (October) number of the *Quarterly Review*, on the Talmud. You really must go out of your way to read it. It is written by one of the greatest Oriental scholars, the man among living men who probably knows the most about the Talmud; and you will appreciate the pregnancy of

[1] "An Old Story and Other Poems," by Elizabeth D. Cross.

the article. There are also beautiful, soul-cheering things selected for quotation.

Journal, 1867.

Oct. 31.– I have now inserted all that I think of for the first part of the "Spanish Gypsy." On Monday I wrote three new Lyrics. I have also rewritten the first scenes in the gypsy camp, to the end of the dialogue between Juan and Fedalma. But I have determined to make the commencement of the second part continue the picture of what goes forward in Bedmar.

Nov. 1.– Began this morning Part II. "Silva was marching homeward," etc.

Letter to John Blackwood, 9th Nov. 1867.

About putting Fedalma in type. There would be advantages, but also disadvantages; and on these latter I wish to consult you. I have more than three thousand lines ready in the order I wish them to stand in, and it would be good to have them in print to read them critically. Defects reveal themselves more fully in type, and emendations might be more conveniently made on proofs, since I have given up the idea of copying the MS. as a whole. On the other hand, *could the thing be kept private when it had once been in the printing-office*? And I particularly wish not to have it set afloat, for various reasons. Among others, I want to keep myself free from all inducements to premature publication; I mean, publication before I have given my work as much revision as I can hope to give it while my mind is still nursing it. Beyond

this, delay would be useless. The theory of laying by poems for nine years may be a fine one, but it could not answer for me to apply it. I could no more live through one of my books a second time than I can live through last year again. But I like to keep checks on myself, and not to create external temptations to do what I should think foolish in another. If you thought it possible to secure us against the oozing out of proofs and gossip, the other objections would be less important. One difficulty is, that in my MS. I have frequently two readings of the same passage, and, being uncertain which of them is preferable, I wish them both to stand for future decision. But perhaps this might be managed in proof. The length of the poem is at present uncertain, but I feel so strongly what Mr. Lewes insists on, namely, the evil of making it too long, that I shall set it before me as a duty not to make it more than nine thousand lines, and shall be glad if it turns out a little shorter.

Will you think over the whole question? I am sure your mind will supply any prudential considerations that I may have omitted.

I am vexed by the non-success of the serial edition of the works. It is not, Heaven knows, that I read my own books or am puffed up about them, but I have been of late quite astonished by the strengthening testimonies that have happened to come to me of people who care about every one of my books, and continue to read them – especially young men, who are just the class I care most to influence. But what sort of data can one safely go upon with regard to the success of editions?

"Felix Holt" is immensely tempted by your suggestion,[2] but George Eliot is severely admonished by his domestic critic not to scatter his energies.

Mr. Lewes sends his best regards. He is in high spirits about the poem.

Journal, 1867.

Nov. 22.– Began an "Address to the Working Men, by Felix Holt," at Blackwood's repeated request.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 22d Nov. 1867.

Yes, indeed – when I do *not* reciprocate "chaos is come again." I was quite sure your letter would come, and was grateful beforehand.

There is a scheme on foot for a Woman's College, or, rather, University, to be built between London and Cambridge, and to be in connection with the Cambridge University, sharing its professors, examinations, and degrees! *Si muove.*

Letter to Madame Bodichon, 1st Dec. (?) 1867.

I have written to Miss Davies to ask her to come to see me on Tuesday.

I am much occupied just now, but the better education of women is one of the objects about which I have *no doubt*, and shall rejoice if this idea of a college can be carried out.

I see Miss Julia Smith's beautiful handwriting, and am glad to

[2] "Address to the Working Men."

think of her as your guardian angel.

The author of the glorious article on the Talmud *is* "that bright little man" Mr. Deutsch – a very dear, delightful creature.

Journal, 1867.

Dec. 4.– Sent off the MS. of the "Address" to Edinburgh.

Letter to John Blackwood, 7th Dec. 1867.

I agree with you about the phrase "Masters of the country."[3] I wrote that part twice, and originally I distinctly said that the epithet was false. Afterwards I left that out, preferring to make a stronger *argumentum ad hominem*, in case any workman believed himself a future master.

I think it will be better for you to write a preliminary note, washing your hands of any over-trenchant statements on the part of the well-meaning Radical. I much prefer that you should do so.

Whatever you agree with will have the advantage of not coming from one who can be suspected of being a special pleader.

What you say about Fedalma is very cheering. But I am chiefly anxious about the road still untravelled – the road I have still *zurück zu legen*.

Mr. Lewes has to request several proofs of Fedalma, to facilitate revision. But I will leave him to say how many. We shall keep them strictly to ourselves, you may be sure, so that three or four will be enough – one for him, one for me, and one for the

[3] In the "Address to the Working Men."

resolution of our differences.

Letter to John Blackwood 12th Dec. 1867.

I am very grateful to you for your generous words about my work. That you not only feel so much sympathy, but are moved to express it so fully, is a real help to me.

I am very glad to have had the revise of the "Address." I feel the danger of not being understood. Perhaps, by a good deal longer consideration and gradual shaping, I might have put the ideas into a more concrete, easy form.

Mr. Lewes read the proof of the poem all through to himself for the first time last night, and expressed great satisfaction in the impression it produced. Your suggestion of having it put into type is a benefit for which we have reason to be obliged to you.

I cannot help saying again that it is a strong cordial to me to have such letters as yours, and to know that I have such a *first reader* as you.

Journal, 1867.

Dec. 21.– Finished reading "Averroës and Averroisme" and "Les Médicins Juifs." Reading "First Principles."

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 22d Dec. 1867.

Our Christmas will be very quiet. On the 27th Mr. Lewes means to start on a solitary journey to Bonn, and perhaps to Würzburg, for anatomical purposes. I don't mean that he is going to offer himself as an anatomical subject, but that he wants to get answers to some questions bearing on the functions of the nerves.

It is a bad time for him to travel in, but he hopes to be at home again in ten days or a fortnight, and *I* hope the run will do him good rather than harm.

Journal, 1867.

Dec. 25.– George and I dined happily alone; he better for weeks than he has been all the summer before; I more ailing than usual, but with much mental consolation, part of it being the delight he expresses in my poem, of which the first part is now in print.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 26th Dec. 1867.

Thanks for the pretty remembrance. You were not unthought of before it came. Now, however, I rouse all my courage under the thick fog to tell you my inward wish – which is that the new year, as it travels on towards its old age, may bring you many satisfactions undisturbed by bodily ailment.

Mr. Lewes is going to-morrow on an unprecedented expedition – a rapid run to Bonn, to make some anatomical researches with Professor Schutze there. If he needs more than he can get at Bonn, he may go to Heidelberg and Würzburg. But in any case he will not take more than a fortnight.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 28th Dec. 1867.

Public questions which, by a sad process of reduction, become piteous private questions, hang cloudily over all prospects. The state of Europe, the threat of a general war, the starvation of multitudes – one can't help thinking of these things at one's

breakfast. Nevertheless, there is much enjoyment going on, and abundance of rosy children's parties.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 30th Dec. 1867.

It is very good and sweet of you to propose to come round for me on Sunday, and I shall cherish particularly the remembrance of that kindness. But, on our reading your letter, Mr. Lewes objected, on grounds which I think just, to my going to any public manifestation without him, since his absence could not be divined by outsiders.

I am companioned by dyspepsia, and feel life a struggle under the leaden sky. Mme. Bodichon writes that in Sussex the air is cold and clear, and the woods and lanes dressed in wintry loveliness of fresh, grassy patches, mingled with the soft grays and browns of the trees and hedges. Mr. Harrison shed the agreeable light of his kind eyes on me yesterday for a brief space; but I hope I was more endurable to my visitors than to myself, else I think they will not come again. I object strongly to myself, as a bundle of unpleasant sensations with a palpitating heart and awkward manners. Impossible to imagine the large charity I have for people who detest me. But don't you be one of them.

Letter to John Blackwood, 30th Dec. 1867.

I am much obliged to you for your handsome check, and still more gratified that the "Address" has been a satisfaction to you.

I am very glad to hear of your projected visit to town, and shall hope to have a good batch of MS. for you to carry back.

Mr. Lewes is in an unprecedented state of delight with the poem, now that he is reading it with close care. He says he is astonished that he can't find more faults. He is especially pleased with the sense of variety it gives; and this testimony is worth the more because he urged me to put the poem by (in 1865) on the ground of monotony. He is really exultant about it now, and after what you have said to me I know this will please you.

Hearty wishes that the coming year may bring you much good, and that the "Spanish Gypsy" may contribute a little to that end.

SUMMARY

January, 1867, to December, 1867

Letter to Madame Bodichon from Bordeaux – Madame Mohl – Scherer – Renan – Letter to Mrs. Congreve from Biarritz – Delight in Comte's "Politique" – Gratitude to him for illumination – Learning Spanish – Papers in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, by Saveney – Letter to Madame Bodichon from Barcelona – Description of scenery – Pampeluna – Saragossa – Lerida – Letter to F. Harrison from Granada – The vindication of the *law* in "Felix Holt" – Spanish travelling – Letter to John Blackwood from Granada – Alicante – Granada – Letter to Mrs. Congreve from Biarritz – Delight of the journey – Madrid pictures

– Return to the Priory – Letter to John Blackwood – "Felix Holt" – Cheap edition of novels – "Spanish Gypsy" – Dr. Congreve's Lectures on Positivism – Letter to Miss Hennell – Historical Portraits at South Kensington – Letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor – Women's claims – Comte's position – Fortnight's Visit to the Isle of Wight – Letter of adieu to Mrs. Congreve – Two months' visit to North Germany – Return to England – Reading on Spanish subjects – Mr. Lewes and Mr. Spencer at Weybridge – Acquaintance with Mrs. Cross and family – Letter to Miss Hennell – Deutsch's article on the Talmud – Letter to Blackwood about putting "Spanish Gypsy" in type – "Address to Workingmen, by Felix Holt" – Letter to Miss Hennell – Girton College – Letter to Madame Bodichon – The higher education of women – Letter to John Blackwood on the "Address" – Christmas day at the Priory – Letter to Miss Hennell – Visit of Mr. Lewes to Bonn – Letter to Mrs. Congreve – Depression – Letter to John Blackwood – Mr. Lewes on "Spanish Gypsy."

CHAPTER XV

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 9th Jan. 1868.

There is a good genius presiding over your gifts – they are so felicitous. You always give me something of which I have felt the want beforehand, and can use continually. It is eminently so with my pretty mittens; there was no little appendage I wanted more; and they are just as warm at the wrist as I could have wished them to be – warming, too, as a mark of affection at a time when all cheering things are doubly welcome.

