

[Letter Alice H. Lemon to Elihu Burritt, May 29, 1865]

10 Orrington Square

May 29th 1865

My dear Mr Burritt—

I return you many thanks for your long letter of the 16th Inst.—at last I find time to answer it, having, for a wonder a free and unengaged afternoon. I am glad to hear that you are getting reconciled to your new life, although I can well understand your regret of London—dear old London just now too is at its height of amusement & enjoyment—the parks are quite a sight—the Gardens crowded with fashionable and unfashionable—concert rooms full—the Operas thronged—Flower-shows here—Bazaars there—Balls and dinner parties everywhere [capitalization in original]—Oh London for me! beyond all places in world—But you are

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wrong in thinking that my head is filled and my time occupied with nothing else [underline in original] but gaiety and frivolity—you forget that I have all the cares of a household on my shoulders—mighty accounts to keep—servants to order—linen to mend & make—and Papa to see after—I lead no idle life I can assure you! We spent a delightful day at the Academy last Thursday—but I consider it on the whole a very second-rate exhibition this year--there are very few gems [underline in original]—and I have not the slightest wish to pay a second visit—there are some grand cloudscapes of Limelli and a few choice little interiors and cottage scenes—but the picture which pleased me most of all is (as usual) Landseer's—called “The Connoisseurs”—and artist taking a sketch and two dear beautiful big doggies [underline in original] looking over his shoulder, watching him with the most comical interest
another little tiny picture delighted me very much by its truthful simplicity and pathos—it is called

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“Cantavi” and represents a little dead canary bird on a velvet cushion with a sprig of forget-me-not laid beside it—of course there are many many of them I could tell you about, if you had seen them [underline in original], but as you have not done so it would be useless—I will send you my marked catalogue if you like to see all there are—you amused me by asking my opinion of poor President Lincoln and then threatening to put me in the “Bond” [underline in original]—

why if anything would shut my mouth and stop my pen that [underline in original] would! – besides my sympathies are so entirely with the South that I could not tell you, a Northerner, one half of what I thought—it was a barbarian brutal murder—and a sad and disastrous calamity both for North and South—what climax of atrocity will be perpetrated under the sway of this ruffianly jailor[?] Johnson remains to be proved! Do you think they will hang Jefferson Davis? – I am glad to tell you that Papa’s health is much improved

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since our Brighton trip—he is off to Norfolk this Whitsuntide for another change—I am going to make another effort in the dramatic line—some friends of [ours?] are getting [up?] private theatrical, and Mrs Thorpe & I all enlisted amongst their “dramatic personae” Our first piece is the farce of the “Illustrious Stranger”—my character is that of “Fatima” [underline in original]—an oriental damsel—in Eastern costume—all spangles and bangles and glitter and gauze—my paper warns me that I have written enough so I must now wind up—please do remember me very kindly to Miss Strickland and now—most mighty Consul—I must bid you adieu—wishing you all health and happiness in your new post, and hoping soon to receive your carte-de-visite in full canonicals—no that won’t do—full consular robes—we’ll say[.]

I remain, with kind regard, yours very sincerely,

Alice H Lemon