

Henry Handel
RICHARDSON
the letters

edited by

CLIVE PROBYN and BRUCE STEELE

with

RACHEL SOLOMON and PATRICK O'NEILL

VOLUME I: 1874-1915



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CLIVE PROBYN AND BRUCE STEELE
January 2000

CHRONOLOGY

ENTRIES REFER TO Henry Handel Richardson ('HHR') except where indicated and include publication dates of her works.

VOLUME 1

- 3 JANUARY 1870 Born Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson, Fitzroy, Melbourne, to Mary (Bailey) Richardson (MR b. Leicester, England, 1835) and Walter Lindesay Richardson (WLR b. Dublin, Ireland, 1826).
- 28 APRIL 1871 Sister Ada Lillian (Lil) Lindesay born.
- 6 OCTOBER 1871 At 'Springfield', Chapel Street, St Kilda, Melbourne.
- 18 APRIL 1873 Leaves with family for England, arriving 11 July.
- AUGUST 1874 HHR's first letter.
- 17 SEPTEMBER 1874 Leaves Plymouth for Melbourne, arriving 12 December; at Sydney Terrace, Fitzroy Gardens, East Melbourne.
- AUGUST 1875 Moves to new house in Hawthorn; family in debt.
- JULY 1876 At Chiltern, N. E. Victoria; HHR and Lil taught at home by governess.
- SUMMER 1876-77 Two months in Melbourne, Sorrento and Queenscliff.
- 27 AUGUST 1877 WLR abandons failed medical practice in Chiltern; MR follows later with HHR and Lil.
- OCTOBER 1877 At [26] Mercer Street, Queenscliff; WLR's mental state worsens, suffers from delusions.
- JUNE 1878 WLR relieved of all official duties as Health Officer at Queenscliff.
- MID-SEPTEMBER 1878 At Koroit post office (HHR's eighth home); taught by wife of local parson, Rev. C. L. H. Rupp.
- 18 NOVEMBER 1878 WLR placed in government asylum, Yarra Bend.
- 24 FEBRUARY 1879 WLR released from asylum, goes to Koroit, 'a

gentle broken creature who might have been a stranger' (HHR).

- 1 AUGUST 1879 WLR dies; MR inherits £1800 and the Hawthorn house.
- 27 AUGUST 1880 At Maldon.
- JANUARY 1881 Holidays with Lil in Melbourne; visits theatre and International Exhibition. Maldon education continues with governess; reads Shakespeare, Hardy, George Eliot, 'Yellow Back' fiction and WLR's books on Spiritualism.
- MARCH 1883 HHR (thirteen) develops passionate attraction for Revd John ('Jack') Stretch (twenty-eight), new vicar of Holy Trinity, Maldon.
- APRIL 1883–DEC. 1887 At The Ladies' College (Presbyterian Ladies' College: PLC). Winner of school tennis tournament, co-founder of literary club; performs Schumann and Chopin at half-yearly concert. Writes first musical compositions. Forms strong attachment to room-mate Connie Cochran. Matriculates December with honours in English and French, and passes in Latin, History, Botany, Arithmetic and Algebra; excels in school concert.
- JANUARY 1887 At Swan Street, Richmond South; Music Scholarship at PLC. Lil joins PLC at class 5.
- MAY 1887 Moves to East Melbourne (address unknown).
- 27 MAY 1887 Reads letters of MR and WLR—'a love story of 30 years ago'.
- DECEMBER 1887 Leaves PLC with first class honours in English and History.
- EARLY 1888 'Morning governess' for six months in private school at Toorak; moves to Kambrook Road, Caulfield.
- 3 AUGUST 1888 To England, arrives 11 September.
- JANUARY 1889 In Leipzig.
- 25 APRIL 1889 Admitted to Leipzig Conservatorium. At Gottschedstrasse 4 III; reads Ibsen.
- END OF 1889 At Mozartstrasse 13 III. Meets John George Robertson (JGR b. 18 January 1867), science graduate of Glasgow University, now at Leipzig University; begins systematic reading in Russian, French, English and Danish literature: especially Nietzsche and Brandes.
- 20 FEBRUARY 1891 Engaged to JGR.
- 25 MARCH 1892 *Hauptprüfung* (final examination) at Conservatorium.

17 APRIL 1892 Leaves Conservatorium with *Direktorial Zeugnis* (Director's Statement), dated 15 April.

EASTER 1892 In London, Scotland, Cambridge and Balham. JGR applying for lectureships in British universities, reviewing and translating.

SUMMER 1893 Writes defence of Ibsen; begins translating Jacobsen's *Niels Lyhne*.

MAY 1894 First sees Eleanora Duse in *The Lady of the Camellias*; offers *Niels Lyhne* translation to Heinemann.

MAY 1895 At Akademiestrasse, Munich (until December).

13 JUNE 1895 'Music Study in Leipzig', *Lady* (London).

30 DECEMBER 1895 Marries JGR in Dublin.

1896 Experiments with fiction and composes music.

7 JANUARY 1896 In Munich: at Thorwaldsenstrasse 33 III, Nymphenburg district.

29 JANUARY 1896 Heinemann proposes translation of Bjørnson's novel *Fiskerjenten*.

21 APRIL 1896 Holiday in Starnberg.

7 MAY 1896 JGR appointed Lector Publicus, University of Strassburg.

20 JULY 1896 Walking tour from Munich to Strassburg via Bavarian highlands; reaches Strassburg 6 August.

SUMMER 1896 *Niels Lyhne* as *Siren Voices* and *Fiskerjenten* as *The Fisher Lass*, Heinemann's International Series.

AUG.–SEPT. 1896 Writes article on Jacobsen.

25 SEPTEMBER 1896 Leaves Munich.

28 SEPTEMBER 1896 Begins *Maurice Guest*; works intermittently until 1904.

1 OCTOBER 1896 In Strassburg: at Sternwartstrasse 6.

OCTOBER 1896 Writing article 'German Women Writers'.

26 NOVEMBER 1896 MR dies.

DECEMBER 1896 Writes account of her mother's death.

EARLY 1897 At work on articles on Schubert, Ibsen and German women writers.

30 JANUARY 1897 'The Schubert Centenary', *Speaker*.

MARCH 1897 Ten-day trip to Lucerne, Lugano, Bellagio, Como.

10 JULY 1897 'Ibsen in Translation', *Speaker*.

1 AUGUST 1897 In London.

20 SEPTEMBER 1897 To Strassburg.

NOVEMBER 1897 'A Danish Poet', *Cosmopolis*.

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- 1898 Takes French lessons.
 16–28 MARCH 1898 To Italy; return via Basel.
 AUGUST 1898 Walking tour in Switzerland.
 1 OCTOBER 1898 To Karlsruhe to hear Berlioz' *Les Troyens* (Hoftheater); receives four letters from Georg Brandes in this month.
 DECEMBER 1898 Serious attack of bronchitis.
 22 JAN.–18 APRIL 1899 Sent to Bordighera to recover; joined by JGR 2 March.
 SUMMER 1899 Holiday in Badenweiler until 1 September.
 5 APRIL 1900 Marriage of Lil to Otto Neustätter in Munich.
 10 APRIL 1900 Moves to Twingerstrasse 5, Strassburg.
 7–8 OCTOBER 1900 Sees Eleanora Duse in *Hedda Gabler* and *Dame aux Camélias* in Frankfurt.
 LATE 1900 Helps JGR to proofread his *History of German Literature*.
 APRIL 1900 Walking tour through Black Forest and Vosges; takes Italian lessons.
 JUNE 1900 Visits Munich.
 1901 First sketch of 'Der Herbst', 'tone poem'.
 1 JANUARY 1901 Working at *Maurice Guest*.
 AUGUST 1901 First of seven summers spent in Bavarian Highlands (near Marquartstein); returns to Strassburg 11 September.
 JULY–SEPT. 1902 Complete break from writing.
 1 APRIL 1903 In London: JGR appointed to Chair of German, University of London.
 22 APRIL 1903 At 18 Willow Road, Hampstead.
 30 JULY–30 SEPT. 1903 In Marquartstein; begins *The Getting of Wisdom*.
 SEPTEMBER 1903 In Munich; takes lessons in composition from Ludwig Thuille; possibly meets Richard Strauss; JGR returns to London.
 7 DECEMBER 1903 Nephew Walter Lindsay Neustätter born, Munich.
 4 JANUARY 1904 To London, with Irene Stumpp.
 5 JANUARY 1904 At 5 Lyon Road, Harrow.
 1 MARCH 1904 'Georg Brandes', *Independent Review*.
 AUTUMN 1904 'Der Herbst' final (incomplete) version.
 1905 Joins Society for Psychical Research and London Spiritualist Alliance.
 14 APRIL 1905 To Belgium.