Mr. Lewes came home last night, and you may imagine that I am glad. Between the bad weather, bad health, and solitude, I have been so far unlike the wicked that I have not flourished like the green bay-tree. To make amends, he – Mr. Lewes, not the wicked – has had a brilliant time, gained great instruction, and seen some admirable men, who have received him warmly.

I go out of doors very little, but I shall open the drawer and look at my mittens on the days when I don't put them on.

Journal, 1868.

Jan.– Engaged in writing Part III. of "Spanish Gypsy."

Feb. 27.– Returned last evening from a very pleasant visit to Cambridge.[4] I am still only at p. 5 of Part IV., having had a

[4] Visit to Mr. W. G. Clark.

wretched month of *malaise*.

March 1.– Finished Guillemin on the "Heavens," and the 4th Book of the "Iliad." I shall now read Grote.

March 6.– Reading Lubbock's "Prehistoric Ages."

March 8.– Saturday concert. Joachim and Piatti, with Schubert's Ottett.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 17th Mch. 1868.

We go to-morrow morning to Torquay for a month, and I can't bear to go without saying a word of farewell to you. How sadly little we have seen each other this winter! It will not be so any more, I hope, will it?

We are both much in need of the change, for Mr. Lewes has got rather out of sorts again lately. When we come back I shall ask you to come and look at us before the bloom is off. I should like to know how you all are; but you have been so little inspired for note-writing lately that I am afraid to ask you to send me a line to the post-office at Torquay. I really deserve nothing of my friends at present.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 22d Mch. 1868.

I don't know whether you have ever seen Torquay. It is pretty, but not comparable to Ilfracombe; and, like all other easily accessible sea-places, it is sadly spoiled by wealth and fashion, which leave no secluded walks, and tattoo all the hills with ugly patterns of roads and villa gardens. Our selfishness does not adapt itself well to these on-comings of the millennium.

I am reading about savages and semi-savages, and think that our religious oracles would do well to study savage ideas by a method of comparison with their own. Also, I am studying that semi-savage poem, the "Iliad." How enviable it is to be a classic. When a verse in the "Iliad" bears six different meanings, and nobody knows which is the right, a commentator finds this equivocalness in itself admirable!

Letter to John Blackwood, end of Mch. 1868.

Mr. Lewes quite agrees with you, that it is desirable to announce the poem. His suggestion is, that it should be simply announced as "a poem" first, and then a little later as "The Spanish Gypsy," in order to give a new detail for observation in the second announcement. I chose the title, "The Spanish Gypsy," a long time ago, because it is a little in the fashion of the elder dramatists, with whom I have perhaps more cousinship than with recent poets. Fedalma might be mistaken for an Italian name, which would create a definite expectation of a mistaken kind, and is, on other grounds, less to my taste than "The Spanish Gypsy."

This place is becoming a little London, or London suburb. Everywhere houses and streets are being built, and Babbacombe will soon be joined to Torquay.

I almost envy you the excitement of golf, which helps the fresh air to exhilarate, and gives variety of exercise. Walking can never be so good as a game – if one loves the game. But when a friend of Mr. Lewes's urges him angrily to play rackets for his health,

the prospect seems dreary.

We are afraid of being entangled in excursion trains, or crowds of Easter holiday-makers, in Easter week, and may possibly be driven back next Wednesday. But we are loath to have our stay so curtailed.

Mr. Lewes sends his kind regards, and pities all of us who are less interested in ganglionic cells. He is in a state of beatitude about the poem.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 4th April, 1868.

We find a few retired walks, and are the less discontented because the weather is perfect. I hope you are sharing the delights of sunshine and moonlight. There are no waves here, as you know; but under such skies as we are having, sameness is so beautiful that we find no fault, and there is a particular hill at Babbacombe of the richest Spanish red. On the whole, we are glad we came here, having avoided all trouble in journeying and settling. But we should not come again without special call, for in a few years all the hills will be parts of a London suburb.

How glorious this weather is for the hard workers who are looking forward to their Easter holiday! But for ourselves, we are rather afraid of the railway stations in holiday time. Certainly, we are ill prepared for what Tennyson calls the "To-be," and it is good that we shall soon pass from this objective existence.

Letter to Madame Bodichon, 6th April, 1868.

I think Ruskin has not been encouraged about women by

his many and persistent attempts to teach them. He seems to have found them wanting in real scientific interest – bent on sentimentalizing in everything.

What I should like to be sure of, as a result of higher education for women – a result that will come to pass over my grave – is their recognition of the great amount of social unproductive labor which needs to be done by women, and which is now either not done at all or done wretchedly. No good can come to women, more than to any class of male mortals, while each aims at doing the highest kind of work, which ought rather to be held in sanctity as what only the few can do well. I believe, and I want it to be well shown, that a more thorough education will tend to do away with the odious vulgarity of our notions about functions and employment, and to propagate the true gospel, that the deepest disgrace is to insist on doing work for which we are unfit – to do work of any sort badly. There are many points of this kind that want being urged, but they do not come well from me.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 17th April, 1868.

Your letter came just at the right time to greet us. Thanks for that pretty remembrance. We are glad to be at home again with our home comforts around us, though we became deeply in love with Torquay in the daily heightening of spring beauties, and the glory of perpetual blue skies. The eight hours' journey (one hour more than we paid for) was rather disturbing; and, I think, Mr. Lewes has got more zoological experience than health from our month's delight – but a delight it really has been to us to have

perfect quiet with the red hills, the sunshine, and the sea.

I shall be absorbed for the next fortnight, so that I cannot allow myself the sort of pleasure you kindly project for us; and when May begins, I want you to come and stay a night with us. I shall be ready by and by for such holiday-making, and you must be good to me. Will you give Dr. Congreve my thanks for his pamphlet, which I read at Torquay with great interest? All protests tell, however slowly and imperceptibly, and a protest against the doctrine that England is to keep Ireland under all conditions was what I had wished to be made. But in this matter he will have much more important concurrence than mine. I am bearing much in mind the great task of the translation. When it is completed we shall be able and glad to do what we were not able to do in the case of the "Discours Préliminaire," namely, to take our share, if we may, in the expenses of publication.

Journal, 1868.

April 16.– Returned home, bringing Book IV. finished.

April 18.– Went with Mr. Pigott to see Holman Hunt's great picture, Isabella and the Pot of Basil.

Letter to John Blackwood, 21st April, 1868.

I send you by to-day's post the MS. of Book IV., that it may be at hand whenever there is opportunity for getting it into print, and letting me have it in that form for correction. It is desirable to get as forward as we can, in case of the Americans asking for delay after their reception of the sheets – if they venture to make any

arrangement. I shall send the MS. of Book V. (the last) as soon as headache will permit, but that is an uncertain limit. We returned from Torquay on the 16th, leaving the glorious weather behind us. We were more in love with the place on a better acquaintance: the weather, and the spring buds, and the choirs of birds, made it seem more of a paradise to us every day.

The poem will be less tragic than I threatened: Mr. Lewes has prevailed on me to return to my original conception, and give up the additional development, which I determined on subsequently. The poem is rather shorter in consequence. Don't you think that my artistic deference and pliability deserve that it should also be better in consequence? I now end it as I determined to end it when I first conceived the story.

Journal, 1868.

April 25.– Finished the last dialogue between Silva and Fedalma. Mr. and Mrs. Burne Jones dined with us.

April 29.– Finished "The Spanish Gypsy."

Letter to John Blackwood, 29th Aug. 1868.

I send you by to-day's post the conclusion of the poem in MS., and the eighteen sheets of revise. The last book is brief, but I may truly use the old epigram – that it would have taken less time to make it longer. It is a great bore that the name of my heroine is wrongly spelled in all the earlier sheets. It is a fresh proof of the fallibility of our impressions as to our own doings, that I would have confidently affirmed the name to be spelled Fedalma (as

it ought to be) in my manuscript. Yet I suppose I should have affirmed falsely, for the *i* occurs in the slips constantly.

As I shall not see these paged sheets again, will you charitably assure me that the alterations are safely made?

> Among my wife's papers were four or five pages of MS. headed, "Notes on the Spanish Gypsy and Tragedy in General." There is no evidence as to the date at which this fragment was written, and it seems to have been left unfinished. But there was evidently some care to preserve it; and as I think she would not have objected to its presentation, I give it here exactly as it stands. It completes the history of the poem.
>
> Notes on "The Spanish Gypsy."

The subject of "The Spanish Gypsy" was originally suggested to me by a picture which hangs in the Scuola di' San Rocco at Venice, over the door of the large Sala containing Tintoretto's frescoes. It is an Annunciation, said to be by Titian. Of course I had seen numerous pictures of this subject before; and the subject had always attracted me. But in this my second visit to the Scuola di' San Rocco, this small picture of Titian's, pointed out to me for the first time, brought a new train of thought. It occurred to me that here was a great dramatic motive of the same class as those used by the Greek dramatists, yet specifically differing from them. A young maiden, believing herself to be on the eve of the chief event of her life – marriage – about to share in the ordinary lot of womanhood, full of young hope,

has suddenly announced to her that she is chosen to fulfil a great destiny, entailing a terribly different experience from that of ordinary womanhood. She is chosen, not by any momentary arbitrariness, but as a result of foregoing hereditary conditions: she obeys. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Here, I thought, is a subject grander than that of Iphigenia, and it has never been used. I came home with this in my mind, meaning to give the motive a clothing in some suitable set of historical and local conditions. My reflections brought me nothing that would serve me except that moment in Spanish history when the struggle with the Moors was attaining its climax, and when there was the gypsy race present under such conditions as would enable me to get my heroine and the hereditary claim on her among the gypsies. I required the opposition of race to give the need for renouncing the expectation of marriage. I could not use the Jews or the Moors, because the facts of their history were too conspicuously opposed to the working-out of my catastrophe. Meanwhile the subject had become more and more pregnant to me. I saw it might be taken as a symbol of the part which is played in the general human lot by hereditary conditions in the largest sense, and of the fact that what we call duty is entirely made up of such conditions; for even in cases of just antagonism to the narrow view of hereditary claims, the whole background of the particular struggle is made up of our inherited nature. Suppose for a moment that our conduct at great epochs was determined entirely by reflection, without the immediate intervention of

feeling, which supersedes reflection, our determination as to the right would consist in an adjustment of our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot, partly as to our natural constitution, partly as sharers of life with our fellow-beings. Tragedy consists in the terrible difficulty of this adjustment —

> "The dire strife of poor Humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

Looking at individual lots, I seemed to see in each the same story, wrought out with more or less of tragedy, and I determined the elements of my drama under the influence of these ideas.

