

Letters to Miss Louisa Gaster, private secretary to John Lawrence

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
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Abber, where all may see & be inspired by his
greatness
And may I say how you
are & be moved for all you have
done for him.

May I write again?
Yrs, overflowing in grief & sympathy,
Florence Nightingale

June 30/79

5475/1

73339

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

I cannot thank you enough, I
cannot thank you enough.
Those precious signs of him -
the signature in his own hand -
the ^{Report} ~~letter~~ he had read
& wished me to read
the place where he left off -
they have hardly been out of
my hands since.
O India for which he had
done all, would that I
could do something for her.

O poor Lady Lawrence - poor
daughters - yet not poor,
rich beyond all - for they
have had, have still the
greatest hero this half century
of our day -

has been - the Vicegerent not
only of an earthly sovereign
but of God.

the re-creator of whole races
- yet humble & simple, as
became the highest servant of
God, which he so truly
felt himself to be & of which
he was one of the highest in all time -
I how he will be missed -

And who will write his life?
None can do it - but those who have lived as he lived.
But he will be with us still,
- he is living, not dead, living
more than ever.

May his spirit be with us!
as Christ promised us that He would be
- he followed in so many ways
the steps of our Great Master
- he is now in the presence of God
for which his whole life had made him fit.

He was so good as I come to
see me (about sanitary things)
just before his hurried departure
from England for India in
December 1863.

He spoke of Lady Lawrence
- he knows how - of the little
babe unborn & of his children,
his youngest. Then all
about India -

he had the blue eye & tender
expression in it of a girl of
16 - & the brow, the head of
the Ruler of nations, the Statesman,
the General - a greater never ruled.

I can write no more.
God bless & support Lady Lawrence
& his children

There is not one in all the world
who can feel with them as I can.
O may ^{not} his body ~~not~~ lie in Westminster.

And God continue his work
in India

God bless you
And God bless Lady Lawrence
& his children -

Ever yours in his name

Florence Nightingale

5475/2

73339

July 30/79

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE. W.

Dear Miss Gaster

How good of you to
remember the photographs
for me. Even you cannot
imagine how I have looked
longed for them. They
were like a message.

And even you cannot
imagine how deeply sorry
I am that I cannot see
you this morning, as you so
kindly offer.

This is the month of Matrons
to me: of the losing all our
trained Matrons.

And I shall miss the
divine strength of hearing all

10. SOUTH STREET.
W. W. W. W. W. W.
About him who was so strong
from you.

Alas! we shall miss him
more & more every day:
What must it be for Lady
Lawrence?

Kindly promise—you say
you will be in London
again in 3 months—to be
me know: I promise me
advice. I shall look
forward to it.

My memory
of him will be as fresh,
my feeling of his loss ever
increasing, as any—

—I what can we say about
such a loss? There are no

words.

I have dried the rose which
came from his coffin. Her
books are ever before me.

I will write again: the
'Memorials' of the Photograph.

God bless you. do not forget
that I shall be longing to see
you again.

May I say: write down now
all that about his last days,
his last years which you
knew so well— all that
you remember of him—
it will be so valuable,
so precious.

"Now are the mighty fallen
in the midst of the battle."

we see the path of light
left behind - & we ask:
Upon whom has fallen the
burden?

Upon whom?
I shall not be. "her last
great man" had India
now deplored.

Who shall write his life?
I think so much of that
that he may not be the last.

You cannot think how
little he is known in England.
And how the little crew here
have basked & bit round
the heels of the noble lord!
And now he is gone to
undertake yet greater labours,
& help more worlds in the
service of God.

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July 31/79

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

My dear Miss Gaster

I cannot thank Lady Lawrence
enough for the photographs.

May I try & say to you
what they say to me: [I think
they say it more plainly even
than when first I saw them,
before the body of our hero
was laid in Westminster Abbey.]

I have never seen any thing
so beautiful or so holy in the
holiest pictures of the old
Masters. If it had been
an old picture, we should
have said: how far are
transcendent Nature:

the lips slightly parted
(like those of a child in a

rapture of joy on first awakening
with a child-like joy at
entering into the presence of
the Heavenly Father whom
he had loved so nobly & so
humbly.

The poor eyes looking down,
but as if they were looking
inward into the soul to
realize the rapture of
surprise that is there - God
for the first time dwelling
in him in His fulness.

like Milton's: "And joy
shall overtake him like a
flood".

The face so worn - "it
behooves him & have suffered

these things that he might
enter into His glory."