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- 14 JANUARY 1907 Death of JGR's father.
 7 AUG.–3 OCT. 1907 Holiday in Germany (Marquartstein and Leipzig).
 12 NOVEMBER 1907 First visit to Heinemann's.
 27 AUGUST 1908 *Maurice Guest* (Heinemann).
 MARCH 1909 *Maurice Guest*, second impression.
 16 FEBRUARY 1910 Finishes *The Education of Laura*; MS. to Heinemann.
 23 MARCH 1910 Moves to 90 Regent's Park Road, London NW1.
 1 APRIL 1910 Signs contract for *Laura* (*The Getting of Wisdom*).
 25 JULY 1910 Finishes first sketch of 'Richard'le' ('Life and Death of Peter'le Lüthy')
 30 JULY 1910 Leaves for Marquartstein.
 4 OCTOBER 1910 Receives first copies of *The Getting of Wisdom*.
 11 OCTOBER 1910 Begins *Australia Felix*.
 27 OCTOBER 1910 Paul Solanges offers to translate *Maurice Guest*.
 28 DECEMBER 1910 German *Maurice Guest* finished.
 13 JULY–1 SEPT. 1911 Holiday in Norway; records trip in diary.
 2 OCTOBER 1911 'Death' in *English Review*.
 27 DECEMBER 1911 To Dresden; returns 12 January 1912
 1911 *Death* (De La More Press, London).
 3 APRIL 1912 Signs contract for German *Maurice Guest*.
 17 JULY 1912 Attends meeting of the Women's Social and Political Union.
 2 AUGUST 1912 Leaves for Australia with JGR, Lil and Walter.
 10 SEPTEMBER 1912 In Melbourne (Grand Hotel); 16 to Geelong; 23 to Castlemaine; 24 to Maldon (by car); 25 to Ballarat; 30 to Melbourne.
 2 OCTOBER 1912 At Mt Dandenong (with Mary Kernot); 7 to Queenscliff and Geelong; 8 to Kororoit; 9 to Melbourne; 12 to Chiltern.
 15 OCTOBER 1912 German *Maurice Guest* (Fischer Verlag).
 16 OCTOBER 1912 Leaves Melbourne on SS *Orsova*.
 23 NOVEMBER 1912 In London.
 8 APRIL 1913 To Dresden; returns 3 May.
 5 JULY 1913 To Germany; returns 2 September.
 7 FEBRUARY 1914 Paul Solanges dies.
 20 JANUARY 1915 JGR's mother dies.
 8 MAY 1915 Rents 'Westfield', Lyme Regis, for three years.

2° Vous dites en parlant de Schilsky page 561: and *consciously* *inconsciously*—j'ai beau penser, il me semble toujours qu'il est *inconsciously* *conscious*. C'est à dire que, sans s'en rendre compte, il a conscience de la foule qui l'attend: Voulez-vous me rectifier?

Je me fais jouer par ma fille dix fois par jour, les impromptus de Schumann über ein Thema von Clara Wieck.—J'appelle *le thème* et *l'impromptu* No. 4: la marche funèbre de Maurice Guest.

Bien à vous

P. Solanges

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/212-13

45 TO PAUL SOLANGES

11 February 1911

90, Regent's Park Road

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your two letters—your letters are always welcome. Had it not been for press of work, I should have replied to the first of them before this.

I am very glad indeed to hear of the steady and satisfactory progress of the translation; and I congratulate myself on having fallen into the hands of a translator who is able to enter so intensely into the spirit of my book. Work done with such zest must be good work—whether you are satisfied with it yourself or not.

Now, to take up a few points in your letters, which I think call for an answer. I certainly should not care myself to undertake the task of cutting the book down for serial publication—but then the author is usually the person who is least fitted to attempt such a thing. However, we will put the idea aside. It could probably only arise in this very commercial nation, where monetary success is the one recognised success, and everything else bows to it.

Another point: you say: 'Votre roman, si roman il y a.' In that you are at one with several of my critics on this side of the water. Many insisted on maintaining that the book could only be the transcript of a personal tragedy. The laugh was on my side, though they did not know it. To you, however, I will confide, that M.G. is a pure piece of invention; and that both the chief characters in it are creatures of my imagin-

ation. The minute experience on which I built my fabric, was, to the whole, in the proportion of a grain of mustardseed.

I am naturally interested to hear of the success of the last chapter when read aloud. I ask nothing better than to wake in my readers the 'pity and fear' you speak of. What you write, too, strengthens my hope that the book will meet with a wider appreciation on the continent than here. British nerves were not, it seems, strong enough to support the truth of M.G. The nation is at present suffering from an attack, not of spleen, but of optimism; everything is for the best, in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimists and would-be faithful portrayals of life are anathema.

Do not think I am bitter on the non-success (commercial success) of the book in this country. As I have said, had it jumped into instant notoriety, I should have doubted its worth; and that is really what I mean with regard to Merriman. Time is the only real test of a book's value; and all my esteem goes to the author who climbs slowly and steadily up the ladder of recognition.

But now I want to say this: I do not think your little audience was quite in a position to judge of the artistic justification of the epilogue to M.G. For they had not followed the history of Maurice and Louise from the beginning of the book.

To you, I will say, that I felt the impossibility of letting the book end with the death of Maurice. Life is not like that. Life goes on. Though one has dropped out, in pain and intolerable suffering, there still come sunny days, still come windy days, on which one has to clutch at one's hat; gossip goes on, too, and curiosity, and enthusiasm; and all the epitaph the vanquished one gets is: 'an English chap shot himself on her account.' Oh no, I hold to my epitaph; I must have that suggestion in, at the end, of life's coarse, unfeeling indifference. Maurice runs his short, mad race, is beaten, and succumbs—what does the great world care?

The touch about the droschke is only another rather ironic instance of the grim, ugly indifference of things. If, when the whole translation is finished, you still think it would be best to omit it, do so. But my last sentence must stand, and stand alone; for, in this way, it carries the reader's memory back to the opening scene of all. The contra-position of the two scenes was quite instinctive on my part; but I set store by it now.

Another thing: to most of my readers, Louise is the most important person in the book, Maurice only a by-figure. It would not have done to end without giving a hint of what became of her.

I fancy you see in my mention of her marriage a concession to British prejudice—is that so? Nothing was further from my thoughts. I am still young enough, and combative enough, wilfully to offend against the national cant, where it is artistically justifiable. My idea was, to show that Louise at heart was one of the 'single lovers' of this world—one of those women who, if no misfortune cross their path, remain faithful to one man throughout their lives.—She caught Schilsky at a loose end here, and the marriage resulted.

I should indeed be very glad to have a photograph of you, and should have asked for one before now, had I had one of mine to send in return. I have not been photographed for seven years, and have none of the old ones left. But I am going to have my portrait painted this summer, and if it turns out well, I might have some photographs taken from that. In the meantime let me have yours.

I trust you will excuse this type-written letter. By the time I have finished my daily work, my hand is often so tired that it refuses to hold a pen.

Yes, I have another Colosse on hand, & it begins to grow, though slowly. It is impossible to say how long it will take me, or even when there is a likelihood of its being done. I work very slowly, wait for inspiration to come to me, & try not to force matters. Fortunately for me, I am not obliged to live by my pen; and Nietzsche said that was the greatest boon an artist could know.—But I am not so young as you probably think me; for I studied to be a musician before taking up writing. That meant a late beginning for me, but I do not regret it; the experience I gained was very valuable.—As to my age, Dante's 'mezzo del Camin' approximately fits me.