In order to judge properly of the dramatic structure it must not be considered first in the light of doctrinal symbolism, but in the light of a tragedy representing some grand collision in the human lot. And it must be judged accordingly. A good tragic subject must represent a possible, sufficiently probable, not a common, action; and to be really tragic, it must represent irreparable collision between the individual and the general (in differing degrees of generality). It is the individual with whom we sympathize, and the general of which we recognize the irresistible power. The truth of this test will be seen by applying it to the greatest tragedies. The collision of Greek tragedy is often that between hereditary, entailed Nemesis and the peculiar individual lot, awakening our sympathy, of the particular man or woman whom the Nemesis is shown to grasp with terrific

force. Sometimes, as in the Oresteia, there is the clashing of two irreconcilable requirements, two duties, as we should say in these times. The murder of the father must be avenged by the murder of the mother, which must again be avenged. These two tragic relations of the individual and general, and of two irreconcilable "oughts," may be – will be – seen to be almost always combined. The Greeks were not taking an artificial, entirely erroneous standpoint in their art – a standpoint which disappeared altogether with their religion and their art. They had the same essential elements of life presented to them as we have, and their art symbolized these in grand schematic forms. The Prometheus represents the ineffectual struggle to redeem the small and miserable race of man, against the stronger adverse ordinances that govern the frame of things with a triumphant power. Coming to modern tragedies, what is it that makes Othello a great tragic subject? A story simply of a jealous husband is elevated into a most pathetic tragedy by the hereditary conditions of Othello's lot, which give him a subjective ground for distrust. Faust, Rigoletto (Le Roi s'Amuse), Brutus. It might be a reasonable ground of objection against the whole structure of "The Spanish Gypsy" if it were shown that the action is outrageously improbable – lying outside all that can be congruously conceived of human actions. It is *not* a reasonable ground of objection that they would have done better to act otherwise, any more than it is a reasonable objection against the Iphigenia that Agamemnon would have done better not to

sacrifice his daughter.

As renunciations coming under the same great class, take the renunciation of marriage, where marriage cannot take place without entailing misery on the children.

A tragedy has not to expound why the individual must give way to the general; it has to show that it is compelled to give way; the tragedy consisting in the struggle involved, and often in the entirely calamitous issue in spite of a grand submission. Silva presents the tragedy of entire rebellion; Fedalma of a grand submission, which is rendered vain by the effects of Silva's rebellion. Zarca, the struggle for a great end, rendered vain by the surrounding conditions of life.

Now, what is the fact about our individual lots? A woman, say, finds herself on the earth with an inherited organization; she may be lame, she may inherit a disease, or what is tantamount to a disease; she may be a negress, or have other marks of race repulsive in the community where she is born, etc. One may go on for a long while without reaching the limits of the commonest inherited misfortunes. It is almost a mockery to say to such human beings, "Seek your own happiness." The utmost approach to well-being that can be made in such a case is through large resignation and acceptance of the inevitable, with as much effort to overcome any disadvantage as good sense will show to be attended with a likelihood of success. Any one may say, that is the dictate of mere rational reflection. But calm can, in hardly any human organism, be attained by rational reflection. Happily,

we are not left to that. Love, pity, constituting sympathy, and generous joy with regard to the lot of our fellow-men comes in – has been growing since the beginning – enormously enhanced by wider vision of results, by an imagination actively interested in the lot of mankind generally; and these feelings become piety —*i. e.*, loving, willing submission and heroic Promethean effort towards high possibilities, which may result from our individual life.

There is really no moral "sanction" but this inward impulse. The will of God is the same thing as the will of other men, compelling us to work and avoid what they have seen to be harmful to social existence. Disjoined from any perceived good, the divine will is simply so much as we have ascertained of the facts of existence which compel obedience at our peril. Any other notion comes from the supposition of arbitrary revelation.

That favorite view, expressed so often in Clough's poems, of doing duty in blindness as to the result, is likely to deepen the substitution of egoistic yearnings for really moral impulses. We cannot be utterly blind to the results of duty, since that cannot be duty which is not already judged to be for human good. To say the contrary is to say that mankind have reached no inductions as to what is for their good or evil.

The art which leaves the soul in despair is laming to the soul, and is denounced by the healthy sentiment of an active community. The consolatory elements in "The Spanish Gypsy" are derived from two convictions or sentiments which so

conspicuously pervade it that they may be said to be its very warp, on which the whole action is woven. These are: (1) The importance of individual deeds. (2) The all-sufficiency of the soul's passions in determining sympathetic action.

In Silva is presented the claim of fidelity to social pledges. In Fedalma the claim constituted by an hereditary lot less consciously shared.

With regard to the supremacy of love: if it were a fact without exception that man or woman never did renounce the joys of love, there could never have sprung up a notion that such renunciation could present itself as a duty. If no parents had ever cared for their children, how could parental affection have been reckoned among the elements of life? But what are the facts in relation to this matter? Will any one say that faithfulness to the marriage tie has never been regarded as a duty, in spite of the presence of the profoundest passion experienced after marriage? Is Guinivere's conduct the type of duty?

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 7th May, 1868.

Yes, I am at rest now – only a few pages of revise to look at more. My chief excitement and pleasure in the work are over: for when I have once written anything, and it is gone out of my power, I think of it as little as possible. Next to the doing of the thing, of course, Mr. Lewes's delight in it is the cream of all sympathy, though I care enough about the sympathy of others to be very grateful for any they give me. Don't you imagine how the people who consider writing simply as a

money-getting profession will despise me for choosing a work by which I could only get hundreds, where for a novel I could get thousands? I cannot help asking you to admire what my husband is, compared with many possible husbands – I mean, in urging me to produce a poem rather than anything in a worldly sense more profitable. I expect a good deal of disgust to be felt towards me in many quarters for doing what was not looked for from me, and becoming unreadable to many who have hitherto found me readable and debatable. Religion and novels every ignorant person feels competent to give an opinion upon, but *en fait de poésie*, a large number of them "only read Shakespeare." But enough of that.

Letter to Frederic Harrison, 25th May, 1868.

Before we set off to Germany I want to tell you that a copy of "The Spanish Gypsy" will be sent to you. If there had been time before our going away I should have written on the fly-leaf that it was offered by the author "in grateful remembrance." For I especially desire that you should understand my reasons for asking you to accept the book to be retrospective and not prospective.

And I am going out of reach of all letters, so that you are free from any need to write to me, and may let the book lie till you like to open it.

I give away my books only by exception, and in venturing to make you an exceptional person in this matter, I am urged by the strong wish to express my value for the help and sympathy you

gave me two years ago.

The manuscript of "The Spanish Gypsy" bears the following inscription:

"To my dear – every day dearer – Husband."

Letter to Frederic Harrison, 26th (?) May, 1868.

Yes, indeed, I not only remember your letter, but have always kept it at hand, and have read it many times. Within these latter months I have seemed to see in the distance a possible poem shaped on your idea. But it would be better for you to encourage the growth towards realization in your own mind, rather than trust to transplantation.

My own faint conception is that of a frankly Utopian construction, freeing the poet from all local embarrassments. Great epics have always been more or less of this character – only the construction has been of the past, not of the future.

Write to me *Poste Restante*, Baden-Baden, within the next fortnight. My head will have got clearer then.

Journal, 1868.

May 26.– We set out this evening on our journey to Baden, spending the night at Dover. Our route was by Tournay, Liége, Bonn, and Frankfort, to Baden, where we stayed nine days; then to Petersthal, where we stayed three weeks; then to Freiburg, St. Märgen, Basle, Thun, and Interlaken. From Interlaken we came by Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Dijon, to Paris and Folkestone.

Letter to John Blackwood, 7th July, 1868.

We got your letter yesterday here among the peaceful mountain-tops. After ascending gradually (in a carriage) for nearly four hours, we found ourselves in a region of grass, corn, and pine woods, so beautifully varied that we seem to be walking in a great park laid out for our special delight. The monks, as usual, found out the friendly solitude, and this place of St. Märgen was originally nothing but an Augustinian monastery. About three miles off is another place of like origin, called St. Peter's, formerly a Benedictine monastery, and still used as a place of preparation for the Catholic priesthood. The monks have all vanished, but the people are devout Catholics. At every half-mile by the roadside is a carefully kept crucifix; and last night, as we were having our supper in the common room of the inn, we suddenly heard sounds that seemed to me like those of an accordion. "Is that a zittern?" said Mr. Lewes to the German lady by his side. "No – it is prayer." The servants, by themselves – the host and hostess were in the same room with us – were saying their evening prayers, men's and women's voices blending in unusually correct harmony. The same loud prayer is heard at morning, noon, and evening, from the shepherds and workers in the fields. We suppose that the believers in Mr. Home and in Madame Rachel would pronounce these people "grossly superstitious." The land is cultivated by rich peasant proprietors, and the people here, as in Petersthal, look healthy and contented. This really adds to one's pleasure in seeing natural beauties. In North Germany, at Ilmenau, we were

constantly pained by meeting peasants who looked underfed and miserable. Unhappily, the weather is too cold and damp, and our accommodations are too scanty, under such circumstances, for us to remain here and enjoy the endless walks and the sunsets that would make up for other negatives in fine, warm weather. We return to Freiburg to-morrow, and from thence we shall go on by easy stages through Switzerland, by Thun and Vevay to Geneva, where I want to see my old friends once more.

We shall be so constantly on the move that it might be a vain trouble on your part to shoot another letter after such flying birds.

Journal, 1868.

July 23.– Arrived at home (from Baden journey).

Letter to John Blackwood, 24th July, 1868.

We got home last night – sooner than we expected, because we gave up the round by Geneva, as too long and exciting. I dare say the three weeks since we heard from you seem very short to you, passed amid your usual occupations. To us they seem long, for we have been constantly changing our scene. Our two months have been spent delightfully in seeing fresh natural beauties, and with the occasional cheering influence of kind people. But I think we were hardly ever, except in Spain, so long ignorant of home sayings and doings, for we have been chiefly in regions innocent even of *Galignani*. The weather with us has never been oppressively hot; and storms or quiet rains have been frequent. But our bit of burned-up lawn is significant of the dryness here. I

believe I did not thank you for the offer of "Kinglake," which we gratefully accept. And will you kindly order a copy of the poem to be sent to Gerald Massey, Hemel-Hempstead.

A friendly gentleman at Belfast sends me a list of emendations for some of my verses, which are very characteristic and amusing.

I hope you have kept well through the heat. We are come back in great force, for such feeble wretches.

Letter to John Blackwood, 28th July, 1868.

As to the reviews, we expected them to be written by omniscient personages, but we did *not* expect so bad a review as that Mr. Lewes found in the *Pall Mall*. I have read no notice except that in the *Spectator*, which was modest in tone. A very silly gentleman, Mr. Lewes says, undertakes to admonish me in the *Westminster*; and he thinks the best *literary* notice of the poem that has come before him is in the *Athenæum*. After all, I think there would have been good reason to doubt that the poem had either novelty or any other considerable intrinsic reason to justify its being written, if the periodicals had cried out "Hosanna!" I am sure you appreciate all the conditions better than I can, after your long experience of the relations between authors and critics. I am serene, because I only expected the unfavorable. To-day the heat is so great that it is hardly possible even to read a book that requires any thought. London is a bad exchange for the mountains.