What words those are!
here it was the joy arising out
of the long trial, the toil:
the Cross out of which came
the Crown.

the expression that of the
child-soul rising spiritually
out of the worn-out body -
shuffling off the 'mortal coil':
& passing into the immediate
presence of God.

The subject is almost too
sacred & write about -

"My father - My father - The
Chariot of Israel & the
Horsemen thereof" - as they
bear him away from us into
the immediate Presence of God

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[31 July 1873]

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

5475/3/2

73339

I could not but write a
word of thanks to Lady Lawrence
to day. Did I know where
you were going, I would venture
to write again: there is so much to say.

You cannot think how I
deplored not being able to see
you: but one cannot
throw aside duties to do
honour to the man who
was above all the man of
duty.

in haste
to catch you before you go:
with the precious photograph
which looks ever before me
as my bedside

Yrs ever most truly
in haste
Florence Nightingale
That account was so infinitely

touching which you have
about his having left nothing
behind him, the old
shoe horn.

You know, his was an ideal
character: it was the
Ancient Roman, the Christian
hero saint, the chivalrous
Knight, a statesman, &
the anchorite of the first
ages of Christianity, all in
~~fused into~~ one with the
tender husband of domestic
life. If he had been
a youthful lover instead
of a vicary, going to his
Empire, he could not have
spoken of her differently
than he did to me in
December 1863.

F.H.

but a Biographical sketch
of his achievements of the
Punjab, especially at the
time of the Mutiny.

There is scarcely any deed
of history, - ancient, or modern,
I compare with this - the
winning over the Sikhs
I save the Empire, the
denuding himself of help,
& the having to converted
our late ^{perce} enemies that he
could lend them I have no
"Good, here am I, lend me",
^{has been said by many} (like Clarendon). ^{But} he could
say, "Good, here are they,
lend them".

This is what every body
can understand, ~~what~~
a reverence.

Dear Nurse
Bromford
Dorby

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5475/4/1

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

Aug 30/79

My dear Miss Foster
I am always thinking of the
question, as you put it,
as to who could best write
the life of Lord Lawrence, -
a 'Memorial' I think of
more importance than
perhaps any ~~the~~ other, or
than anything the world
could have said to us at
this moment.

And I have been making
inquiries.

I am afraid what I have
I suggest, if indeed it could

be of ~~any~~ use, has been
delayed too long to be of
any.

The first thing is: What are the materials?

(Suppose, to the Governor
Genl.?) must be absolutely
priceless.

These, I believe, have never been published.

As to the Correspondence, you
are making a hit of it.

I venture to think that
the great deeds of his
Vic. Royalty would receive
better justice some 10 or
12 years hence.

2. I confess that if the Dean
of Westminster is not to be
had Mr. Geo. Trevelyan
is the person I should like
to see write the life. What he
writes would be read.

And he is capable of such
enthusiasm. But he is very busy.

5. If he cannot be had,
what would Lady Lawrence
think of Lieut. Trevelyan -
not to write the life,
but to write the Punjab
part of it? He has such
a true feeling of Lord
Lawrence's great career.

If the Punjab could be elicited
out of him, it
would be done with the pure
enthusiasm of a friend.

What ² every body would read -
what would stir up no
hideous controversies

"O'er the grave where our hero
we buried." But all would reverence.

I earnestly hope that those
despatches are forth coming.

And there must be those
still living who could add
five the most striking &
telling personal facts.

Among them Mr. Arthur
Brandreth.

But alas! how many are
dead!

The next thing is: who is
to do it?

Has Lady Lawrence thought

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1. of the Dean of Westminster?

The drawback is: that I believe he had not the good of being much acquainted personally with Lord Lawrence: the other is that he is very much occupied. The material must be placed within easy access of him. But if he undertook it & was inspired by his subject he would make something like a worthy representation either of the whole life or of the Punjab epic.

2. Then there is Mr. Theodore
Nalmond: the C. S. Commissioner.
He wrote Lord Elgin's life.

Lord Lawrence's life is on the heroic scale, & should have a hero to write it.

But where are the Indian heroes who shared his labours & who can ^{are} also writers? Who survives?

Mr. Nalmond has judgement: & in the selection among correspondence & Despatches perhaps good judgment is as much wanted as good writing. If he undertakes it, he should write the whole life.