But this letter is growing to unwieldy proportions, getting out of Rand und Band, as the Germans say. I must bring it to a close. I return the notes with my comments which I hope are of some service to you.

With kindest regards
Yours very truly
Henry H. Richardson

While I was writing M.G. I often amused myself with thinking of musical motives for different parts of the book. Someday, if it interests you, I will tell you what these were.

TL/ALS: NLA MS 133/12/12-14

best of all possible worlds: the maxim of Dr Pangloss in *Candide* (1759), a satire on optimism by Voltaire. English chap shot himself: see the 'epilogue' to *MG*, p. 561. my portrait: probably by Rupert Bunny (1864–1947) who about this time did three portraits of HHR, now in the NLA; the portrait by Reginald Eves was not completed until May 1913 (see Letter 277). Nietzsche said: in *Untimely Meditations*, Part III, 'Schopenhauer as Educator', section 8. See also Daniel Halévy's *La vie de Frédéric Nietzsche*, (Paris, 1909): 'the Greeks "declare . . . that work is a disgrace, for it is impossible that a man engaged in the pain of earning a living could ever become an artist"' (p. 95, editors' trans.). 'mezzo del Camin': 'Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita'—'Midway upon the journey of our life', Dante, *Inferno* 1. 1. Rand und Band: 'ausser Rand und Band' (out of control). musical motives: HHR never told PS, for instance, that in the first years of writing *MG* she produced a spate of song settings. JGR writes of the close affinity of HHR's song 'Der Herbst' to *MG*: it 'has left its traces in *Maurice* . . .' (*MWY*, p. 148). See *MG* ed. Probyn & Steele, pp. lii ff. and note 9 to p. 217.

46 TO HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

19 February 1911

Multedo

Dear Sir, I received your kind, long letter of the 11th. I did not want to answer it before I could announce the end of chap. VII to you. I finished it yesterday evening and I enclose the three related observations.

I have decided to reply to you in two parts. Please read the present letter at once to give me the information I need, some of which is necessary for the chapters I am about to undertake.

I will then write to you, this evening or tomorrow, and at length, for I have given myself a break until Tuesday morning; but you may read this second letter at your leisure. It replies to different points in yours which I do not want to let pass without discussing them again with you or elucidating them, and above all without protesting . . . and you can gather your strength to reply to me.

And now to our great matter.

1. I will only live in peace when you have really read some of the translation and I have your *general opinion*—clear, sincere, and without courteousness. Be assured that I will not show myself to be sensitive on this. I am not the *sonneteer* in *Le Misanthrope*.

Tous mes compliments pour vos progrès dans votre nouveau livre; ce que vous m'en dites excite vraiment ma curiosité et mon intérêt.—Le temps ici n'est pas beau non plus; il pleut souvent et le ciel est toujours gris. Mais nous ne sommes encore qu'au 2 avril.

Très cordialement à vous et comptez sur moi pour faire tout le possible pour M.G.

P. Solanges

Vous devriez accepter l'offre que vous fait le compte Malvezzi d'écrire un article sur votre oeuvre.

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/232-33

63 TO PAUL SOLANGES

7 April 1911

90, Regent's Park Road

My dear Sir

Your kind letter was very welcome. I am sorry always I cannot reply to you at greater length; but the day has only twenty-four hours, & these are past in a flash. I am very hard at work, & when my work is finally over, it is a relief to me to lay aside my pen, & turn to another occupation. So I remain but a poor correspondent.

Thank you also, first for the pretty card you sent me: it drew my thought Italy-wards very strongly, & made me long to turn my back on all the grime & ugliness around me. Still, if, as I hope, my third big book is to play in England, I must first drink in the Stimmung of this country to the full, however disagreeable it is to me. Thanks, also, for the letter you enclosed. I have already written a note to Count Malvezzi in reply, saying how flattered I should be by his writing an article on 'M.G.' It is extremely kind of him to suggest it; & I value it all the more coming as it does just now, when matters concerning M.G. are here at a decided ebb.

I hope chapter X is making good progress & providing not too many difficulties. I think it rather an easy one on the whole.

The German translation is finally finished & I have some hope now of seeing it appear in the autumn.

With reference to 'it was late,' I think there could be no possible misunderstanding in the mind of an English reader of the sentence; but,

in French, I shall leave it to you to make it absolutely clear. Better a few words too many than too little.

We have had a week of extraordinary cold, and I have found it hard to bear, after so mild a winter. But today the sun is out again.

If you could hear of some one with enough patience & perseverance to translate 'M.G.' into Italian, I should naturally be very glad; but I cannot imagine anyone undertaking the task, who has not been strongly attracted to the book for its own sake. It would seem like trying to move a mountain. And then do not nearly all Italians read French?

I am called away & must end. My kindest greetings & best wishes for a pleasant holiday.

Very truly yours

Henry H. Richardson

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/24

third big book: PS seems not to have known about GW, which might have raised his suspicions about HHR's sex. **Stimmung:** see Letter 66: 'Literally "in tune", to be keyed up to a perfectly harmonic pitch'. **Count Malvezzi:** the correspondence with Count Malvezzi has not survived. HHR sent the Count's letter to her sister Lil, who replied: 'The enclosure was highly interesting—I mean the Count's. Otto says it is one of Italy's oldest names. It called up a vivid picture in my mind wh. will stick there of you promenading around the monuments of Bologna accompanied by this gentleman & discussing the mysteries of the human soul!!! Fancy I hear you—no! sister I really can't picture you but I can picture you taking in every detail of the man while he tires you with talk . . . Well I've no doubt Count Malvezzi will find the mysteries of the human soul still more complicated when he finds you are a female soul!! Oh how I should like to see their faces on learning the facts & he is *sure* to call & see you in England one day & perhaps bring old Paul with him' (Lil to HHR, 17 April 1911; NLA MS 133/2/504). **German translation:** not published until 15 October 1912.

64 TO HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

16 April 1911

Multedo

Dear Sir, I never lack the desire to answer your letters, but you are such an exact correspondent that I never write to you without feeling remorse for the time I will make you waste. Therefore despite the very great

pleasure I feel in chatting with you, I intend to make my scribbles less frequent in future. This in spite of the flattering assurance you give me at the top of your last letter.

Chapter X is all but finished; three more pages and it will go to join the others. You see I have not worked as assiduously as at Muledo. It is really not my fault. One only works well at home; whatever the willingness of one's friends and hosts, it never goes so far as to leave you entirely free. And besides I am three quarters of an hour from Milan and, being so close, I cannot avoid going to shake the hands of the friends I have kept there. I will return home in about ten days and will then catch up on lost time.

I will also tell you that I do not share your opinion on chap. X. On the contrary I find it difficult. In Ephie's adventure you have left an apparent grace that comes entirely from the good little woman's exterior grace, but underneath there is a profound irony that is not easy to express. Your English, and—I would add—English in general, lends itself very well to this sort of cold *scherzo*. This is less easy when one wishes to remain objective. As always, you lay your *traps* for your readers and it is up to them to understand when it is you speaking and when it is Ephie. I got around the problem as well as I could by using more solemn, or at least more important words than I would have used to give, to translate your personal ideas. Did I succeed? You will tell me later.

This thought of your *traps* is hounding me. It alternatively amuses and bothers me. It is certainly not English. I think you were not entirely occupied with music during your ten years in Germany and that you took some University courses. You caught a horror of Philistinism there to which Flaubert put the finishing touches by giving you a distaste for the bourgeois.

Try to write a little, as an experiment, for the ideal reader who understands you, thinks like you and gives you all his sympathy. That would not oblige you to change your ideas at all.

I don't know if it is my wounded amour-propre that makes me speak thus. In all candour, this is what I said to myself: if he, whose work I love and believe I have felt and understood, throws me into confusion and from time to time makes me fall into one of his traps, traps that he says he has put there deliberately to catch me, then he has overdone it. If I grant that there are more intelligent but less sympathetic readers than me, those readers will become my enemies. Now it may be mean to flatter one's public, but it is certainly pointless to antagonise it.