Letter to John Blackwood, 30th July, 1868.

I enclose a list of corrections for the reprint. I am indebted to my friendly correspondent from Belfast for pointing out several oversights, which I am ashamed of, after all the proof-reading. But, among the well-established truths of which I never doubt, the fallibility of my own brain stands first.

I suppose Mudie and the other librarians will not part with their copies of the poems quite as soon as they would part with their more abundant copies of a novel. And this supposition, if warranted, would be an encouragement to reprint another moderate edition at the same price. Perhaps, before a cheaper edition is prepared, I may add to the corrections, but at present my mind resists strongly the effort to go back on its old work.

I think I never mentioned to you that the occasional use of irregular verses, and especially verses of twelve syllables, has been a principle with me, and is found in all the finest writers of blank verse. I mention it now because, as you have a certain *solidarité* with my poetical doings, I would not have your soul vexed by the detective wisdom of critics. Do you happen to remember that saying of Balzac's, "When I want the world to praise my novels I write a drama; when I want them to praise my drama I write a novel"?

On the whole, however, I should think I have more to be grateful for than to grumble at. Mr. Lewes read me out last night some very generous passages from the *St. Paul's Magazine*.

Journal, 1868.

August.– Reading 1st book of Lucretius, 6th book of the "Iliad," "Samson Agonistes," Warton's "History of English Poetry," Grote, 2d volume, "Marcus Aurelius," "Vita Nuova," vol. iv. chap. i. of the "Politique Positive," Guest on "English Rhythms," Maurice's "Lectures on Casuistry."

Sept. 19.– We returned from a visit to Yorkshire. On Monday we went to Leeds, and were received by Dr. Clifford Allbut, with whom we stayed till the middle of the day on Wednesday. Then we went by train to Ilkley, and from thence took a carriage to Bolton. The weather had been gray for two days, but on this evening the sun shone out, and we had a delightful stroll before dinner, getting our first view of the Priory. On Thursday we spent the whole day in rambling through the woods to Barden Tower and back. Our comfortable little inn was the Red Lion, and we were tempted to lengthen our stay. But on Friday morning the sky was threatening, so we started for Newark, which we had visited in old days on our expedition to Gainsborough. At Newark we found our old inn, the Ram, opposite the ruins of the castle, and then we went for a stroll along the banks of the Trent, seeing some charming, quiet landscapes.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 20th Sept. 1868.

This note comes to greet you on your return home, but it cannot greet you so sweetly as your letter did me on our arrival from Leeds last night. I think it gave me a deeper pleasure than

any I have had for a long while. I am very grateful to you for it.

We went to Leeds on Monday, and stayed two days with Dr. Allbut. Dr. Bridges dined with us one day, and we had a great deal of delightful chat. But I will tell you everything when we see you. Let that be soon – will you not? We shall be glad of any arrangement that will give us the pleasure of seeing you, Dr. Congreve, and Emily, either separately or all together. Please forgive me if I seem very fussy about your all coming. I want you to understand that we shall feel it the greatest kindness in you if you will all choose to come, and also choose *how* to come – either to lunch or dinner, and either apart or together. I hope to find that you are much the better for your journey – better both in body and soul. One has immense need of encouragement, but it seems to come more easily from the dead than from the living.

Letter to John Blackwood, 24th Sept. 1868.

Your letter gave an additional gusto to my tea and toast this morning. The greater confidence of the trade in subscribing for the second edition is, on several grounds, a satisfactory indication; but, as you observe, we shall be still better pleased to know that the copies are not slumbering on the counters, but having an active life in the hands of readers.

I am now going carefully through the poem for the sake of correction. I have read it through once, and have at present found some ten or twelve *small* alterations to be added to those already made. But I shall go through it again more than once, for I wish to be able to put "revised" to the third edition, and to leave

nothing that my conscience is not ready to swear by. I think it will be desirable for me to see proofs. It is possible, in many closely consecutive readings, not to see errors which strike one immediately on taking up the pages after a good long interval.

We are feeling much obliged for a copy of "Kinglake," which I am reading aloud to Mr. Lewes as a part of our evening's entertainment and edification, beginning again from the beginning.

This week we have had perfect autumnal days, though last week, when we were in Yorkshire, we also thought that the time of outside chills and inside fires was beginning.

We do not often see a place which is a good foil for London, but certainly Leeds is in a lower circle of the great town —*Inferno*.

Letter to Madame Bodichon, 25th Sept. 1868.

I can imagine how delicious your country home has been under the glorious skies we have been having – glorious even in London. Yesterday we had Dr. and Mrs. Congreve, and went with them to the Zoological Gardens, and on our return, about 5 o'clock, I could not help pausing and exclaiming at the exquisite beauty of the light on Regent's Park, exalting it into something that the young Turner would have wanted to paint.

We went to Leeds last week – saw your favorite, David Cox, and thought of you the while. Certainly there was nothing finer there in landscape than that Welsh funeral. Among the figure-painters, Watts and old Philip are supreme.

We went on from Leeds to Bolton, and spent a day in wandering through the grand woods on the banks of the Wharfe. Altogether, our visit to Yorkshire was extremely agreeable. Our host, Dr. Allbut, is a good, clever, graceful man, enough to enable one to be cheerful under the horrible smoke of ugly Leeds; and the fine hospital, which, he says, is admirably fitted for its purpose, is another mitigation. You would like to see the tasteful, subdued ornamentation in the rooms which are to be sick wards. Each physician is accumulating ornamental objects for his own ward – chromo-lithographs, etc. – such as will soothe sick eyes.

It was quite cold in that northerly region. Your picture keeps a memory of sunshine on my wall even on this dark morning.

Letter to John Blackwood, 21st Oct. 1868.

I have gone through the poem twice for the sake of revision, and have a crop of small corrections – only in one case extending to the insertion of a new line. But I wish to see the proof-sheets, so that "Revised by the Author" may be put in the advertisement and on the title-page.

Unhappily, my health has been unusually bad since we returned from abroad, so that the time has been a good deal wasted on the endurance of *malaise*; but I am brooding over many things, and hope that coming months will not be barren. As to the criticisms, I suppose that better poets than I have gone through worse receptions. In spite of my reason and of my low expectations, I am too susceptible to all discouragement not to have been depressingly affected by some few things in the

shape of criticism which I have been obliged to know. Yet I am ashamed of caring about anything that cannot be taken as strict evidence against the value of my book. So far as I have been able to understand, there is a striking disagreement among the reviewers as to what is best and what is worst; and the weight of agreement, even on the latter point, is considerably diminished by the reflection that three different reviews may be three different phases of the same gentleman, taking the opportunity of earning as many guineas as he can by making easy remarks on George Eliot. But, as dear Scott's characters say, "Let that fly stick in the wa' – when the dirt's dry, it'll rub out." I shall look at "Doubles and Quits," as you recommend. I read the two first numbers of "Madame Amelia," and thought them promising.

I sympathize with your melancholy at the prospect of quitting the country; though, compared with London, beautiful Edinburgh is country. Perhaps some good, thick mists will come to reconcile you with the migration.

We have been using the fine autumn days for flights into Kent between Sundays. The rich woods about Sevenoaks and Chislehurst are a delight to the eyes, and the stillness is a rest to every nerve.

Journal, 1868.

Oct. 22.– Received a letter from Blackwood, saying that "The Spanish Gypsy" must soon go into a third edition. I sent my corrections for it.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 27th Oct. 1868.

At last I have spirit enough in me to thank you for your valuable gift, which Emily kindly brought me in her hand. I am grateful for it – not only because the medallion[5] is a possession which I shall always hold precious, but also because you thought of me among those whom you would choose to be its owners.

I hope you are able to enjoy some walking in these sunshiny mornings. We had a long drive round by Hendon and Finchley yesterday morning, and drank so much clear air and joy from the sight of trees and fields that I am quite a new-old creature.

I think you will not be sorry to hear that the "Spanish Gypsy" is so nearly out of print again that the publishers are preparing a new, cheaper edition. The second edition was all bought up (subscribed for) by the booksellers the first day.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 30th Oct. 1868.

Your pretty letter is irresistible. May we then be with you on Tuesday somewhere about twelve, and return home on Wednesday by afternoon daylight? If the weather should be very cold or wet on Tuesday we must renounce or defer our pleasure, because we are both too rickety to run the risk of taking cold. So you see we are very much in need of such sweet friendliness as yours gives us faith in, to keep us cheerful under the burden of the flesh.

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[5] Of Comte.

Journal, 1868.

Nov. 3.– Went to dine and sleep at the Congreves, at Wandsworth.

Nov. 4.– We set off for Sheffield, where we went over a great iron and steel factory under the guidance of Mr. Benzon. On Saturday, the 7th, we went to Matlock and stayed till Tuesday. I recognized the objects which I had seen with my father nearly thirty years before – the turn of the road at Cromford, the Arkwrights' house, and the cottages with the stone floors chalked in patterns. The landscape was still rich with autumn leaves.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, Thursday evening, 12th Nov. 1868.

We got home last night after delicious days spent at Matlock. I was so renovated that my head was clearer, and I was more unconscious of my body than at the best of times for many months. But it seemed suddenly colder when we were in London, and old uneasy sensations are revisiting us both to-day.

I wonder whether you will soon want to come to town, and will send me word that you will come and take shelter with us for the night? The bed is no softer and no broader; but will you not be tempted by a new carpet and a new bit of matting for your bath? – perhaps there will even be a new fender? If you want to shop, I will take you in the brougham.

I think you will be just able to make out this note, written by a sudden impulse on my knee over the fire.

Letter to Madame Bodichon, 16th Nov. 1868.

No oracle would dare to predict what will be our next migration. Don't be surprised if we go to the borders of the White Sea, to escape the fitful fast and loose, hot and cold, of the London climate.

We enjoyed our journey to the north. It was a great experience to me to see the stupendous iron-works at Sheffield; and then, for a variety, we went to the quiet and beauty of Matlock, and I recognized all the spots I had carried in my memory for more than five-and-twenty years. I drove through that region with my father when I was a young grig – not very full of hope about my woman's future. I am one of those perhaps exceptional people whose early, childish dreams were much less happy than the real outcome of life.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 20th Nov. 1868.

I think your birthday comes after mine; but I am determined to write beforehand to prove to you that I bear you in my thoughts without any external reminder.

I suppose we are both getting too old to care about being wished *many* happy returns of the day. We shall be content to wish each other as many more years as can carry with them some joy and calm satisfaction in the sense of living. But there is one definite prospect for you which I may fairly hope for, as I do most tenderly – the prospect that this time next year you will be looking back on your achieved work as a good seed-sowing.