3. Then there is Mr. Proude: he would do it well: but he is so plastic one never knows what he will take.

BACK PAGE 10
TO BOUND REVERSE

6. Of other Indians, ³ there is
Col. Malleon:

What would Lady Lawrence
think of him?

The sketch he wrote of Sir
John Lawrence was infinitely
below the mark. (Published

7 or 8 years ago, or more,
in a volume with sketches
of Sir B. Trevelyan & others.)

But he is known as a writer.

7. Col. Meehan was a good
writer: but he is dead, is
he not?

Cannot you think of some
Indian writer, who is now
dead? Who would I could

do some justice to the subject?

Who personally took part
in his life? or ^{even one} ~~or~~ who
could be a Johnson's Bodwell?

8. Lastly, there is, in default
of a more experienced writer,
Sir Arthur Hobhouse: he
is painstaking & conscientious
- he is an earnest supporter
of Lord Lawrence's opinions
on Afghan Policy.

I pray God that some one
may be found: not wholly
unworthy of the subject.
Why are there no Plutarchs
now? No Thucydides?
Lord Lawrence would be a
fine subject ^{for such an historian} ~~than~~ for them
than Pericles was for Thucydides.
I cannot think but what
some one will be raised up
to do it.

Truer I shall see you again in London
this Autumn.

I must ask your forgiveness
for not having written sooner.

It is not for want of thinking
of him whom we have lost
& of those he has left without
him.

I had to come down here
(in Derbyshire) to take charge
of my dear Mother. This is
what 'reck or nothing' is me.
Last year it was 'reck': this
year it is 'nothing': that is,
it was a nervous fever with
40 hours of sleeplessness -

But I must not trouble
you with my troubles:

God speed the work of
making John Lawrence
known to this world
as he is to God & Heaven & the
Saints & heroes gone before.
Yrs ever sincerely
F. Nightingale.

he is writing, I understand,
the life of Fox now: but as
that has waited so long, it
might wait longer. And,
were Mr. G. Trevelyan to be
the ~~wealthy~~ materials so grand
and so ample before him
for such a life, I do
believe that he could not
refuse. And his father,
Sir C. Trevelyan, tho' without
writing, might contribute
materials.

The friends who thought
that Professor Bryce would
not undertake it suggested
the Rev. Stopford Brooke
who wrote the life of the Rev.
Robertson. I merely

Dear Hubert
Cromford
Delby

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5475/5/1
Oct 20/79

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

My dear Miss Gaster

The prayer is ever before
me that this great man's
life may be made an ^{inspiration} example
for generations to come:
as well as the thought of
Lady Lawrence which does not leave
me. But I have hesitated to
write because you kindly
promised that you would
let me "know the result"
whether "the Despatcher
written by Lord Lawrence
from the Punjab" were
"forthcoming on application".
I feared to appear impatient.

Probably Lady Lawrence & her
advisers may already
have come to a decision as
to who shall write his life.
The materials, as you have
shown, are ample.

I think matters stand on a
very different footing ^{now} than
they did before the appalling
events at Kabul, which one
is almost glad he did not
live to see, proved his
unerring knowledge & fore cast
in so terrible a manner.

I mean that people are
much more disposed to read

the great events of his life now
who is to write them?

You asked me about Professor
Boyce "whether he would
do justice to a work like this."
He is an extremely able man,
but I believe he neither
could nor would undertake
it.

I have questioned
intimate friends of his &
mine, who have the highest
admiration for him: but
they say he is too busy &
scarcely the man for the work.

You ask: would Mr. G.
Sedgelyan undertake it?

I cannot but think that he
might & be inspired by it.

Probably the momentous
question has been settled
already of who is to be
the writer.

I pray God that this great
unique life may be worthily
done.

You, I think, have written
down, ("committed to writing",
expressive words: our
memories are so treacherous),
all the precious details
of his last weeks & months
& even of his last years.

Suppose Lady Lawrence
is now expecting home Mr.
Cunningham: that will be a
renewal of grief but a comfort
to both.

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mention the name: I do
not know that Mr. Clappford
Brooke has any Indian
knowledge. I can scarcely
conceive that he would
'set up' such an immense
subject.

Another person who has
been suggested to me is one
known, I believe, to Lady
Lawrence: "J. C. Saunders".
He is a clever dexterous writer,
indeed, I believe ^{as told}
much the ~~cleverer~~ ^{of the men suggested.} writer
well in the 'Saturday Review'.
I have some knowledge of Indian
things.