90 Regent's Park Road, London, HHR's home from 1910 to 1934

PEGLI LIGURE - MULTEDO
VILLA NEGRONE

27 octobre 1910

Monsieur

Je viens de terminer la lecture de votre
beau livre, Maurice Guast. Après avoir
beaucoup réfléchi sur la difficulté de la
tâche, j'en suis venu à me sentir en mesure d'en
tentir la traduction. Je vous salue, avec les
reconnaissances de mon dire, en deux mots, d'a-
bord si je n'arrive pas trop tard, et si, dans ce
cas, vous serez disposé à me la confier. Il
s'agit naturellement de la traduction en
français. J'ai fait plusieurs versions, mais
les auteurs n'ont été ni intéressés à aucun
point de vue. Je vous cite, entre autres, le
Daniel Gauthier d'Antonio Fogazzaro qui a
été publié d'abord dans la Revue de Paris
et a eu depuis une quinzaine d'éditions chez
Calmann Lévy. Si, pour vous faire une idée
de ma manière, vous désirez le lire, je
tiens le volume à votre disposition. Je suis,
en outre disposé à vous soumettre quelques
pages traduits de Maurice Guast. Je

Paul Solanges' first letter to HHR (Letter 19)

LETTER 64 16 APRIL 1911

And that is how my little vanity reasons.—You will have understood that I am joking with an argument that I nevertheless consider to have a solid basis.

But there I am chatting without saying anything that I intended to ask you.

I have not lost sight of the question of a publisher. I am preparing support for others apart from my publisher Calmann Lévy. And on this subject, would you tell me when the article on M.G. appeared in the Mercure, so that I can order it. Tell me also, please, if Mr Heinemann would give me a *simple letter of introduction* for the director of the Mercure de France, *if need be*. Casimir Strykowski promises me his support with Hachette and I have other help with Plon.

The more I glimpse the possibility of finding a publisher, the less hurried I feel about taking the first steps. Or more accurately: the more I understand that I will increase our chances by presenting our future fletcher with a good part of the translation ready for the press. Don't make any new objections about my running the risk of working just for the sake of it. Even if it turned out for the worst, I would not regret the time spent on it.

And your snapshot? I really fear you will keep me waiting for it.

I do not have my German dictionary with me. What exactly does the word *Stimmung* as used in your letter mean? I find it used in a French book I am reading at night—one I would recommend to you—used (in German) as a synonym of *mood*, or rather state of mind. Now there is an important word that is missing from our French language!

The book in question is *La vie de Frédéric Nietzsche* by Daniel Halévy. Do you know it?

I would like to ask what you think of Nietzsche, but it would take you too long to tell me. I had not understood much of him, but after this book by D. Halévy I am going to re-read him, or try to.

This D. Halévy must be Ludovic Halévy's son, Fromental Halévy's great-nephew and Bizet's nephew. Money, music and philosophy. The lot of the Jews is not so bad.

This is quite a letter for Easter Sunday! And yet I am going to ask one more question, a brutal one from a Frenchman in general, but a simple one from a Frenchman not lacking in natural philosophy who has never had the time and will to get himself an . . . artificial one. Do you really like Germany and Germans a lot?

Quite a nice subject for a novel occurred to me. You do not need it, but when you want, I will give it to you. Your psychology would

make good use of it. I am too old to use it despite the example of your septuagenarian.

* Read me in the *two pence tube* (I do not think that is how it is said) and answer my talkative indiscretions later with a couple of lines.

Very cordially yours
P. Solanges

I told you I used important words for Ephie. I meant to say that I used such words as her empty little brain could find to inflate the importance of her dull adventure. I consider her a spoilt child, curious for sensations, vain, lacking in affection, graceful only on the outside, and very egotistic.

cold *scherzo*: a surprise move, from *scherzo*, joke (Italian). PS is vexed about HHR's 'traps'—i.e. her use of free indirect speech. Casimir Stryienski: (1853–1912), editor and critic of the works of Stendhal, Stryienski's critical introduction to Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir* (1830) was published by Larousse in 1912. See also Letter 65. Daniel Halévy: (1872–1962), French historian, see Letter 45. Ludovic Halévy: (1834–1908), French writer and dramaturge. Fromental Halévy: Jacques Fromental Halévy (Lévy) (1799–1862), French opera composer teacher of Bizet and Gounod; his greatest success was *La Juive* (1835). *two pence tube*: the London underground railway.

ORIGINAL LETTER

Cher Monsieur, ce n'est jamais l'envie qui me manque de répondre à vos lettres, mais vous êtes un correspondant si exact que je ne vous écris jamais sans avoir le remords du temps que je vous ferai perdre. Aussi malgré le très grand plaisir que j'éprouve à causer avec vous ai-je l'intention de rendre mes griffonnages plus rares à l'avenir. Cela malgré la flatteuse assurance que vous me donnez en tête de votre dernière lettre.

Le chapitre X touche à sa fin; encore trois pages et il ira rejoindre les autres. Vous voyez que je n'ai pas travaillé avec autant d'assiduité qu'à Multedo. Ce n'est vraiment pas ma faute. On ne travaille bien que chez soi; quelle que soit la bonne volonté des amis dont on est l'hôte elle ne va pas jusqu'à vous laisser entièrement libre. Et puis je suis à trois quarts d'heure de Milan et je ne puis me dispenser, étant si près d'eux, d'aller serrer la main aux amis que j'y ai conservés. Je retournerai chez moi dans une dizaine de jours et rattraperai alors le temps perdu.

Je vous dirai encore que je ne suis pas de votre avis sur le chap. X. Je le trouve au contraire difficile. Vous avez laissé, à l'aventure d'Ephie, de la grâce apparente qui vient tout entière de la grâce extérieure de la petite bonne femme, mais il y a, en dessous, une ironie profonde dont l'expression n'est pas commode. Votre anglais, et je dirai l'anglais en général se prête très bien à ce genre de *scherzo* à froid. En français c'est moins facile quand on veut rester objectif. Comme toujours vous tendez vos *traps* à vos lecteurs et c'est à eux de comprendre quand c'est vous qui parlez et quand c'est Ephie. Je m'en suis tiré tant bien que mal par l'emploi de mots d'une solennité, au moins d'une importance plus grande que celle dont je me serais servi pour donner, pour traduire vos idées personnelles. Ai-je réussi? Vous me le direz plus tard.

Cette pensée de vos *traps* me poursuit. Elle m'amuse et me chiffonne alternativement. Elle n'est pas anglaise bien certainement. Je pense que vous ne vous êtes pas uniquement occupé de musique pendant vos dix années d'Allemagne et que vous avez suivi des cours d'Université. Vous avez contracté là une horreur du Philistin à laquelle Flaubert aura mis la dernière main en vous donnant le dégoût du bourgeois.

Essayez donc un peu, pour voir, d'écrire pour le lecteur idéal qui vous comprend, qui pense avec vous et qui vous donne toute sa sympathie. Cela ne vous obligerait en rien à modifier vos idées.

Je ne sais si c'est l'amour propre vexé qui me fait parler ainsi. En toute franchise, voilà ce que je me suis dit: si lui, dont j'aime l'oeuvre que je crois avoir sentie et comprise, me met dans l'embarras et me fait tomber de temps en temps dans un de ses pièges, pièges qu'il me dit avoir placé tout exprès pour que je m'y prenne, c'est qu'il a trop forcé la note. Si j'admetts un lecteur plus intelligent mais doué de moins de sympathie que moi, ce lecteur-là deviendra un ennemi. Or s'il est bas de flatter son public il est au moins inutile de l'indisposer. Et voilà comment raisonne une petite vanité.—Vous aurez compris que je plaisante avec un argument dont je considère cependant le fond comme assez solide.

Mais voilà que je bavarde sans vous rien dire de ce que je comptais vous demander.

Je ne perds pas de vue la question éditeur. Je me prépare des appuis pour d'autres, en dehors de mon éditeur Calman[n] Lévy. Et à ce propos je vous prie de me dire à quelle époque a paru l'article du *Mercure* sur M.G., afin que je le fasse venir. Dites-moi aussi, je vous prie, si Mr Heinemann me donnerait *au besoin* une lettre de *simple présentation* pour le directeur du *Mercure* de France. Casimir Stryienski me promet son appui auprès d'Hachette et j'ai encore une aide chez Plon.