Some sadness there must always be in saying good-bye to a work which is done with love; but there may – I trust there *will*– be a compensating good in feeling that the thing you yearned to do is gone safely out of reach of casualties that might have cut it short.

We have been to Sheffield at the seducing invitation of a friend, who showed us the miraculous iron-works there; and afterwards we turned aside to beautiful Matlock, where I found again the spots, the turns of road, the rows of stone cottages, the rushing river Derwent, and the Arkwright mills – among which I drove with my father when I was in my teens. We had glorious weather, and I was quite regenerated by the bracing air. Our friend Mr. Spencer is growing younger with the years. He really looks brighter and more enjoying than he ever did before, since he was in the really young, happy time of fresh discussion and inquiry. His is a friendship which wears well, because of his truthfulness. He always asks with sympathetic interest how you are going on.

Journal, 1868.

Nov. 22.– The return of this St. Cecilia's Day finds me in better health than has been usual with me in these last six months. But I am not yet engaged in any work that makes a higher life for me – a life that is young and grows, though in my other life I am getting old and decaying. It is a day for resolves and determinations. I am meditating the subject of Timoleon.

Letter to Mrs. Bray, 30th Nov. 1868.

I like to think of you painting the physiological charts, although they tire your eyes a little; for you must be sure that the good of such work is of a kind that goes deep into young lives. "Fearfully and wonderfully made" are words quite unshaken by any theory as to the making; and I think a great awe in the contemplation of man's delicate structure, freighted with terrible destinies, is one of the most important parts of education. A much-writing acquaintance of ours one day expressed his alarm for "the masses" at the departure of a religion which had *terror* in it. Surely terror is provided for sufficiently in this life of ours – if only the dread could be directed towards the really dreadful.

Letter to Madame Bodichon, 12th Dec. 1868.

We have been having a little company, and are rejoicing to think that our duties of this sort are done for the present. We like our studies and our dual solitude too well to feel company desirable more than one day a-week. I wish our affection may be with you as some little cheering influence through the dark months. We hardly estimate enough the difference of feeling that would come to us if we did not imagine friendly souls scattered here and there in places that make the chief part of the world so far as we have known it.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 16th Dec. 1868.

Tell Dr. Congreve that the "mass of positivism," in the shape of "The Spanish Gypsy," is so rapidly finding acceptance with the public that the second edition, being all sold, the third,

just published, has already been demanded to above 700. Do not think that I am becoming an egotistical author. The news concerns the doctrine, not the writer.

Letter to the Brays, 19th Dec. 1868.

I am moved to congratulate you on writing against the ballot with such admirably good sense – having just read your "slip" at the breakfast-table. It has been a source of amazement to me that men acquainted with practical life can believe in the suppression of bribery by the ballot, as if bribery in all its Protean forms could ever disappear by means of a single external arrangement. They might as well say that our female vanity would disappear at an order that women should wear felt hats and cloth dresses. It seems to me that you have put the main unanswerable arguments against the ballot with vigorous brevity.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 29th Dec. 1868.

Thanks for letting me know about the meeting. I shall not be able to join it bodily, but I am glad always to have the possibility of being with you in thought. I have a twofold sympathy on the occasion, for I cannot help entering specially into your own wifely anxieties, and I shall be glad to be assured that Dr. Congreve has borne the excitement without being afterwards conscious of an excessive strain.

Journal, 1868.

Dec. 30.– I make to-day the last record that I shall enter of the old year 1868. It has been as rich in blessings as any

preceding year of our double life, and I enjoy a more and more even cheerfulness and continually increasing power of dwelling on the good that is given to me and dismissing the thought of small evils. The chief event of the year to us has been the publication and friendly reception by the public of "The Spanish Gypsy." The greatest happiness (after our growing love) which has sprung and flowed onward during the latter part of the year is George's interest in his psychological inquiries. I have, perhaps, gained a little higher ground and firmer footing in some studies, notwithstanding the yearly loss of retentive power. We have made some new friendships that cheer us with the sense of new admiration of actual living beings whom we know in the flesh, and who are kindly disposed towards us. And we have had no real trouble. I wish we were not in a minority of our fellow-men! I desire no added blessing for the coming year but this – that I may do some good, lasting work, and make both my outward and inward habits less imperfect – that is, more directly tending to the best uses of life.

Letter to John Blackwood, 31st Dec. 1868.

Many thanks for the check, which I received yesterday afternoon. Mr. Lewes is eminently satisfied with the sales; and, indeed, it does appear from authoritative testimony that the number sold is unusually large even for what is called a successful poem.

The cheap edition of the novels is so exceptionally attractive in print, paper, and binding, for 3*s.* 6*d.*, that I cannot help fretting

a little at its not getting a more rapid sale. The fact rather puzzles me, too, in presence of the various proofs that the books really are liked. I suppose there is some mystery of reduced prices accounting for the abundant presentation of certain works and series on the bookstalls at the railways, and the absence of others, else surely those pretty volumes would have a good chance of being bought by the travellers whose taste shrinks from the diabolical red-and-yellow-pictured series. I am sure you must often be in a state of wonderment as to how the business of the world gets done so as not to ruin two thirds of the people concerned in it; for, judging from the silly propositions and requests sometimes made to me by bald-headed, experienced men, there must be a very thin allowance of wisdom to the majority of their transactions.

Mr. Lewes is attracted by the biographical studies of George the Second's time; but last night, after he had done reading about Berkeley, I heard him laughing over "Doubles and Quits." It is agreeable to think that I have that bit of cheerful reading in store.

Our first snow fell yesterday, and melted immediately. This morning the sun is warm on me as I write. The doctors say that the season has been horribly unhealthy, and that they have been afraid to perform some operations from the low state of vitality in the patients, due to the atmospheric conditions. This looks like very wise writing, and worthy of Molière's "Médecin."

Mr. Lewes joins me in sincere good wishes to Mr. William Blackwood, as well as yourself, for the coming year – wishes for

general happiness. The chief, particular wish would be that we should all in common look back next Christmas on something achieved in which we share each other's satisfaction.

Letter to Hon. Robert Lytton (now Lord Lytton). No date. Probably in 1868.

I am much obliged to you for mentioning, in your letter to Mr. Lewes, the two cases of inaccuracy (I fear there may be more) which you remembered in the "Spanish Gypsy." How I came to write Zincálo instead of Zíncalo is an instance which may be added to many sadder examples of that mental infirmity which makes our senses of little use to us in the presence of a strong prepossession. As soon as I had conceived my story with its gypsy element, I tried to learn all I could about the names by which the gypsies called themselves, feeling that I should occasionally need a musical name, remote from the vulgar English associations which cling to "gypsy." I rejected Gitana, because I found that the gypsies themselves held the name to be opprobrious; and Zíncalo – which, with a fine capacity for being wrong, I at once got into my head as Zincálo – seemed to be, both in sound and meaning, just what I wanted. Among the books from which I made notes was "Pott, die Zigeuner," etc.; and in these notes I find that I have copied the sign of the tonic accent in Romanó, while in the very same sentence I have not copied it in Zíncalo, though a renewed reference to Pott shows it in the one word as well as the other. But "my eyes were held" – by a demon prepossession – "so that I should not see it." Behold the fallibility of the human brain, and

especially of George Eliot's.

I have been questioned about my use of Andalus for Andalusia, but I had a sufficient authority for that in the "Mohammedan Dynasties," translated by Gayangos.

It may interest you, who are familiar with Spanish literature, to know that after the first sketch of my book was written I read Cervantes' novel "La Gitanélla," where the hero turns gypsy for love. The novel promises well in the earlier part, but falls into sad commonplace towards the end. I have written my explanation partly to show how much I value your kind help towards correcting my error, and partly to prove that I was not careless, but simply stupid. For in authorship I hold carelessness to be a mortal sin.

SUMMARY

JANUARY, 1868, TO DECEMBER, 1868

Letter to Mrs. Congreve – Mr. Lewes's return from Bonn – First visit to Cambridge – Letter to Mrs. Congreve – Month's visit to Torquay – Letter to Miss Hennell – Reading the "Iliad" – Letter to John Blackwood – Title of "Spanish Gypsy" – Letter to Madame Bodichon – Women's work – Letter to Mrs. Congreve – England and Ireland – Translation of the "Politique" – Return to London from

Torquay – Letter to John Blackwood – Ending of "Spanish Gypsy" – The poem finished – George Eliot's "Notes on the Spanish Gypsy and Tragedy in general" – Suggestion of the poem an Annunciation by Titian, at Venice – Motive – Hereditary conditions – Gypsy race – Determination of conduct – Nature of tragedy – Collision between the individual and the general – Greek tragedy – Hereditary misfortunes – Growth of human sympathy – Moral sanction is obedience to facts – Duty what tends to human good – Letter to Mrs. Bray on the writing of poetry instead of novels – Letter to F. Harrison presenting copy of "Spanish Gypsy" – Inscription on MS. of "Spanish Gypsy" – Letter to F. Harrison on suggestion of a poem – Six weeks' journey to Baden, etc. – Letter to John Blackwood from St. Märgen – Catholic worship – Return to London – Letters to John Blackwood —*Pall Mall* review of "Spanish Gypsy" – Saying of Balzac – Letter to William Blackwood – Versification – Reading Lucretius, Homer, Milton, Warton, Marcus Aurelius, Dante, Comte, Guest, Maurice – Visit to Dr. Clifford Allbut at Leeds – Visit to Newark – Letter to Mrs. Congreve – Letters to John Blackwood – Second edition of "Spanish Gypsy" – "Kinglake" – Criticisms on "Spanish Gypsy" – Visit to the Congreves – Visit to Sheffield with Mr. Benzon – Matlock – Letters to Madame Bodichon and Miss Hennell on Sheffield journey – Herbert Spencer – Meditating subject of Timoleon – Letter to Mrs. Bray – Physiological charts – Letter to Madame Bodichon on influence of friends – Letter to Mrs. Congreve – Positivism in "Spanish Gypsy" – Letter to Charles Bray

on vote by ballot – Retrospect of 1868 – Letter to John Blackwood – The cheap edition of novels – Letter to the Hon. Robert Lytton – Pronunciation in "Spanish Gypsy" – Cervantes' "La Gitanélla."

CHAPTER XVI

Journal, 1869.

Jan. 1.– I have set myself many tasks for the year – I wonder how many will be accomplished? – a novel called "Middlemarch," a long poem on Timoleon, and several minor poems.

