

(See also nos. 19, 20, 21)

LETTERS

from

The Lady Sophia FitzClarence

to

[The Lady Dorothea FitzClarence] Miss Dorothea Turner?

Written in the Year 1815

in Paris

After the Battle of Waterloo.

St. James'

Thursday

My dear Dot,

Jane tells me that in your last letter to her, you proposed being in London the beginning of September. I am sorry I shall not be at Bushy as I go tomorrow to Paris, with Mrs. Arbuthnot and I think it very probable we shall not return till quite the end of that month. We embark at Brighton for Dieppe, & hope to reach the place of our destination by Monday night. It will be a most delightful Excursion, & one I have long wished it were in my power to make. Going with Mrs. Arbuthnot will render it still more agreeable to me. I shall have a great deal to tell you when we meet which I hope will be soon after I return. You shall hear from me if I can find time to write, but we shall have so much to see, & to do that I do not expect to have much leisure.

God bless you dear Dot

Ever most affectionately & truly yours

S F C

Paris

Sept. 17th.

This is the twentieth letter I have begun to you, my dear Det. Heaven knows if it will have a better fate than any of its predecessors, as I am generally called away a dozen times whilst I am writing a page, & my composition always appears so bad on a second perusal that I uniformly destroy them, so that you have no chance of receiving an epistle from me, unless I can get through it at my first attempt, & then with all its imperfections on its head, I send it forth trusting to your good nature not its own merits, to tolerate such a production. We have now been 18 days in Paris & have seen a great many of the extraordinary sights, this famed city contains, the public buildings are magnificent, but the town itself is very inferior to London, they surpass us in splendour and luxury & we are far beyond them in cleanliness & comfort. Various are the odours that are exhaled from the streets by the passenger, one large gutter, a receptacle for every sort of filth, rolls a black fetid stream down the middle of every street in Paris, & the drains, instead of being as in London, under the pavement, are on its surface, the very air is impregnated with dirt, yet it is not an unhealthy place, which appears to me to be a very unaccountable circumstance. There is no society here. Lady Castlereagh is at home every evening, the Duke of Wellington gives Dinners

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& sometimes Concerts, but the natives never come forth, we have only been to one French party the most formidable thing you can imagine, figure to yourself a very little room, excessively hot, the company ranged in rows, the gentlemen separated from the ladies, wretched music, the visitors condemned to constant silence, & to complete the whole, the Duc de Berri in the middle of the circle, trying to look tremendous. The Duke of Wellington told us, that this extraordinary arrangement was part of Bonaparte's political plan, & that in order to prevent any remarks on his government in Society, he divided the company in order to put an end to all conversation, & ranged them on forms like a public concert in England, that not a single word might be spoken that could not be overheard by a dozen persons at least. Was there ever a completer system of tyranny? We have been once to Talleyrand, whose house is open every evening. He is a very ugly man with a countenance not as expressive of intellect as I had expected. He looks rather cunning than clever. His wife is in England. His two nieces, wives of his nephews, keep his house. One is very pretty, she is going to be separated from her husband, & scandal says, she prefers the husband to the nephew. Paris is filled with English. The Sidney Smiths are here & the fair Emily, still lonely, still unmarried. Lord March was flirting with her but has gone to England, & all hopes of him are over. Mrs. Arbuthnot has produced a great sensation here & all nations & degrees unite in admiration of her. I never saw any one have so

great succes, or retain it so well, in fact I think she  
approaches as nearly to perfection as Human Nature can do.  
I fear my dearest Dot you will not be able to decipher, but I  
have such wretched material, that I can hardly write at all.

Yours affectly.

S.F.C.

Oct. 3rd.

I have only written to you once my dear Dot, since I have been here, but pray do not accuse me of neglect. I have had the inclination but not the power, our time is so constantly occupied, that whole days pass, without my knowing how they went, & yet I have never a moment's leisure. Our visit is now to my sorrow drawing to a close, & in a fortnight I shall be in England. I have been very happy here & I look forward to quitting it with great regret. There are so many people I like so excessively that I shall never see again & parting with even a person one does not care for, with the idea of never again beholding them is to me a melancholy feeling.