Plus j'entrevois la possibilité de trouver l'éditeur et moins je me sens pressé de commencer les démarches. Je dirais plus juste en disant: plus je comprends que j'augmenterai nos chances en présentant à notre futur écorcheur une bonne partie de la traduction prête pour l'impression. Ne me faites pas d'objections nouvelles sur les chances que je pourrais courir de travailler pour l'honneur. En supposant tout pour le pire je n'aurais aucun regret de mon temps.

Et votre instantanée? Je crains fort que vous me la fassiez beaucoup désirer.

Je n'ai pas ici mon dictionnaire allemand. Que veut dire exactement le mot *Stimmung* que vous employez dans votre lettre. Je le trouve employé dans un livre français que je lis le soir, et que je vous recommande, employé (cité en allemand) comme synonyme de *mood*, ou plutôt d'état d'âme. Voilà un mot important qui manque à notre langue française!

Le livre en question c'est *La vie de Frédéric Nietzsche* par Daniel Halévy. Le connaissez-vous?

Je vous demandais bien comment vous appréciez Nietzsche, mais ce serait trop long pour vous de me le dire. Je n'y avais pas compris grand chose, mais après ce livre de D. Halévy je vais le relire ou m'y essayer.

Ce D. Halévy doit être le fils de Ludovic Halévy, le petit neveu de Fromental Halévy et le neveu de Bizet. L'argent, la musique et la philosophie. Le lot des Juifs n'est pas si mauvais.

En voilà une lettre pour le jour de Pâques! Et pourtant je vais vous faire encore une question, brutale chez un Français en général, simple chez un Français qui ne manque pas de philosophie naturelle et a toujours manqué du temps et du courage nécessaires pour s'en faire une... artificielle. Aimez-vous vraiment beaucoup l'Allemagne et les Allemands?

Il m'a passé par la tête un assez joli sujet de roman. Vous n'en avez pas besoin, mais, quand vous le voudrez, je vous le donne. Votre psychologie en tirerait un bon parti. Je suis trop vieux pour m'en servir malgré l'exemple de votre septuagénaire.

Lisez-moi dans le *two pence tube* (je ne crois pas que ce soit ainsi que cela se dit) et ne répondez que plus tard et par deux lignes à mes indiscretions bavardes.

Très cordialement à vous.

P. Solanges

Je vous ai dit que j'ai employé des mots importants pour Ephie. J'ai entendu dire que j'ai employé des mots tels que pouvait les trouver son petit cerveau sec et vide pour enfler l'importance de sa plate aventure. Je la considère comme une enfant gâtée, curieuse de sensations, vaniteuse, dépourvue d'affectuosité, qui n'a de gracieux que son extérieur, et très égoïste.

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/234-36

65 TO HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

17 April 1911

Multedo

Dear Sir, yesterday, instead of telling you a pile of useless information, I would have done better to reply to your letter! I will do so as briefly as possible.

No, I have heard no more from the lady about the Italian translation of *M.G.*, and I fear I will hear no more from her. I believe she did not know very well what she wanted herself, perhaps the colossus gave her a fright with its bulk. I believe it is better not to think more about it.

I had set my heart on a young man whom I know. His English is admirable and he writes well, but he has a job in a bank, has to work hard but has sufficient energy. He might even fall in love with it and do three chapters, after which...

I will keep on looking. As you say, we would need a translator who would do it for love. It would not be difficult to find people among those who know English who love your book, but love is not enough for a translation. Young Count Malvezzi tried two or three pages, as an experiment, and that was enough for him.

On the subject of Count Malvezzi, I hope he will do the article; he promised to. But let's not forget that he is young, very worldly and travels a lot. Here the first move is always good, but a bit of German solidity is missing.

You tell me that *the matters concerning M.G. are here at a decided ebb*. For God's sake, do not be overawed by that. Your book will sell one day like *Copperfield* or *Pickwick Papers*. Did you not say that you have independent means? Be patient then: your second book will make the first sell, your third book will make the other two sell.—God grant that the French translation may be of some help! God grant that it will give it a shot in the arm!

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And may the same thing happen with the German translation that is to be published—I wish it good luck.

In relation to the French translation . . . Do you know the name of Casimir Stryienski the Stendhalian? He has offered to be intermediary with a publisher. He is an excellent man, very obliging. I have just sent him a long letter to put him in the picture. However I wish to present at least half of the translation. It would be absurd to risk compromising our success by wishing to advance too quickly. Be assured that I am sensitive to the situation and will spare no trouble to arrive safe and sound.

Cordially yours
P. Solanges

Copperfield or *Pickwick Papers*: the two best-selling novels of Charles Dickens.

ORIGINAL LETTER

Cher Monsieur, hier, au lieu de vous raconter un tas de choses inutiles j'aurais mieux fait de répondre à votre lettre! Je le fais aussi brièvement que possible.

Non, je n'ai plus entendu parler de la dame pour la traduction italienne de M.G., et je crains de n'en plus entendre parler. Je crois qu'elle ne savait pas trop elle-même ce qu'elle voulait; peut-être le colosse l'aura-t-il épouvantée par sa masse. Je crois qu'il vaut mieux n'y plus penser.

J'avais jeté mon dévolu sur un jeune homme que je connais. Il sait admirablement l'anglais et a une bonne plume, mais il a un emploi dans une banque, beaucoup à travailler et une énergie relative. Il se prendrait peut-être de passion et ferait trois chapitres, après quoi . . .

Je chercherai encore. Il faudrait ce que vous dites, un traducteur par amour. Ce ne serait pas difficile parmi les gens qui savent l'anglais de trouver des gens qui aiment votre livre, mais aimer ne suffit pas pour traduire. Le jeune comte Malvezzi a essayé deux ou trois pages, *pour voir*, et il n'en pouvait déjà plus.

À propos du comte Malvezzi, j'espère qu'il fera l'article; il l'a promis. N'oublions pas cependant qu'il est jeune, très mondain et qu'il voyage beaucoup. Ici le premier mouvement est toujours bon, mais on y manque un peu de la solidité germanique.

Vous me dites que *the matters concerning M.G. are here at a decided ebb*. Pour l'amour de Dieu, ne vous impressionnez pas pour cela plus que de mesure. Votre livre se vendra un jour comme *Copperfield* ou *Pickwick Papers*. Vous êtes, n'avez-vous dit dans une situation indépendante? Ayez donc patience: votre second livre fera vendre le premier, votre troisième livre fera vendre les deux autres.—Dieu veuille que la traduction française puisse aider! Dieu veuille qu'elle donne un choc en retour!

Et qu'il en soit de même de la traduction allemande qui va paraître et à laquelle je souhaite bonne chance.

Pour ce qui est de la traduction française . . . Connaissez-vous de nom Casimir Stryienski le Stendhalien? Il m'a proposé son intermédiaire pour un éditeur. C'est un excellent homme, très serviable. Je viens de lui envoyer une longue lettre et je le mets au courant de la situation. Toutefois je veux présenter au moins la moitié de la traduction. Il serait absurde de risquer, de compromettre la réussite, pour vouloir aller trop vite. Croyez que j'ai le sentiment de la situation et que je ne ménagerai rien pour arriver à bon port.

Cordialement à vous
P. Solanges

ALS: NLA MS 133/2/237-38

66 TO PAUL SOLANGES

23 April 1911
90, Regent's Park Road

My dear Sir

My best thanks for your two letters. They were both extremely interesting to me—I quite missed not hearing from you the week before. I like to know how my first-born is progressing in French, & to think of him growing & taking shape in my beautiful Italy. Perhaps someday I, too, shall be able to get to the colour & light for which my soul craves.

You see I have taken advantage of your permission to be lax in replying to your letters—this time, at least. On the whole, though, I am a methodical person in my correspondence, & find I can best keep its bulk down by replying to each letter as it comes, & not allowing my letters to accumulate. If they do, it is a hopeless task for me.