It appears as if these men
stand, as decided writers

of the life,^x in the following
order:

First: Mr. Geo Trevelyan
Next: Mr. Theodore Walrond
then Professor Bryce
then Mr. Saunders.

^x I entirely agree that it would not
do to forestall the "Life" by a
short Biography. I only thought
that a sketch of his Punjab action
during the Mutiny might be
published at once: & his life later.
But I am no judge of these things.

Still I cannot help thinking
that one of his own disciples,
one to whom he was guide
& friend, one who has
followed in his steps in
Indian Administration - that
great career - would still
be the best person to write
his life. And if Sir R.
Temple would undertake it,
& is good writer enough, he
would be the man.

I thank you most heartily
for having shown me this
beautiful letter - I did not
know he could write such an
one - & I return it most
gratefully.

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Possibly Lady Lawrence
has returned to London.

Gave you all very well,
very well, in the highest
sense.

God has blessed his great
deeds. May He bless them
yet further.

No blacker cloud hangs
over us than the dread
that this second Afghan War
will force 'retrenchment'
in all good things.

It is a crisis almost as
great, ^{as the Indian Mutiny} for future good or ill.
And we have no ~~John~~ John
Lawrence to ride the storm.

Yrs ever sincerely

Florence Nightingale

[20 Oct 79]

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Nov 20/79

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

My dear Miss Gaster

I have been so ill &
knocked up on my return
that I have hardly been
able to sit up.

But I am almost appalled
I think that you will be
gone in a fortnight.

I hope that you will
kindly be able to give me
twice an hour before that
going abroad.

Now I do feel for Lady
Lawrence, I wish that I
could do the least little
thing for her.

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

And how this life of
him clings to my thoughts!

Could you kindly settle;
any day after to-morrow
(Friday), to see me at 5
or if more convenient to
you at 4?

With the warmest sympathy
ever faithfully yours
Florence Nightingale

India Office? I know him
Or the Dr. Johnston of Upper
India?

See you have a "Mr. L. Thorne"
on your list.

There is a Mr. Elliott, the
Secretary of the Famine
Commission, just come to
England. Every body seems
to think he would be of
~~so much use~~. All I have
been of his was most able.

He too was of Upper India.
but he did not know Lord Lawrence, did he?
[Was his grandfather
Resident of Lahore?]

Dr. Hunter is also spoken
of as able. but I am sure
his sympathies are not
right.

Private

98/8 South

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5475/7/1
Nov 25/79

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

My dear Miss Gaster

You asked me to think over
who could be of use in
contributing information or help
to Lord Lawrence's life.

Sir Wm Muir you have
already.

Sir John Strachey would
contribute a chapter on
Sanitary matters. Lord Lawrence
inaugurated sanitary reform
& sanitary organization as
Viceroy in India. And Sir
John Strachey was his first
appointment. I have always
known Sir John S. as an
enthusiastic disciple of Sir
John Lawrence. Should be.

be otherwise now. I should
still apply to him,
because you do not want
partisans on either side.
You want honest men
who will give information.

Col. Commelin would contribute
information on L. Lawrence's
Barrack reforms.

Lord Northbrook says that
a Mr. Lenkinson (I believe
he is some relative of his)
would give information &
assistance. He did not
say particularly on what
subject.

[L. Northbrook is warm in
his admiration of L. Lawrence.
I would I have no doubt
help.]

He mentioned that Sir Arthur
Hobhouse. "With Lenkinson's
help" might be of use:
but is too much of a partisan
& not earnest in religious
matters.

You certainly know both
men.

He also mentioned a Gordon.
(I do not quite know what
Gordon he means) I believe
he said Commissioner of Mysore.
He spoke of
J. H. Johnston D. C. & L.
I think the Mr. Johnston of the

I undertake it.
The work will be so extremely
interesting & inspiring, &
if done by such a man,
will add so much to his
reputation that, if you
find present difficulty,
some good man, now in
India, who served under
Lord Lawrence, might ask
to be entrusted with it.
Surely some good man
will offer if time is
given.

Y^rs.

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There are all the people
I have mentioned just
now. as likely to give information
I am quite sure you know
them all better than I
do. excepting perhaps
Sir John Strachey: &
Lord Napier of Magdala.
Have you thought of the
latter? He had much to
do with Sir John Lawrence
in the Punjab & afterwards.

(as an adviser)
Lastly: people think a
great deal of Morley,
of the Fortnightly [Editor],
"Who writes like Defoe?"
[Mr. Elliott's History of the
Mysoore Famine of 1877]

reads like Defoo]
to a man I consult with
for good writers, in case
you fail in your present
search.