I am grown still more of a philosopher than ever I was, since I came to Paris, & it is rather ridiculous that the most dissipated of all places, the city where vice is not only tolerated but applauded, where you cannot go into society without meeting men stained with every crime, that can disgrace Human Nature, & women devoid of every proper feeling, & every virtuous principle, should have had the effect of giving me more serious ideas than ever I had before, of creating in me a greater horror of impropriety & irreligion, & of obtaining for me, half in jest, half in earnest, the appellations of Prude & Methodist. Do not fancy that my moralising spirit arises from dissatisfaction for vanity apart, I never recollect having had so much success anywhere since I first began my career. All nations I can number amongst my flirts

& some who aspired beyond a temporary amusement. I own I do not dislike this distinction, with all my philosophy, but luckily it has not turned my head, & you will find me on my return unchanged. So much for prosing, now for something more amusing. The Louvre is heavily stripped of all its borrowed or rather Stolen treasures, & most of the magnificent Chef D'Oeuvres are already on the road to their lawful masters. The French are not a little enraged, & I doubt not will take the first opportunity of revenging themselves. In order to complete their humiliation they are going to uncoat the great column in the Place Vendome, which is formed of the cannon taken at Austerlitz & which is adorned with bas reliefs, representing the principal events of that campaign. The beautiful Venetian horses are already removed & the case & the two figures of victory are in the most ridiculous manner left standing on the top of the triumphal arch. Part of the case was broken in unharnessing the horses, & as I have some of the pieces, I will give you a relic when I return. Poor old Dix huit the Desire was very restive about the Louvre, & has made as great a fuss as if he had the power of preventing its demolition, but all nations agreed in not attending in the slightest degree to anything he says, & as he drives out in his carriage he sees the carts conveying off the pictures & statues, & hears the hammers at work, notwithstanding his thundering threats. However all his rage is only put on. A dearth of oysters would be to him a far more serious misfortune than the loss

of all the chef d'oeuvres in the world, & after raving with all the vehemence so immense a body is capable of, he quietly sits down to lunch, & it is said, (mind I do not vouch for the truth of it,) eats 800 oysters in order to get an appetite for dinner. The whole royal family is detested here & I am convinced they will remain no longer in France than the armies of the Allies. The Duke of Wellington will some day or other sway the sceptre of Henri VI, at least if I can judge from the sentiments the French themselves profess. I hope you will be able to decipher this, as it would be a pity that any part of so fine a composition should be lost.

Yours ever affly.

S F C



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Transcript of Geo. Addl 44/19  
[Oct 1815]

Altho' I still hope & trust to see you some time in next week yet as I have a few leisure moments, I do not think I can employ them better than in dedicating them to you my dear Det. I should have written to you more regularly, but for the last month we have been daily expecting to set off, & most deeply do I regret that we have been detained so long. Paris can boast but little variety in its amusements. We are not admitted into French society. Talleyrand's is the only house open to the English, & that only through the Duke's introduction, so that I have not learnt much of French manners. Lady Castlereagh's is the constant rendez-vous of all the best English Society. By the best, I mean only that particular set whom she would invite to her suppers in London. This I think she carries too far for in St James' Square, she is only a simple Particuliere, here she is in a public situation, & as she fills the place of Ambassadors, & partakes of all the honours & dignities attached to it, she ought certainly to fulfill its duties, particularly as government defrays all the expenses. The male part of her society are far better & more numerous than the female as it includes all the foreigners of any distinction in Paris & all the better class of our own officers & all the young men of rank in our army. She has had balls regularly once a fortnight & to them she invites all the decent English (I can assure you there are a great many here who do not come under that epithet.) At