67 TO HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

30 April 1911

Multedo

Dear Sir, here I am back at Multedo after a month's absence. I got bored and tired, did not satisfy my friends, did little work, and consequently, became dissatisfied with myself. You see that, *tirata la somma*, it is not a brilliant result. By my count I should have finished 170 pages of M.G. and in reality I can only show 150. That makes a deficit of 20 pages, which means I have to work twice as hard for twenty days, since only my health can justify any delay and I am quite well. So I am furious and can only feel antipathy for the colour and light to which you aspire. Alas, one can become tired of anything and I must admit to you that there are days when I long for a town where I would see the bustle of human affairs, and in which I could get lost and live peacefully, far from the demands of friends. You see that I am in a dark mood today. So bend your epistolary rules—which are mine as well—and do not reply. I only want you to know I have returned and resumed my work in earnest.

What do you mean, M.G. is your firstborn! Let me congratulate you. Writing a book like that at the first attempt. You must know what I and others around me think of it, nor to mention your English readers who will have given you their opinion. I will say no more, considering my actions as being worth many words.

But it is my duty to remind you that you promised me a short novella by you which is to be published in a Journal. Do not forget me, please. And please also read *Cortis*, in the evenings before you go to sleep. I am curious to have your *sincere* opinion on this book. I understand all that might separate you from it, but I would like to know your artistic opinion apart from any religious or philosophical ideas.—I read in the newspapers that at the memorial service for Fogazzaro in Paris, they did me the honour of reading a few pages of my translation. In truth, I should be flattered at having been preferred over the numerous translations of other novels by the maestro, done by Hérelle, who enjoys a great reputation as a translator, since he has translated Fogazzaro—except for *Cortis*—d'Annunzio, *Grazia dell'Edda* etc. I tell you this since it may please you in view of my work for you.

I have noted what you tell me about Mr Heinemann and the director of the *Mercure de France*. I think it will be all right when the time comes, with or without him. But for the moment I want to continue much further without thinking of it. You know my reasons, they are

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valid. If I went to Paris today and did not find a publisher, I would still finish the translation, in the certainty of having it published at the right moment. End of discussion.

As for your *snapshot*, my mistake was deliberate, but my little trap did not succeed. Amen!

And now we return to your traps:

*A man convinced against his will
Remains of the same opinion still.*

I am quoting from memory, be indulgent. I know you are not seeking to convince me, but let's still have a look.

For the Mendelssohn trap, all right. There, the reader can guess, but if he does not guess it is his own fault.

In the case of Wagner it is another matter. The reader could very well suppose that you do not like what good critics call boring passages in Wagner: Wotan's tales, Erda's explanations, King Mark's reflections. You are very objective, I know, but not every reader can analyse the book so as to follow your concern not to appear in it and to give only the impressions, feelings and ideas of your characters. So what use is there in plunging them into confusion? I persist in believing that it amuses you and that you laugh to yourself at the little farce you put them through. As for the question of *style*, I do not believe in it. Oh yes, you have your own style, your originality is very powerful, but it is not involved here.

Scandinavians and Russians, Slavs, have nothing to do with it, if you will allow me to say so; Slavs are mystics and Scandinavians are nebulous. You on the other hand are as clear as spring water. Your psychology has a Russian flavour, in my opinion, and I have compared it to Dostoevski's when speaking of you. It is precisely because you are clear and luminous that the points in question stop and irritate the reader. Thereafter, it is not a great problem, but if you repeat it a lot in your new book . . . I will have a grudge against you.

Imagine being able to analyse a sunbeam and amuse yourself throwing shadow at it!

And to conclude with you: if an English reader must understand your thought, thanks to a certain style of expressing it, then there is no longer a *trap* and all is for the best.

Was I hard on poor little Ephie? It's possible. Basically I like her, but when I examine her I find she has a little head empty of everything except vanity and then . . . I do not believe in the stereotypical young

girl, but I could not generalise like you, or at least I cannot admit that besides vanity, curiosity etc, there are not qualities in many of them that Ephie does not share.

How I would like to speak with you about Nietzsche! There I would not contradict you, I would listen and profit from what you could tell me. So do read *La vie de F. N.* by Daniel Halévy. I would like to know what you think of it overall. Certainly Nietzsche was a prose poet and also a verse poet, was he not? but I would like your opinion on his ulterior motives, disregarding his character.—That will be for when we meet.

About Germans, I think like you as far as I know. I like their music, that goes without saying, I like some of their painting. I do not know their literature. I have found excellent people, very noble souls, very fine natures, under heavy wrapping, amongst Germans. As a group I execrate them. If you could see the flood of odious Germans spreading out over Italy! Besides, they have changed markedly. I saw them at close range in sad circumstances, a very long time ago; they were then worth more despite the good reasons I had to wish them ill.

Once more I must apologise for making you waste your time. But I do like chatting with you.

Very cordially yours
P. Solanges

tirata la somma: All things considered (Italian), a short novella: see Letter 51. d'Annunzio: Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863–1938), Italian poet, novelist, playwright and political activist. *Grazia dell'Edda*: Grazia Deledda (1871–1936), Italian naturalist, novelist, winner of Nobel Prize for Literature 1926. *A man . . . opinion still*: Samuel Butler (1612–80), *Hudibras* (1663–78), Part III, canto iii, l. 547: 'He that complies against his will, / Is of his own opinion still'. boring passages in Wagner: probably the monologues of Wotan in *Die Walküre*, II, ii; Erda in *Siegfried*, III, i, and King Mark in *Tristan und Isolde* II, iii and III, iii. long time ago: a Sergeant-major in the French army during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, PS was a prisoner of war from 2 September to 12 April 1871.

ORIGINAL LETTER

Cher Monsieur, me voilà rentré à Multedo après un mois d'absence. Je me suis ennuyé, fatigué, je n'ai pas contenté mes amis, j'ai peu travaillé

et, en conséquence, me suis mécontenté moi-même. Vous voyez que, *tirata la somma*, le résultat n'est pas brillant. À mon compte je devrais avoir fini 170 pages de M.G. et en réalité je n'en puis présenter que 150. Ce sont donc 20 pages de déficit, c'est à dire l'obligation de travailler double pendant vingt jours, car ma santé seule peut justifier un retard et je me porte fort bien. Aussi je suis furieux et ne me sens que de l'antipathie pour the colour and light auxquelles vous aspirez. Hélas on se blase sur tout et je dois vous avouer qu'il y a des jours où je soupire pour une ville où je verrais l'agitation humaine et dans laquelle je pourrais me perdre et vivre tranquille, loin des exigences des amis. Vous voyez que je suis aujourd'hui dans les idées noires. Faites donc un accroc à vos règles de correspondance—qui sont aussi les miennes—et ne me répondez pas. Je veux seulement que vous sachiez mon retour et la reprise sérieuse de mon travail.

Comment M.G. est votre first born! Je vous fais mon compliment. Écrire un pareil livre comme coup d'essai. Vous devez savoir ce que j'en pense et ce qu'en pensent d'autres que moi autour de moi, sans parler de vos lecteurs anglais qui vous auront donné leur opinion. Je ne vous en dis pas plus, estimant que mes actes valent beaucoup de paroles.

Mais j'ai le devoir de vous rappeler que vous m'avez promis une courte nouvelle de vous qui doit paraître dans une Revue. Ne m'oubliez pas, je vous en prie. Et, je vous en prie aussi lisez donc *Cortis*, le soir avant de dormir. Je suis curieux d'avoir votre avis *sincère* sur ce livre. Je comprends tout ce qui peut vous en séparer, mais j'aimerais à connaître votre opinion d'artiste en dehors de toute idée religieuse ou philosophique. —J'ai lu dans les journaux qu'à Paris, à la commémoration de Fogazzaro on m'a fait l'honneur de lire quelques pages de ma traduction. En vérité, je dois être flatté d'avoir été préféré aux nombreuses traductions des autres romans du maître, traductions faites par Hérelle qui jouit d'une grande réputation comme traducteur, car il a fait passer dans ma langue Fogazzaro—à l'exception de *Cortis*—d'Annunzio, Grazia dell'Edda etc. Je vous dis cela qui pourra vous faire plaisir en vue de mon travail vous regardant.