May God speed you!
I do not think my letter of
this morning, ^{or this}
will be of any ^{present} use to you.
but at least I am trying
to do my best for as holy
an object as ever was
pursued.

Did you ever think again
of Mr. Theodore Walcott?

In haste, believe me
Ever faithfully yours &c &c
Florence Nightingale

*Most
Private*

Most singularly my
brother-in-law, Sir Harry
Percy, calling on Lord
Northbrook this morning,
& talking about a life
of Lord Lawrence, met
his nephew, Mr. Henry
Cunningham, at Lord North-
brook's.

May do not think if
you hear this that I
have been consulting Mr.
Cunningham about this
sacred matter.

I should not weary or
despair in this quest of
the ^{holy} spirit: - that is the very
best man who can be found

Doctor tells me I talk 'only
half an hour every other day'
which is simply impossible.

I have not seen any one
for years but with long
standing claims of business
upon me who, including
the Trained Nurses, are
numbered by hundreds.

But if it would do the
least good for me to see
Mr. or Mrs. Bowditch Smith
some afternoon that he or
she would fix the week
after next at 5 or 10 a.m.
I would. I am afraid

I am quite 'gilt' till then.

I have written thus much
I show that my 'poverty' &
not my will' consents & putting

5479/8/1

73339

27/11/79

10, SOUTH STREET,
PARK LANE, W.

My dear Miss Gaster

I was very glad to receive
your kind note.

As you know it has so
strongly struck me that you
ought to be the 'Private Secy.'
to I speak, of any one who
wrote Lord Lawrence's life,
as you were, of him whom
we have lost. During the
last years of his life, - that
I felt aghast at your going
abroad, & almost hoped
that the life would not
be written till your return?
No one could ^{give the help of} do it but you.

as, apart from other distinguished characteristics, you have had such extraordinary opportunities of personally living Lord Lawrence's expectations.

Nothing can replace that - especially in his case who was an individuality without a parallel.

The writing of this life is an event unique in history. As he was unique in history.

And it would seem as if everything should be ~~so~~ made I work together for that to be done as well as possible.

I shall hope to see you before you leave England. I am very much overworked, but I would put off everything to see you once more. I may be no longer here in this world when you return.

Friday & Saturday & Tuesday & Thursday I am afraid I am quite full of engagements.

It is very good of Mr. & Mrs. Roworth Smith to wish to see me. It is very many years since I have been able to see 2 people together - not even my sister & her husband. And my

[27 Nov 79]

2.

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is off the virus.

But I cannot fancy that
I should be of any use:

because overwork prevents
my taking up such a subject
as this in the only way
that is deserving of it:

I do not know of any
"detailed account" of the
Sullivans time. That
is the worst & the best of it
that there never was any
great man who was so
little written of. Even
his despatches not published.

I think there must be two
Thorntons, that is three.
1. Thornton of the India Office

whose initials are, I think,
W. T.: he writes on
Peasant Proprietorship

2. Dr. Thornton^(I.H.) of Upper India
(d.d.D.) who is, I think,
the man at Northbrook
recommends.

3. Your Mr. E. Thornton.

Yours speed.

I wish I could help more:
in great haste
yrs ever sincerely

Florence Nightingale

5475/9

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TELEPHONE
15 CRADDOCK.

THE VICARAGE,
UFFCULME,
DEVON.

30th July 1930.

My dear Sir,

You ask me what you
know something of the
history of the seven auto-
graph letters of Mrs
Florence Nightingale that
you have purchased from
me.

The letters were written
by my Aunt, Mrs Louisa
Gasker, who was Private
Secretary to Lord Lawrence
after his retirement from
the Viceroyalty of India
till the time of his death.
Florence Nightingale was
a personal friend of Lord
Lawrence & as the letters

she, much attached to him. After his death, she was greatly concerned that a fitting choir should be made of his biographer, & discussed this question at several interviews with my Aunt - the interviews being supplemented by these letters.

Subsequently, my Aunt married the Rev. Arthur Charles Garbett, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Southwell, (nephew of the present Bishop of Southwark), who predeceased her; & at her death several years ago,

she left all her papers & other belongings to my Mother, who gave the letters of Florence Nightingale to me.

I feel very happy to think that the letters should now be in the possession of so great an admirer of Florence Nightingale as yourself.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely
Herbert Chubb