Talleyrand's I have seen most of the celebrated characters, that have made themselves famous or infamous for the last 25 years on the guilty theatre of Paris. Young & unmarried ladies are in France nonentities in Society & till a woman is married she is nothing, but somehow or other the Fouquieres broke through their usual rule with regard to me. Prince Metternich, the Austrian Prime Minister, the Prince Kaunitz of the present day,<sup>\*</sup> first brought me into notice, & his example has been followed more or less by all the rest. I do not mention this from vanity but only to show you, that I have had greater opportunities of making my journey of use to me than young unmarried females generally have. The second circumstance that brought me forward & gave me a greater notoriety than I was desirous of having, was the mania that all the princes took of "faisant la cour" to me. One of them in particular, The Prince Royal of Bavaria, made himself so absurd, by the extravagance of his folly, that he rendered himself the conversation of all Paris. I hate publicity, & how greatly I prefer respectability & my own native obscurity, however flattering admiration may be it only weighs with me in proportion to the real intrinsic worth of the person who admires me. Now I have enough of a democrat about me, not to look upon rank as a part of the animal, or to be more enchanted with the preference of a nobleman than of a commoner unless he adds superiority of sense to superiority of station, consequently H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Bavaria's adoration, far from pleasing, quite disgusted me. He is quite mad &

\*where the original starts

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the love of a madman, particularly when it does not meet with a return, is not a thing to be laughed at. One evening he grew quite outrageous, & I really feared lest his passion should have some fatal effect. Now as I never sought for his admiration, or laid myself out for it, it was rather hard upon me that I should undergo such persecution. At last Lady Kinnaird & Mrs. Arbuthnot beat into the wretch's head, that in England, attention from a married man was looked upon as an insult, & he consented to let me alone in Public, provided he might be allowed to visit me every day. To this of course we objected, & at last the monster in a fit of despair, quitted Paris & restored me to Freedom by his departure. This is one of my adventures. I have some others that I cannot write, but will tell you when we meet.

Yours affly.

S F C

Paris

Oct. 19th.

I have been expecting to hear from you my dearest Det, ever since I quitted England, but my hopes have been disappointed & not one letter have I received from you, since I have been at Paris. However as it is one of the precepts of our religion to return good for evil you shall not find me want-in essential a maxim & notwithstanding your silence I will make one more attempt to draw you in to answer me by writing to you again for the fourth time, trusting that my goodness will make your crime appear even in your eyes of still greater magnitude. Our stay is still uncertain. Lord Castlereagh now wishes us to return with him, & as the conferences seem likely to "trainez en longue" Heaven alone can tell when that will be. I have everything here I can desire to make my sojourn delightful. Both Mr & Mrs Arbuthnot are kindness itself to me, & the inhabitants of this town, be they English, natives or foreigners, seem to have entered into a conspiracy if I may use the term, to overwhelm me with goodness. In short I never knew what success was till I came here. Indeed so much so that I am sometimes annoyed at it & would give the world to escape from some of my Royal pursuers, or Diplomatic adorers. Yet notwithstanding all this, I begin to have the "maladie du pays" very strong upon me, & to desire most anxiously to return home. I am so dreadfully idle here that whole days pass without my having been in any degree occu-

pled. I have one amusement here however that I cannot carry with me to England, & which I shall regret extremely, - riding on horseback. I have a delightful horse of one of the Lord Lennox's, & as many cavaliers to attend me as I can desire. I ride regularly & I find it agrees with me particularly well. Although I have not made progress in any of my usual studies, during my stay here, yet my time has not been absolutely lost. I have seen a great deal, have associated with almost all the distinguished characters that have figured on the theatre of Europe for the last 20 years, & have obtained many juster ideas than I could have drawn from books. Add to all this that I have been very happy & I cannot regret the time I have passed in Paris. So much for self, but you know of old that I am a little bit of an egoist, & you know my feelings & myself too well for me to apologise to you for enlarging upon a subject, that in some shape or other, is always uppermost in everyone's imagination. We have had an elopement in this good town of Paris, which for the last week has scandalised all the virtuous & moral inhabitants, who innocent, pure creatures, are not accustomed to such indecent passion. General Maitland<sup>e</sup> and Lady Sarah Lennox<sup>e</sup> are the parties in question. They fled on Saturday & their place of concealment not being discovered till Sunday, was certainly rather unlucky. However the business was hushed up, & they were married at the Hotel Borghese, at our Ambassadors on that day. The Duke & Duchess of Richmond have forgiven them, & indeed have behaved with great affection. To-morrow the Duke of