J'ai pris note de ce que vous me dites relativement à Mr Heinemann et au Directeur du Mercure. Je pense que cela marchera au moment donné, avec ou sans lui. Mais je veux, pour le moment, aller de l'avant, et beaucoup, sans y penser. Vous connaissez mes raisons, elles sont bonnes. Si aujourd'hui j'allais à Paris et que je ne trouve pas d'éditeur, je finirais quand même la traduction, sûr de la faire paraître à un moment donné! Concluez.

Quant à votre *instantanée* j'avais fait exprès de me tromper, my little trap n'a pas eu de succès. Amen!

Et nous voilà encore à vos traps:

*A man convinced against his will
Remains of the same opinion still.*

Je cite de mémoire soyez indulgent. Je sais que vous ne cherchez pas à me convaincre, mais cependant voyons un peu.

Pour le piège Mendelssohn, bien. Là, le lecteur peut deviner, mais s'il ne devine pas c'est sa faute.

Pour le cas Wagner c'est autre chose. Le lecteur peut très bien supposer que vous n'aimez pas dans Wagner ce que de bons critiques eux-mêmes appellent d'ennuyeuses longueurs: les récits de Wotan, les explications d'Erda, les considérations du roi Marke. Vous êtes très objectif, je le sais, mais tous les lecteurs ne peuvent pas analyser le livre de façon à suivre votre soin de ne pas paraître et de ne donner que les impressions, les sentiments, les idées de vos personnages. Quelle utilité y a-t-il donc à les mettre dans l'embarras? Je persiste à croire que cela vous amuse et que vous riez tout seul de la petite farce que vous leur faites. Quant à la question de *manière* je n'y crois pas. Oh oui, vous avez votre manière à vous, votre originalité est très puissante, mais elle n'est pas là.

Les Scandinaves et même les Russes, les Slaves, n'ont rien à voir là-dedans, si vous voulez bien le permettre; les Slaves sont des mystiques et les Scandinaves des nébuleux. Vous, vous êtes clair comme de l'eau de roche. Votre psychologie, selon moi, a quelque chose de russe et je l'ai comparée en parlant de vous à celle de Dostoïewski. C'est justement parce que vous êtes clair et lumineux que les points en question arrêtent et gênent. Après cela, l'inconvénient n'est pas grand, mais si vous le répétez beaucoup dans votre nouveau livre... j'aurai une dent contre vous.

Pouvoir analyser dans un rayon de soleil et s'amuser à y jeter de l'ombre!!

Et pour conclure avec vous: si un lecteur Anglais doit comprendre votre pensée, grâce à une certaine façon de l'exprimer, alors il n'y a plus de *trap* et tout est pour le mieux.

Ai-je été dur pour la pauvre petite Ephie? C'est possible. Elle me plaît au fond, mais quand je l'examine je trouve que c'est une petite tête

vide de tout sauf de vanité et alors... Je ne crois pas au type conventionnel jeune fille, mais je ne saurais généraliser comme vous ou du moins je ne puis admettre qu'à côté de la vanité de la curiosité etc, il n'y ait pas chez beaucoup d'entre elles des qualités dont Ephie n'est pas pourvue.

Que j'aimerais parler de Nietzsche avec vous! Là je ne vous contredirais pas, je vous écouterai et ferais mon profit de ce que vous pourriez me dire. Lisez donc *La vie de F. N.* par Daniel Halévy. Je voudrais savoir ce que vous en pensez en tout. Certes Nietzsche a été un poète en prose et aussi en vers, n'est-ce pas? mais je voudrais votre opinion sur ses idées de derrière la tête en faisant abstraction de sa nature.—Ce sera pour quand nous nous rencontrerons.

Pour les Allemands je pense comme vous pour ce que je sais. J'aime leur musique cela va de soi, j'aime en partie leur peinture. Leur littérature, je ne la connais pas. J'ai trouvé des gens excellents, des âmes très nobles, des natures très fines, sous une grosse enveloppe, chez les Allemands. En masse je les exècre. Si vous voyiez ce flot d'Allemands odieux qui se répand sur l'Italie! D'ailleurs ils ont bien changé. Je les ai vus de près dans de tristes circonstances, il y a très longtemps, ils valaient mieux malgré les bonnes raisons que je pouvais avoir de les voir en mal.

Encore une fois il faut que je m'excuse pour le temps que je vous fais perdre. Mais j'aime beaucoup causer avec vous.

À vous et très cordialement
P. Solanges

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/239-41

68 TO HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

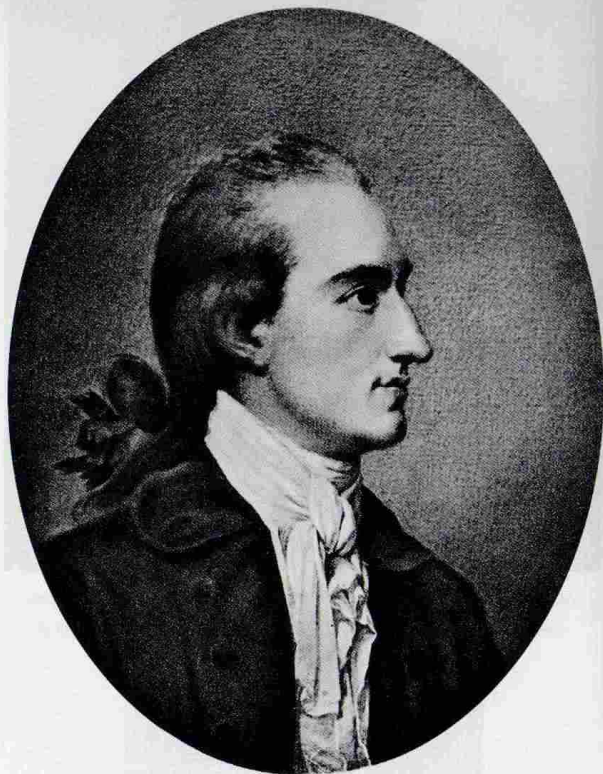
2 May 1911

Multedo

Dear Sir

I am working like a nigger and I send you the proof. I would be very grateful if you would return this note to me urgently. Tomorrow I will finish the draft of chapter XI. But before recopying it I would like to be sure of the points I am doubtful about and am submitting to you.

Thanks in advance.



Portrait of Goethe: 'it has always been said that the portrait . . . has a certain likeness to me . . .' (Letter 332)

It is almost always their actions and their words that make their souls known, but even so they remain mysterious. Krafft for example is alive: I seem to have known him. Not one of his words, not one of his gestures, astonishes me *on his part*; I almost expect them. And yet as a whole he astonishes me, and I have not succeeded in understanding him. And that is how it must be. Have I not sometimes found myself face to face with enigmatic characters whom I have tried unsuccessfully to analyse?

Louise herself is simpler. It's enough to have rubbed shoulders with women a little in order to understand her, with her failings, her whims, her harshness, her feeble heart and her outbursts of nerves; not to mention that instinct for demanding total attention for herself, which makes her an enemy of all higher occupation, of all work. She is one of those women who inevitably renders powerless the man who associates his life with hers, unless the man is of Schilsky's nature . . . and even then!

And there I go telling you things that I fear are hardly intelligible. Perhaps you will understand me.

I have still got the German article. You will have it in a few days. As for the American articles, do not send them to me. I suspect what they must be like. They would put me in a bad mood.

I have occasionally been *worn out* and it was quite immaterial to me, but I do not like to see things that I love maltreated, and I do not have the virtue of suffering fools gladly. It's a weakness, I know, but I cannot help it.

I hope you have received the life of Nietzsche. I posted it two or three days ago. I am re-reading him at night before sleep. I understand him better but he does not convince me. The poet is marvellous, and he has to be if I am to feel that through a bad translation. As for the philosopher! . . . how could I, who believe in God, *despite everything*, how could I espouse the reasoning of a man who says to me: now that no-one, or almost no-one, believes in God, and who uses that as a starting point as if it were a mathematical truth?

Do not worry about *Daniel Cortis*. You will speak to me later; the famous day when we meet.