Jan. 23.– Since I wrote last I have finished a little poem on old Agatha. But the last week or two I have been so disturbed in health that no work prospers. I have made a little way in constructing my new tale; have been reading a little on philology; have finished the 24th Book of the "Iliad," the 1st Book of the "Faery Queene," Clough's poems, and a little about Etruscan things, in Mrs. Grey and Dennis. Aloud to G. I have been reading some Italian, Ben Jonson's "Alchemist" and "Volpone," and Bright's speeches, which I am still reading, besides the first four cantos of "Don Juan." But the last two or three days I have seemed to live under a leaden pressure – all movement, mental or bodily, is grievous to me. In the evening read aloud Bright's fourth speech on India, and a story in Italian. In the *Spectator* some interesting facts about loss of memory and "double life." In the *Revue des Cours*, a lecture by Sir W. Thomson, of Edinburgh, on the retardation of the earth's motion round its axis.

Jan. 27.– The last two days I have been writing a rhymed

poem on Boccaccio's story of "Lisa." Aloud I have read Bright's speeches, and "I Promessi Sposi." To myself I have read Mommsen's "Rome."

Feb. 6.– We went to the third concert. Madame Schumann played finely in Mendelssohn's quintet, and a trio of Beethoven's. As a solo she played the sonata in D minor. In the evening I read aloud a short speech of Bright's on Ireland, delivered twenty years ago, in which he insists that nothing will be a remedy for the woes of that country unless the Church Establishment be annulled: after the lapse of twenty years the measure is going to be adopted. Then I read aloud a bit of the "Promessi Sposi," and afterwards the *Spectator*, in which there is a deservedly high appreciation of Lowell's poems.

Feb. 14.– Finished the poem from Boccaccio. We had rather a numerous gathering of friends to-day, and among the rest came Browning, who talked and quoted admirably *à propos* of versification. The Rector of Lincoln thinks the French have the most perfect system of versification in these modern times!

Feb. 15.– I prepared and sent off "How Lisa Loved the King" to Edinburgh.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 15th Feb. 1869.

I have looked back to the verses in Browning's poem about Elisha, and I find no mystery in them. The foregoing context for three pages describes that function of genius which revivifies the past. Man, says Browning (I am writing from recollection of his general meaning), cannot create, but he can restore: the poet

gives forth of his own spirit, and reanimates the forms that lie breathless. His use of Elisha's story is manifestly symbolical, as his mention of Faust is – the illustration which he abandons the moment before to take up that of the Hebrew seer. I presume you did not read the context yourself, but only had the two concluding verses pointed out or quoted to you by your friends. It is one of the afflictions of authorship to know that the brains which should be used in understanding a book are wasted in discussing the hastiest misconceptions about it; and I am sure you will sympathize enough in this affliction to set any one right, when you can, about this quotation from Browning.

Journal, 1869.

Feb. 20.– A glorious concert: Hallé, Joachim, and Piatti winding up with Schubert's trio.

Feb. 21.– Mr. Deutsch and Mrs. Pattison lunched with us – he in farewell before going to the East. A rather pleasant gathering of friends afterwards.

Feb. 24.– I am reading about plants, and Helmholtz on music. A new idea of a poem came to me yesterday.

March 3.– We started on our fourth visit to Italy, viâ France and the Cornice.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 4th May, 1869, from Paris.

I found your letter at Florence on our arrival there (on the 23d); but until now bodily ease and leisure enough to write to you have never happened to me in the same moments. Our long

journey since we left home on the 3d March, seen from a point of view which, happily, no one shares with me, has been a history of ailments. In shunning the English March, we found one quite as disagreeable, without the mitigation of home comforts; and though we went even as far as Naples in search of warmth, we never found it until we settled in Rome, at the beginning of April. Here we had many days of unbroken sunshine, and enjoyed what we were never able to enjoy during our month's stay in 1860 – the many glorious views of the city and the mountains. The chief novelty to us in our long route has been the sight of Assisi and Ravenna; the rest has been a revisiting of scenes already in our memories; and to most of them we have probably said our last good-bye. Enough of us and our travels. The only remarkable thing people can tell of their doings in these days is that they have stayed at home.

The *Fortnightly* lay uncut at Mr. Trollope's, and Mr. Lewes had nothing more pressing to do than to cut it open at the reply to Professor Huxley.[6] He presently came to me, and said it was excellent. It delighted him the more because he had just before, at Rome, alighted on the *Pall Mall* account of the article, which falsely represented it as entirely apologetic. At the first spare moment I plunged into an easy-chair, and read, with thorough satisfaction in the admirable temper and the force of the reply. We intend to start for Calais this evening; and as the rain prevents

[6] Dr. Congreve's article, "Mr. Huxley on M. Comte," in *Fortnightly Review*, April, 1869.

us from doing anything agreeable out of doors, I have nothing to hinder me from sitting, with my knees up to my chin, and scribbling, now that I am become a little sounder in head and in body generally than beautiful Italy allowed me to be. As beautiful as ever – more beautiful – it has looked to me on this last visit; and it is the fault of my *physique* if it did not agree with me. Pray offer my warmest sympathy to Dr. Congreve in the anxieties of his difficult task. What hard work it seems to go on living sometimes! Blessed are the dead.

Journal, 1869.

May 5.– We reached home after our nine weeks' absence. In that time we have been through France to Marseilles, along the Cornice to Spezia, then to Pisa, Florence, Naples, Rome, Assisi, Perugia, Florence again, Ravenna, Bologna, Verona; across the Brenner Pass to Munich; then to Paris *viâ* Strasburg. In such a journey there was necessarily much interest both in renewing old memories and recording new; but I never had such continuous bad health in travelling as I have had during these nine weeks. On our arrival at home I found a delightful letter from Mrs. H. B. Stowe, whom I have never seen, addressing me as her "dear friend."

It was during this journey that I, for the first time, saw my future wife, at Rome. My eldest sister had married Mr. W. H. Bullock (now Mr. W. H. Hall), of Six-Mile-Bottom, Cambridgeshire, and they were on their wedding journey at Rome when they happened to meet Mr. and Mrs. Lewes

by chance in the Pamfili Doria Gardens. They saw a good deal of one another, and when I arrived, with my mother and another sister, we went by invitation to call at the Hôtel Minerva, where Mr. Lewes had found rooms on their first arrival in Rome. I have a very vivid recollection of George Eliot sitting on a sofa with my mother by her side, entirely engrossed with her. Mr. Lewes entertained my sister and me on the other side of the room. But I was very anxious to hear also the conversation on the sofa, as I was better acquainted with George Eliot's books than with any other literature. And through the dimness of these fifteen years, and all that has happened in them, I still seem to hear, as I first heard them, the low, earnest, deep, musical tones of her voice; I still seem to see the fine brows, with the abundant auburn-brown hair framing them, the long head, broadening at the back, the gray-blue eyes, constantly changing in expression, but always with a very loving, almost deprecating, look at my mother, the finely-formed, thin, transparent hands, and a whole *Wesen* that seemed in complete harmony with everything one expected to find in the author of "Romola." The next day Mr. and Mrs. Lewes went on to Assisi and we to Naples, and we did not meet again till the following August at Weybridge.

Letter to Mrs. H. B. Stowe, 8th May, 1869.

I value very highly the warrant to call you friend which your letter has given me. It lay awaiting me on our return, the other night, from a nine weeks' absence in Italy, and it made me almost wish that you could have a momentary vision of the

discouragement – nay, paralyzing despondency – in which many days of my writing life have been passed, in order that you might fully understand the good I find in such sympathy as yours – in such an assurance as you give me that my work has been worth doing. But I will not dwell on any mental sickness of mine. The best joy your words give me is the sense of that sweet, generous feeling in you which dictated them, and I shall always be the richer because you have in this way made me know you better. I must tell you that my first glimpse of you as a woman came through a letter of yours, and charmed me very much. The letter was addressed to Mrs. Follen; and one morning when I called on her in London (how many years ago![7]) she was kind enough to read it to me because it contained a little history of your life, and a sketch of your domestic circumstances. I remember thinking that it was very kind of you to write that long letter in reply to the inquiries of one who was personally unknown to you; and looking back with my present experience I think it was still kinder than it then appeared. For at that time you must have been much oppressed with the immediate results of your fame. I remember, too, that you wrote of your husband as one who was richer in Hebrew and Greek than in pounds or shillings; and as the ardent scholar has always been a character of peculiar interest to me, I have rarely had your image in my mind without the accompanying image (more or less erroneous) of such a scholar by your side. I shall welcome the fruit of

[7] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 220.

his Goethe studies, whenever it comes. In the meantime let me assure you that whoever else gave you that description of my husband's "History of Philosophy" – namely, "that it was to solve and settle all things" – he himself never saw it in that light. The work has been greatly altered, as well as enlarged, in three successive editions; and his mind is so far from being a captive to his own written words that he is now engaged in physiological and psychological researches which are leading him to issues at variance in some important respects with the views expressed in some of his published works. He is one of the few human beings I have known who will often, in the heat of an argument, see, and straightway confess, that he is in the wrong, instead of trying to shift his ground or use any other device of vanity.

I have good hopes that your fears are groundless as to the obstacles your new book may find here from its thorough American character. Most readers who are likely to be really influenced by writing above the common order will find that special aspect an added reason for interest and study, and I dare say you have long seen, as I am beginning to see with new clearness, that if a book which has any sort of exquisiteness happens also to be a popular, widely circulated book, its power over the social mind for any good is, after all, due to its reception by a few appreciative natures, and is the slow result of radiation from that narrow circle. I mean, that you can affect a few souls, and that each of these in turn may affect a few more, but that no exquisite book tells properly and directly on a multitude, however

largely it may be spread by type and paper. Witness the things the multitude will say about it, if one is so unhappy as to be obliged to hear their sayings. I do not write this cynically, but in pure sadness and pity. Both travelling abroad, and staying at home among our English sights and sports, one must continually feel how slowly the centuries work towards the moral good of men. And that thought lies very close to what you say as to your wonder or conjecture concerning my religious point of view. I believe that religion, too, has to be modified – "developed," according to the dominant phrase – and that a religion more perfect than any yet prevalent must express less care for personal consolation, and a more deeply-awing sense of responsibility to man, springing from sympathy with that which of all things is most certainly known to us, the difficulty of the human lot. I do not find my temple in Pantheism, which, whatever might be its value speculatively, could not yield a practical religion, since it is an attempt to look at the universe from the outside of our relations to it (that universe) as human beings. As healthy, sane human beings, we must love and hate – love what is good for mankind, hate what is evil for mankind. For years of my youth I dwelt in dreams of a pantheistic sort, falsely supposing that I was enlarging my sympathy. But I have travelled far away from that time. Letters are necessarily narrow and fragmentary, and, when one writes on wide subjects, are liable to create more misunderstanding than illumination. But I have little anxiety of that kind in writing to you, dear friend and fellow-laborer, for

you have had longer experience than I as a writer, and fuller experience as a woman, since you have borne children and known the mother's history from the beginning. I trust your quick and long-taught mind as an interpreter little liable to mistake me.

