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Vernon Lee: Letters Home

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6-22-1870

## Violet Paget (Paris, France) to Henry Paget

Vernon Lee (Violet Paget)

Henry Paget

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### Recommended Citation

Lee, Vernon (Violet Paget) and Paget, Henry, "Violet Paget (Paris, France) to Henry Paget" (1870). *Vernon Lee: Letters Home*. 9.

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Paris 22 June 1847  
3 Rue de Luxembourg

My very Dearest Papa

Yesterday Mrs Jenkin called. She ~~had~~ brought a birdlike, or rather parrotlike personage, with little sense I should think, much vanity and great difficulty in enunciation, in short a vulgar, puffing out bore, with her. This person is her husband, Captain Charles J. Jenkin, R. N., and how on earth so clever a woman came to marry so foolish and tiresome a man, is quite beyond my comprehension.

He ~~never~~ understands nothing of nor takes the slightest interest in anything his wife does, neither literature, art, or music, but I should not at all be surprised to hear that he never reads his wife's novels.

His delight is to speak in a patronising

way of his superiors, both in intellect and in rank. His wife is by no means forgotten, and is patronised as much as if she were a poor poet and he a great Maecenas.

He said that as to Ruffini, he really greatly esteemed him, that he thought him a clever man &c -

~~The~~ One can see by her face that whenever he speaks, Mrs Jenkin is on thorns. I should think this man has been the most fearful drag upon her ever since their marriage; she has an inscription in her little study which, I doubt not alludes to his senseless & vulgar prattle: "Pazienza!"

And pazienza she must have, ten times more than Job, to put up with this man. However, he is the reverse of the medal.

Now let us look at the pleasant side of the picture, namely at Mrs Jenkin herself -

You can't imagine how kind she



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she is and what good advice she gave me!

Fancy she took the trouble to hunt out for me a mistress of french style, to help me with any compositions—

She has found a Madame Blanchette, or whom we are to call tomorrow and whom she highly recommends—

This Madame Blanchette is herself an authoress (don't think that I mean to imply by that I am one) and was the friend of Béranger, Lamartine and Sainte Beuve, beside a host of other minor celebrities whose names I forget—

Tomorrow / Thursday / Bruder dines with a friend of the Ruffinis, a Madame Planat de la Fey, who nursed ~~the~~ Manin during his last illness—

He will meet Madame Ristori, the celebrated actress and her family there— Madame Ristori acts both in Italian and in French, and is perhaps as great as

Lily.

Rachel was -

She is a Roman and began by being a strolling actress - She has now married the Marchese Capranica del Grillo, also a Roman -

We saw a beautiful statue of her at Rome - It was by that nice, interesting old man, Rinaldo Rinaldi, Canova's pupil -

Now goodbye my very Dearest Papa

Your very loving

Lily