About d'Annunzio, I am at exactly the same point as you. I no longer read him. As you say, he only knows himself, and badly at that. He is a man who has no moral sense—even from Nietzsche's point of view—



JGR and HHR (right) with Lil and Walter in the Dolomites, 1910



Paul Solanges, c. 1900: 'Dear Sir, I am much obliged to you . . .'
(Letter 20)

je n'écris pas une ligne sans avoir devant moi le *traduttore, traditore*. Cependant je suivrai vos conseils. En attendant je suis heureux de vous dire que vous êtes dans l'erreur: le premier chap. de la seconde partie sera fini demain, et, après demain, j'attaquerai le second. Il me tarde d'entamer la seconde moitié et de descendre au lieu de monter.

Ci-joint deux lettres: l'une est de Madame Maria Carozzi, la dame qui a l'intention de vous traduire en italien; l'autre est la copie de la réponse que je lui adresse.

J'espère que vous en approuverez la teneur. Cette dame—inutile de le dire—ne sait et ne saura rien ni de nos conditions, ni de nos relations. Il vaut mieux qu'elle traite les premières directement avec vous. Vous pouvez, si cela vous convient et vous soulage, l'adresser à moi pour la tournure générale à donner à son travail. Je l'instruirai selon vos vues.

Ne vous croyez *jamaïs* obligé de répondre à mes questions. Je vous les fais en écrivant au courant de la plume, puis, ma lettre partie, je me repens de les avoir faites. Vos longues lettres me sont en même temps qu'un grand plaisir une source de remords.

Ce que vous dites d'A. France à propos de Socrate est très juste pour la seconde manière de France. Le père de Bergeret est alors à la fois un méprisable et merveilleux ironiste, mais il y a un A. F. première manière dont le scepticisme noble et douloureux est tout à fait de mon goût. Il contredit d'ailleurs étrangement l'autre. Celui-ci est l'auteur du *livre de mon ami* et des quatre volumes de la *Vie littéraire*. Si vous n'avez pas lu cela, il faudra le faire plus tard, quand vous aurez du temps.

Et puisque vous êtes en vacance et que vous aimez les anecdotes, en voici une sur A. F.

C'était vers le déclin de l'affaire Dreyfus. France avait transformé en comédie son roman *Le lys rouge*. Je ne connais pas France, mais nous avions un ami commun de qui je tiens cette histoire: Étienne Charavay, un archiviste paléographe de talent qui a écrit une bonne histoire de Lafayette et créé une intéressante revue de documents historiques. Charavay qui a fait au procès Dreyfus une déposition restée fameuse, était camarade de collège de France. C'est avec lui que celui-ci avait fait les récits historiques sur les premiers rois de France dont il est question dans le *livre de mon ami*.

Donc pendant les répétitions du *Lys rouge* F. était inquiet. Il rencontra Charavay et lui fait part de ses inquiétudes:

—Tu comprends, après la position que j'ai prise au cours de l'affaire, je redoute l'attitude du public qui sera, surtout à la première, composé d'anti dreyfusards.

—Bah! répond étourdiment Charavay, tu peux être tranquille. Personne n'a pris cela au sérieux.

France ne le lui a jamais pardonné et je crois que le pauvre Charavay est mort brouillé avec lui.

À vous bien cordialement
P. Solanges

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/260-63

85 TO PAUL SOLANGES

23 June 1911

Here a typical Sussex landscape, as a greeting from another corner of England.

H. H. R.

APCS (View: windmill at Winchelsea, Sussex): NLA MS 133/12/37

86 TO PAUL SOLANGES

2 July 1911

90, Regent's Park Road

My dear Sir

You will wonder at my leaving your last kind letter with its two enclosures so long unanswered. The truth is, I have been ill since getting back to London, with an old complaint of mine, sciatica. You may know something of the pains of this ailment, & how disinclined it makes one even for a movement of the hand; & if so, you will forgive my apparent negligence. I owe the attack, I think, to a severe wetting I got while in Sussex. After being wet through, I was obliged to drive three miles in my wet clothes.

It has been a great annoyance to me, outside the mere discomfort of the thing, for it has thrown me back in my work. I had resolved to have 150 pp. of my new book finished (in their first form, of course) before leaving next week for Norway. Now I shall have to go, short of that amount, unless the very serious strike that is going on at present among the Hull seamen prevents the boat from starting.

Thank you for letting me see Signora Carozzi's letter & your response to it. Your advice to her is certainly what I should have given myself, & I shall hope to hear from her; when she has whetted her scythe on some few pages or chapters of my old 'Maurice.'

In the meantime, are there no points I can clear up for you in XIV, I, or I, II?

You are no doubt right about Anatole France & I am wrong. I have made a note of the books you mention, & shall read them at an early opportunity. I can't describe the feeling that has kept me, some half dozen volumes excepted, from France's work, because I don't fully understand myself in the matter. It is a kind of intuition: that is for later, when I am older; & partly a distaste for the Snobbisme of the English with regard to him. I think one needs, too, not to be in the midst of the trouble & turmoil of things—as I am now—but have reached a certain philosophic calm, before work like Anatole France's is really to be appreciated. My time for him will no doubt come.

While ill, I read Halévy's *Nietzsche*, & I must thank you for some very pleasant hours spent over the book. It is written as only a Frenchman could have done it—with that sovereign gesture of, as it were, skimming the cream off the facts of a dark & laborious life. This method answers admirably for the first half of the book, up to, say, the break with Wagner, even though I would even here object that the early works are analysed at a length quite out of proportion to the later ones. Where it breaks down is in treating that most difficult period, which succeeded the parting from Wagner, & continued to the end. Here, for some reason, the author's sympathy with Nietzsche seems to weaken—perhaps he himself is an ardent Wagnerian—and his light & graceful method does justice neither to the last great works, nor to the state of isolation & desolation that ended in madness. That, at least, is my impression of the book.

I want, too, a deeper probing into the reasons that led to the estrangement of Wagner & Nietzsche—or at least into Nietzsche's reasons. I think the valiant way in which he wrenched himself loose from the older man is one of the most moving things in modern literature.

To *Zarathustra*, Halévy does justice—no more. His attempt to show its failure as a connected philosophic work strikes me a little strangely at this date—when it has so long been for me, for thousands, one of the most magnificent *poems* in existence. It is one of those great personal confessions, which writers give from time to time, here given

in lyric form—as a rhapsody—and written in a style that leaves all others far behind, & makes the German tongue a thing of burning beauty.

But, once before, you asked me: what of Nietzsche the philosopher? As I said then, that is a hard question for me to answer. It is, I suppose natural, that, as an imaginative writer, I should be drawn most to the *Dichter* in him; but then, too, I read him, sucked him into my blood, at such a comparatively young age that I could never get away from him again, to judge him objectively. I only know that for me he was one of those writers who put my own thoughts & feelings—unclear & unexpressed—into words. When I read him, I continually stop & say—but yes, I, too, have known that, have had the same thought. So that he did the work of clearing up my mind for me. His influence will lie over all I do. I am a born questioner of established & conventional values; I want to get at the truth of a thing, & no matter how bitter, or how grey the truth may be that faces me, I think you—and those that can see—will always find me a *Bejaber*—a yes-sayer, an affirmer—of life. (But I ought not to drop into the personal like this. Excuse my egotism. Nietzsche as you will see is a subject that touches me very nearly.)

That his doctrines are dangerous, I have not a doubt. And to practise them & preach them, one should have a nature like Nietzsche's own: fine-strung, sensitive, ascetic, far too proud & too full of responsibility to make the freedom of the ego an excuse for personal license. How I hate the race of so-called Übermenschen—les petits surhommes—who believe that, as followers of Nietzsche, they are at liberty to throw restraint to the winds & to indulge in every excess. But they will pass. They were, I suppose, the natural immediate issue of such a gospel of revolt. And those who come after will know better the worth of Nietzsche's work as a thorough re-examination of existing values.

This is all written very hastily, but I trust you will be able to make something of it. I am back at work again now & must press forward in the time that is left me.

All kind greetings & good wishes for the progress of M.G.

Very truly yours

Henry H. Richardson

Do you know anything of an Italian named Cippico? He has I think translated King Lear.

ALS: NLA MS 133/12/38-9