When you say, "We live in an orange grove and are planting many more," and when I think that you must have abundant family love to cheer you, it seems to me that you must have a paradise about you. But no list of circumstances will make a paradise. Nevertheless, I must believe that the joyous, tender humor of your books clings about your more immediate life, and makes some of that sunshine for yourself which you have given to us.

I see the advertisement of "Old Town Folk," and shall eagerly expect it.

That and every other new link between us will be reverentially valued.

Journal, 1869.

May 8 (Saturday). – Poor Thornie arrived from Natal, sadly wasted by suffering.

May 24.– Sold "Agatha" to Fields & Osgood, for the *Atlantic Monthly*, for £300.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 26th May, 1869.

That "disturbance" in my favorite work, with which you and Dr. Congreve are good enough to sympathize, is unhappily greater now than it has been for years before. Our poor Thornie

came back to us about seventeen days ago. We can never rejoice enough that we were already at home, seeing that we held it impossible for him to set out on his voyage until at least six weeks later than he did. Since he arrived our lives have been chiefly absorbed by cares for him; and though we now have a nurse to attend on him constantly, we spend several hours of the day by his side. There is joy in the midst of our trouble, from the tenderness towards the sufferer being altogether unchecked by anything unlovable in him. Thornie's disposition seems to have become sweeter than ever with the added six years; and there is nothing that we discern in his character or habits to cause us grief. Enough of our troubles. I gather from your welcome letter, received this morning, that there is a good deal of enjoyment for you in your temporary home, in spite of bad weather and faceache, which I hope will have passed away when you read this.

Mr. Beesley[8] wrote to me to tell me of his engagement, and on Sunday we had the pleasure of shaking him by the hand and seeing him look very happy. His is one of a group of prospective marriages which we have had announced to us since we came home. Besides Mr. Harrison's, there is Dr. Allbut's, our charming friend at Leeds. I told Mr. Beesley that I thought myself magnanimous in really rejoicing at the engagements of men friends, because, of course, they will be comparatively indifferent to their old intimates.

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[8] Professor Edmund Spenser Beesley, a well-known member of the Positivist body, who married Miss Crompton, daughter of Mr. Justice Crompton.

Dear Madame Bodichon is a precious help to us. She comes twice a week to sit with Thornie, and she is wonderfully clever in talking to young people. One finds out those who have real practical sympathy in times of trouble.

Letter to Frederic Harrison, 9th June, 1869.

Your letter has fulfilled two wishes of mine. It shows me that you keep me in your kind thoughts, and that you are very happy. I had been told by our friends, the Nortons, of your engagement, but I knew nothing more than that bare fact, and your letter gives me more of a picture. A very pretty picture – for I like to think of your love having grown imperceptibly along with sweet family affections. I do heartily share in your happiness, for however space and time may keep us asunder, you will never to my mind be lost in the distance, but will hold a place of marked and valued interest quite apart from those more public hopes about you which I shall not cease to cherish.

Both Mr. Lewes and I shall be delighted to see you any evening. I imagine that when you are obliged to stay in town the evening will be the easiest time for you to get out to us. Any time after eight you will find us thoroughly glad to shake hands with you. Do come when you can.

Journal, 1869.

July 3.– Finished my reading in Lucretius. Reading Victor Hugo's "L'homme qui rit;" also the Frau von Hillern's novel, "Ein Arzt der Seele." This week G. and I have been to Sevenoaks,

but were driven home again by the cold winds and cloudy skies. "Sonnets on Childhood" – five – finished.

July 10.– I wrote to Mrs. Stowe, in answer to a second letter of hers, accompanied by one from her husband.

Letter to Mrs. H. B. Stowe, 11th July, 1869.

I hoped before this to have seen our friend, Mrs. Fields, on her return from Scotland, and to have begged her to send you word of a domestic affliction which has prevented me from writing to you since I received your and your husband's valued letters. Immediately on our return from Italy, Mr. Lewes's second son, a fine young man of five-and-twenty, returned to us from Natal, wasted by suffering from a long-standing spinal injury. This was on the 8th of May, and since then we have both been absorbed in our duties to this poor child, and have felt our own health and nervous energy insufficient for our needful activity of body and mind. He is at present no better, and we look forward to a long trial. Nothing but a trouble so great as this would have prevented me from writing again to you, not only to thank you and Professor Stowe for your letters, but also to tell you that I have received and read "Old Town Folks." I think few of your many readers can have felt more interest than I have felt in that picture of an elder generation; for my interest in it has a double root – one, in my own love for our old-fashioned provincial life, which had its affinities with a contemporary life, even all across the Atlantic, and of which I have gathered glimpses in different phases, from my father and mother, with their relations;

the other is, my experimental acquaintance with some shades of Calvinistic orthodoxy. I think your way of presenting the religious convictions which are not your own, except by indirect fellowship, is a triumph of insight and true tolerance. A thorough comprehension of the mixed moral influence shed on society by dogmatic systems is rare even among writers, and one misses it altogether in English drawing-room talk. I thank you sincerely for the gift (in every sense) of this book, which, I can see, has been a labor of love.

Both Mr. Lewes and I are deeply interested in the indications which the Professor gives of his peculiar psychological experience, and we should feel it a great privilege to learn much more of it from his lips. It is a rare thing to have such an opportunity of studying exceptional experience in the testimony of a truthful and in every way distinguished mind. He will, I am sure, accept the brief thanks which I can give in this letter, for all that he has generously written to me. He says, "I have had no connection with any of the modern movements, except as father confessor;" and I can well believe that he must be peculiarly sensitive to the repulsive aspects which those movements present. Your view as to the cause of that "great wave of spiritualism" which is rushing over America – namely, that it is a sort of Rachel-cry of bereavement towards the invisible existence of the loved ones, is deeply affecting. But so far as "spiritualism" (by which I mean, of course, spirit-communication, by rapping, guidance of the pencil, etc.) has come within reach of my

judgment on our side of the water, it has appeared to me either as degrading folly, imbecile in the estimate of evidence, or else as impudent imposture. So far as my observation and experience have hitherto gone, it has even seemed to me an impiety to withdraw from the more assured methods of studying the open secret of the universe any large amount of attention to alleged manifestations which are so defiled by low adventurers and their palpable trickeries, so hopelessly involved in all the doubtfulness of individual testimonies as to phenomena witnessed, which testimonies are no more true objectively because they are honest subjectively, than the Ptolemaic system is true because it seemed to Tycho Brahé a better explanation of the heavenly movements than the Copernican. This is a brief statement of my position on the subject, which your letter shows me to have an aspect much more compulsory on serious attention in America than I can perceive it to have in England. I should not be as simply truthful as my deep respect for you demands, if I did not tell you exactly what is my mental attitude in relation to the phenomena in question. But whatever you print on the subject and will send me I shall read with attention, and the idea you give me of the hold which spiritualism has gained on the public mind in the United States is already a fact of historic importance.

Forgive me, dear friend, if I write in the scantiest manner, unworthily responding to letters which have touched me profoundly. You have known so much of life, both in its more external trials and in the peculiar struggles of a nature which is

made twofold in its demands by the yearnings of the author as well as of the woman, that I can count on your indulgence and power of understanding my present inability to correspond by letter.

May I add my kind remembrances to your daughter to the high regard which I offer to your husband?

Journal, 1869.

July 14.– Returned from Hatfield, after two days' stay.

July 15.– Began Nisard's "History of French Literature" – Villehardouin, Joinville, Froissart, Christine de Pisan, Philippe de Comines, Villers.

July 16.– Read the articles Phœnicia and Carthage in "Ancient Geography." Looked into Jewitt's "Universal History" again for Carthaginian religion. Looked into Sismondi's "Littérature du Midi" for Roman de la Rose; and ran through the first chapter about the formation of the Romance languages. Read about *Thallogens* and *Acrogens* in the "Vegetable World." Read Drayton's "Nymphidia" – a charming poem – a few pages of his "Polyolbion." Re-read Grote, v. – vii., on Sicilian affairs, down to rise of Dionysius.

July 18.– Miss Nannie Smith came, after a long absence from England; Professor Masson and Dr. Bastian, Madame Bodichon, and Dr. Payne. Some conversation about Saint-Simonism, *à propos* of the meeting on Woman's Suffrage the day before, M. Arles Dufour being uneasy because Mill did not in his speech recognize what women owed to Saint-Simonism.

July 19.– Writing an introduction to "Middlemarch." I have just re-read the 15th Idyll of Theocritus, and have written three more sonnets. My head uneasy. We went in the afternoon to the old water-colors, finding that the exhibition was to close at the end of the week. Burne-Jones's Circe and St. George affected me, by their colors, more than any of the other pictures – they are poems. In the evening read Nisard on Rabelais and Marot.

July 22.– Read Reybaud's book on "Les Réformateurs Modernes." In the afternoon Mrs. P. Taylor came and saw Thornie, who has been more uneasy this week, and unwilling to move or come out on the lawn.

July 23.– Read Theocritus, Id. 16. Meditated characters for "Middlemarch." Mrs. F. Malleson came.

July 24.– Still not quite well and clear-headed, so that little progress is made. I read aloud Fourier and Owen, and thought of writing something about Utopists.

July 25.– Read Plato's "Republic" in various parts. After lunch Miss Nannie Smith, Miss Blythe, Mr. Burton, and Mr. Deutsch. In the evening I read Nisard, and Littré on Comte.

Aug. 1.– Since last Sunday I have had an uncomfortable week from mental and bodily disturbance. I have finished eleven sonnets on "Brother and Sister," read Littré, Nisard, part of 22d Idyll of Theocritus, Sainte-Beuve, aloud to G. two evenings. Monday evening looked through Dickson's "Fallacies of the Faculty." On Tuesday afternoon we went to the British Museum to see a new bronze, and I was enchanted with some

fragments of glass in the Slade collection, with dyes of sunset in them. Yesterday, sitting in Thornie's room, I read through all Shakespeare's "Sonnets." Poor Thornie has had a miserably unsatisfactory week, making no progress. After lunch came Miss N. Smith and Miss Blythe, Mr. Burton, Mr. and Mrs. Burne-Jones, and Mr. Sanderson.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 1st Aug. 1869.

My last words to you might appear to imply something laughably opposed to my real meaning. "Think of me only as an example" meant – an example to be avoided. It was an allusion in my mind to the servant-girl who, being arrested for theft, said to her fellow-servant, "Take example by me, Sally." With the usual caprice of language, we say. "Make an example of her," in that sense of holding up for a warning, which the poor girl and I intended.

Journal, 1869.

Aug. 2.– Began "Middlemarch" (the Vincy and Featherstone parts).

Aug. 5.– Thornie during the last two or three days gives much more hopeful signs: has been much more lively, with more regular appetite and quieter nights. This morning I finished the first chapter of "Middlemarch." I am reading Renouard's "History of Medicine."

Aug. 31.– We went to Weybridge, walked on St. George's Hill, and lunched with Mrs. Cross and her family.