Wellington gives a dinner, Concert & ball to exhibit their wedding, as he is anxious to give the affair as good a colouring as possible in the eyes of the French who have caught at it with great malignity. We are invited & I expect to be greatly edified! They were only married on Sunday and tomorrow is Friday, so that the lady's blushes are soon over. ----- says "they order these things better in France."

The Duchess of Wellington is expected on Saturday, & as I am in a scandalous humour I will tell you that the Duke looked very "mal a son aise" when he showed us the apartments he had been preparing for her. She is however very much liked by all his Staff, & very popular amongst the French. Caroline Fitzroy is to come with her. I was very shocked at Lady Abdey's elopement. I never gave her credit for much sense, but I had not suspected her of depravity.

I am afraid you will think this letter a very stupid one, but there is no news in Paris, & I have been obliged to savour my Epistle with a little scandal, to make it at all palatable! Trusting to your knowledge of my disposition, not to think the worse for it.

Adieu my dear Dot,

Yours ever affectly.

S.F.C.

I will write to you again soon & will try to make my next letter a more sprightly one than this!

~~ee~~ Sarah, daughter (second) of the 4th Duke of Richmond who died of the bite of a mad fox when he was Governor General in Canada.

Sir Peregrine Maitland, G.C.B., died in 1875.

Oct. 20th.

I wrote to you by the last post, dearest Dot, & not knowing you were at Bushy, till the following Monday, when your very kind & affectionate letter, reached me, I directed it to Mr. Curling's, so that it is very probable you may never receive it. You may console yourself however for its loss, when I tell you, that it contained little more than abuse, & now that I find that you did not deserve all the names I honoured you with, my conscience reproaches me for my base insinuations, & I almost wish, as the only "amende honorable" in my power, that you may never be condemned to wade through it. I am delighted to find that my letters give dear Papa pleasure, & all the foolish success I have here, never have, & never will give me one half the proud feeling of satisfaction, that I experienced at that part of your kind epistle, in which you so good-naturedly informed me, that he was pleased with my correspondence. I am only sorry that Paris now affords me such trifling materials & so few subjects likely to interest him. We dined yesterday at the Duke of Wellington's, a wedding feast in honour of General & Lady Sarah Maitland. They were only married 5 days previously, & in a manner, not in my opinion, very creditable to either. As I informed you in my last, we expected to have had some scenes, and I really went in fear & trembling, lest some of the parties should be overcome. However I was quite mistaken, for had they been married 50 years, they could not have conducted themselves

with greater sang-froid. The bride in particular bore it with a sort of unblushing effrontery, that first engaged, & then amused me. The bridegroom seemed of the two the most abashed. The party at dinner consisted only of the family, but the family in all its ramifications. Cousins without numbers, I was the only person present, who did not claim relationship, altho' I might have done so had I chosen to go back as far as Charles II, the founder of the Duke of Richmond's house. But to tell you the downright truth, I would not have been proud of the affinity, for never was I so shocked at anything, as at the want of modesty & superior feeling displayed upon an occasion, that would have been my death, had I been a party concerned. Lady Berkeley was there, very fine, very great, & very large. Indeed larger I think (mind I have no intention of being scandalous) than the time authorises. But you know I do not understand these sort of things. She treated me "de haute en bas" but in company with so great a number of great personages, it would have been presumption indeed in me, to have supposed she could have deigned to notice one so insignificant as myself. The evening concluded with a ball, not an agreeable one I thought as the company was a terrible mixture, & the room so hot & crowded that one could hardly move. I had been riding a great way in the morning, & was exceeding fatigued, so that altogether I saw everything "en jaune" & went to bed in a very misanthropic humour. Luckily the fit is gone off this morning, & "Couleur de rose" is once more the order of the day. The



Duchess of Wellington is to be here on Monday, & to the dismay of all the Aide de Camps, Caroline Fitzroy has accepted the Duchess's invitation to accompany her. I have never heard of any one so unpopular as she appears to be amongst the Duchess's staff, she must have a winning way to make herself hateful, & moreover a great talent or she could not have succeeded so well. Lord & Lady Worcester & Lady Jersey are also coming, but we shall have gone before their arrival. Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot dine to-day with Talleyrand. He has not invited me, indeed he is the only person in Paris who does not patronise me, & I am very sorry for his bad taste. Lady Castlereagh has a ball on Monday, so that you see we are what you call very gay. The French Duke takes every opportunity of assuring me that I am a thousand times prettier, than when first he knew me, & hints that the power of my beauty is not lost upon his susceptible heart. But I take it all with the utmost sang-froid & indeed just now I have no vacancy for him, so you see I am quite safe in that quarter, & thank Heaven, I still preserve indifference in every other. Adieu dear Dot

Most affectly yours

S.F.C.

What folly I have written, but not having any news, I had nothing else to fill my paper with.

Sir G. Berkeley, the happy husband of Lady Berkeley, is the ugliest man I ever beheld & has a tooth growing out of his nose, which is not at all becoming.

Thursday.

This is probably the last letter you will receive from me, my dear Dot, dated from Paris, as it is Mrs. Arbuthnot's present intention to set out next week, but the day is still uncertain, & I do not think we shall depart before Saturday se'ennight. We are to land at Dover. Mr. & Mrs. Arbuthnot intend passing a few days with Lord & Lady Liverpool at Walmer, but as I know the latter very little & am not included in the invitation, will you tell Mrs. Hunt that I believe I must request her to come to Dover, in order to chaperone me to London. I did not know this arrangement yesterday when I wrote to her, or I should certainly have informed her of it. However as there will be one more post day next Monday, before we quit Paris, she may depend on hearing all the particulars from me, as our departure will then be finally decided. My sojourn here has altogether been delightful. I have had as much amusement, as much pleasure & as much gaiety as I could cram into the time, & last not least more admiration, or to use a less conceited word, more succes, than ever I had before, or most probably shall ever have again. Indeed if it were in the nature of the female heart to be fatigued with attention, I have been ennuyed for some of the foreigners are so stupid, that they take coldness for encouragement & downright rudeness, (for you may depend upon it, I never stood upon any degree of ceremony, whatever their rank might be,) for proofs of kind-

ness, so that they wilfully misunderstood me, & do what one will, the same persecution continues. This moment I have been absolutely obliged to lock myself up in my room, to get away from the Prince Royal of Bavaria, who comes in without being announced, insists upon looking through our apartments, to see if we really are out, & takes possession of our sitting room to wait our return. Four times was the monster here yesterday. As/<sup>we</sup>were luckily out, he wrote on a slip of paper, that he would not be denied, & that he would persevere till he saw me. In short it has been quite a mania amongst all ranks, ages & countries, there being no other tolerable English girl here. My own countrymen thought that for the honour of England, they could not give me up to foreigners, without some sort of struggle, & you know an Englishwoman out of her country, had she the face of Lucifer, & the figure of Mrs. Cockle, would still be a prize, so that I have all the Duke's staff in addition, all Lord Castlereagh's diplomats, & in a word more than I can find conversation for. The French have been the least assiduous, & a French lady the other evening, expressing her opinion of me, said, "Oui, jolie, mais pour la plus belle personne du monde, je ne peux pas le dire, ni le decouvrir, moi!"

I have written you a great deal of nonsense, but I have no intelligence of any kind, & as I would rather you should think me stupid vain, - in short anything but wanting in affection, I have scribbled all this folly rather than let the post pass

without writing to you.

Yours ever affly.

S.F.C.