This visit to Weybridge is a very memorable one to me, because there my own first intimacy with George Eliot began, and the bonds with my family were knitted very much closer. Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were staying with us; and my sister, who had some gift for music, had set one or two of the songs from the "Spanish Gypsy." She sang one of them – "On through the woods, the pillared pines" – and it affected George Eliot deeply. She moved quickly to the piano, and kissed Mrs. Bullock very warmly, in her tears. Mr. and Mrs. Lewes were in deep trouble owing to the illness of Thornton Lewes; we were also in much anxiety as to the approaching confinement of my sister with her first child; and I was on the eve of departure for America. Sympathetic feelings were strong enough to overleap the barrier (often hard to pass) which separates acquaintanceship from friendship. A day did the work of years. Our visitors had come to the house as acquaintances, they left it as lifelong friends. And the sequel of that day greatly intensified the intimacy. For within a month my sister had died in childbirth, and her death called forth one of the most beautiful of George Eliot's letters. A month later Thornton Lewes died.

Journal, 1869.

Sept. 1.– I meditated characters and conditions for "Middlemarch," which stands still in the beginning of chapter iii.

Sept. 2.– We spent the morning in Hatfield Park, arriving at home again at half-past three.

Sept. 10.– I have achieved little during the last week, except

reading on medical subjects – Encyclopædia about the "Medical Colleges," "Cullen's Life," Russell's "Heroes of Medicine," etc. I have also read Aristophanes' "Ecclesiazusœ," and "Macbeth."

Sept. 11.– I do not feel very confident that I can make anything satisfactory of "Middlemarch." I have need to remember that other things which have been accomplished by me were begun under the same cloud. G. has been reading "Romola" again, and expresses profound admiration. This is encouraging.

Sept. 15.– George and I went to Sevenoaks for a couple of nights, and had some delicious walks.

Sept. 21.– Finished studying again Bekker's "Charikles." I am reading Mandeville's Travels. As to my work, *im Stiche gerathen*. Mrs. Congreve and Miss Bury came; and I asked Mrs. Congreve to get me some information about provincial hospitals, which is necessary to my imagining the conditions of my hero.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 21st Sept. 1869.

As to the Byron subject, nothing can outweigh to my mind the heavy social injury of familiarizing young minds with the desecration of family ties. The discussion of the subject in newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets is simply odious to me, and I think it a pestilence likely to leave very ugly marks. One trembles to think how easily that moral wealth may be lost which it has been the work of ages to produce in the refinement and differencing of the affectionate relations. As to the high-flown stuff which is being reproduced about Byron and his poetry, I am utterly out of sympathy with it. He seems to me the most *vulgar-*

minded genius that ever produced a great effect in literature.

Journal, 1869.

Sept. 22.– We went down to Watford for a change.

Sept. 24.– Returned home this morning because of the unpromising weather. It is worth while to record my great depression of spirits, that I may remember one more resurrection from the pit of melancholy. And yet what love is given to me! What abundance of good I possess! All my circumstances are blessed; and the defect is only in my own organism. Courage and effort!

Oct. 5.– Ever since the 28th I have been good for little, ailing in body and disabled in mind. On Sunday an interesting Russian pair came to see us – M. and Mme. Kovilevsky: she, a pretty creature, with charming modest voice and speech, who is studying mathematics (by allowance, through the aid of Kirchhoff) at Heidelberg; he, amiable and intelligent, studying the concrete sciences apparently – especially geology; and about to go to Vienna for six months for this purpose, leaving his wife at Heidelberg!

I have begun a long-meditated poem, "The Legend of Jubal," but have not written more than twenty or thirty verses.

Oct. 13.– Yesterday Mr. W. G. Clark of Cambridge came to see us, and told of his intention to give up his oratorship and renounce his connection with the Church.

I have read rapidly through Max Müller's "History of Sanskrit Literature," and am now reading Lecky's "History of Morals."

I have also finished Herbert Spencer's last number of his "Psychology." My head has been sadly feeble, and my whole body ailing of late. I have written about one hundred verses of my poem. Poor Thornie seems to us in a state of growing weakness.

Oct. 19.– This evening at half-past six our dear Thornie died. He went quite peacefully. For three days he was not more than fitfully and imperfectly conscious of the things around him. He went to Natal on the 17th October, 1863, and came back to us ill on the 8th May, 1869. Through the six months of his illness his frank, impulsive mind disclosed no trace of evil feeling. He was a sweet-natured boy – still a boy, though he had lived for twenty-five years and a half. On the 9th of August he had an attack of paraplegia, and although he partially recovered from it, it made a marked change in him. After that he lost a great deal of his vivacity, but he suffered less pain. This death seems to me the beginning of our own.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 15th Dec. 1869.

The day after our dear boy's funeral we went into the quietest and most beautiful part of Surrey, four miles and a half from any railway station. I was very much shaken in mind and body, and nothing but the deep calm of fields and woods would have had a beneficent effect on me. We both of us felt, more than ever before, the blessedness of being in the country, and we are come back much restored. It will interest you, I think, to know that a friend of ours, Mr. W. G. Clark, the public orator at Cambridge, laid down his oratorship as a preparatory step to writing a letter

to his bishop renouncing, or, rather, claiming to be free from, his clerical status, because he no longer believes what it presupposes him to believe. Two other men whom we know are about to renounce Cambridge fellowships on the same ground.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 31st Dec. 1869.

We shall be delighted to have you on Monday. I hope you will get your business done early enough to be by a good fire in our drawing-room before lunch. Mr. Doyle is coming to dine with us, but you will not mind that. He is a dear man, a good Catholic, full of varied sympathies and picturesque knowledge.

Letter to Frederic Harrison, 15th Jan. 1870.

I am moved to write to you rather by the inclination to remind you of me than by the sense of having anything to say. On reading "The Positivist Problem"[9] a second time, I gained a stronger impression of its general value, and I also felt less jarred by the more personal part at the close. Mr. Lewes would tell you that I have an unreasonable aversion to personal statements, and when I come to like them it is usually by a hard process of *con*-version. But my second reading gave me a new and very strong sense that the last two or three pages have the air of an appendix, added at some distance of time from the original writing of the article. Some more thoroughly explanatory account of your non-adhesion seems requisite as a nexus – since the statement of your non-adhesion had to be mentioned after an argument

[9] An article by Mr. Frederic Harrison in the *Fortnightly Review* of November, 1869.

for the system against the outer Gentile world. However, it is more important for me to say that I felt the thorough justice of your words, when, in conversation with me, you said, "I don't see why there should be any mystification; having come to a resolution after much inward debate, it is better to state the resolution." Something like that you said, and I give a hearty "Amen," praying that I may not be too apt myself to prefer the haze to the clearness. But the fact is, I shrink from decided "deliverances" on momentous subjects from the dread of coming to swear by my own "deliverances," and sinking into an insistent echo of myself. That is a horrible destiny – and one cannot help seeing that many of the most powerful men fall into it.

Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, 16th Mch. 1870.

Cara has told me about your republication of the "Inquiry," and I have a longing to write – not intrusively, I hope – just to say "thank you" for the good it does me to know of your being engaged in that act of piety to your brother's memory. I delight in the act itself, and in the satisfaction which I know you have in performing it. When I remember my own obligation to the book, I must believe that among the many new readers a cheap edition will reach there must be minds to whom it will bring welcome light in studying the New Testament – sober, serious help towards a conception of the past, instead of stage-lights and make-ups. And this value is, I think, independent of the opinions that might be held as to the different degrees of success in the construction of probabilities or in particular interpretations. Throughout there

is the presence of grave sincerity. I would gladly have a word or two directly from yourself when you can scribble a note without feeling me a bore for wanting it. People who write many letters without being forced to do so are fathomless wonders to me, but you have a special faculty for writing such letters as one cares to read, so it is a pity that the accomplishment should lie quite unused. I wonder if you have read Emerson's new essays. I like them very much.

Letter to Mrs. Congreve, 3d April, 1870.

We shall leave Berlin on Tuesday, so that I must ask you to send me the much-desired news of you to Vienna, addressed to the Hon. Robert Lytton, British Embassy. We do not yet know the name of the hotel where rooms have been taken for us. Our journey has not been unfortunate hitherto. The weather has been cold and cheerless, but we expected this, and on the 1st of April the sun began to shine. As for my *Wenigkeit*, it has never known a day of real bodily comfort since we got to Berlin: headache, sore throat, and *Schnupfen* have been alternately my companions, and have made my enjoyment very languid. But think of this as all past when you get my letter; for this morning I have a clearer head, the sun is shining, and the better time seems to be come for me. Mr. Lewes has had a good deal of satisfaction in his visits to laboratories and to the *Charité*, where he is just now gone for the third time to see more varieties of mad people, and hear more about Psychiatrie from Dr. Westphal, a quiet, unpretending little man, who seems to have been delighted with

George's sympathetic interest in this (to me) hideous branch of practice. I speak with all reverence: the world can't do without hideous studies.

People have been very kind to us, and have overwhelmed us with attentions, but we have felt a little weary in the midst of our gratitude, and since my cold has become worse we have been obliged to cut off further invitations.

We have seen many and various men and women, but except Mommsen, Bunsen, and Du Bois Reymond, hardly any whose names would be known to you. If I had been in good health I should probably have continued to be more amused than tired of sitting on a sofa and having one person after another brought up to bow to me, and pay me the same compliment. Even as it was, I felt my heart go out to some good women who seemed really to have an affectionate feeling towards me for the sake of my books. But the sick animal longs for quiet and darkness.

The other night, at Dr. Westphal's, I saw a young English lady marvellously like Emily in face, figure, and voice. I made advances to her on the strength of that external resemblance, and found it carried out in the quickness of her remarks. But new gentlemen to be introduced soon divided us. Another elegant, pretty woman there was old Boeckh's daughter. One enters on all subjects by turns in these evening parties, which are something like reading the Conversations-Lexicon in a nightmare. Among lighter entertainments we have been four times to the opera, being tempted at the very beginning of our stay by Gluck,

Mozart, and an opportunity of hearing Tannhäuser for the second time. Also we have enjoyed some fine orchestral concerts, which are to be had for sixpence! Berlin has been growing very fast since our former stay here, and luxury in all forms has increased so much that one only here and there gets a glimpse of the old-fashioned German housekeeping. But though later hours are becoming fashionable, the members of the Reichstag who have other business than politics complain of having to begin their sitting at eleven, ending, instead of beginning, at four, when the solid day is almost gone. We went to the Reichstag one morning, and were so fortunate as to hear Bismarck speak. But the question was one of currency, and his speech was merely a brief winding-up.

Now I shall think that I have earned a letter telling me all about you. May there be nothing but good to tell of! Pray give my best love to Emily, and my earnest wishes to Dr. Congreve, that he may have satisfaction in new work.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.