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Lettre d'Eugène Lee-Hamilton à Matilda Paget - 23 Mai 1871

Auteurs : Lee-Hamilton, Eugene

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[Commune de Paris](#)

Dossier génétique

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Texte & Analyse

Analyse

Me WC

Amb. d'Ang.

17 Rue des Réservoirs

Versailles

May 23. 71

Tuesday noon

My little darling.

I drove up to Meudon yesterday afternoon, a place whence one has a view of Paris very similar to the view of Rome from the Villa Mellini. The distance is about the same, and you see Paris extended ~~bef~~ below you just as we saw Rome so lately. All the chief monuments are perfectly distinct, the gilded dome of the Invalides, the Panthéon, the Palais de l'Industrie, the nouvel Opéra etc. The ramparts (surrounding Paris just as the Walls do Rome) are also perfectly conspicuous, and the breach through which the Versailles army entered. All the houses immediately within the ramparts are reduced to a state of ruin impossible to describe, as I could see with the naked eye, by the tremendous bombardment of the last two weeks. The whole quarter looked as if it had been ground in some gigantic coffee mill. No roofs, no walls, no insides no outsides. Nothing but streets of the most absolute décombres. At my feet the Seine wound placidly through the city just as the Tiber through Rome, and I could see all the bridges by which we walked so happily last summer, the Trocadéro etc. Nothing indicated that a tremendous battle was then raging inside Paris, only from time to time the low growling of cannon, and clouds of smoke rising slowly upwards in different Parts. I looked through a telescope and saw distinctly the tricolour floating on the Arc de Triomphe and on the Ecole Militaire, but the drapeau rouge still flying on the Louvre. All the houses *outside* the ramparts have been reduced to the most marvellous wrecks.

At Meudon where I was a large Prussian battery had been pounding away at Paris all the winter. This battery ~~ha~~ is on the terrace of the Chateau de Meudon (just like the terrace before the Villa Mellini) The Château itself is utterly burnt out, the whole inside and the roof having disappeared; it was set on fire by a French shell; but the walls are still standing and the smiling faces of the Caryatide contrasted painfully with the state of the place. *All* the houses of the neighbourhood are more or less destroyed. I did not see a single one which had not at least one huge gaping shell-hole in it, large enough for a carriage to drive through.

The Commune ~~are~~ ^{is} fighting desperately; they have so to speak ropes round their necks. Thiers told Lord L. last night that two thirds of Paris ~~was~~ ^{were} already conquered, and that this morning at daybreak Montmartre was to be assaulted. The insurgents have two hundred most powerful guns there and I fear the carnage will be dreadful. This morning an uninterrupted cannonade was

distinctly audible like distant thunder continually rolling. The number of prisoners brought into Versailles yesterday and today has been very great, understand that there are about ten thousand of them. The more recent batches of them consist apparently of the scum of the Paris population. There are strange to say many women among them. I should think the days of June '48 must have been child's play compared to the present insurrection and suppression. Rochefort was captured the other day escaping in disguise from Paris, and is in prison here. Assy, ~~another~~ a prominent member of the Commune ~~has~~ was taken yesterday. I did not enjoy my visit to Meudon yesterday, notwithstanding the interest of the sight. I felt lonely and could not help comparing it to our visit the other day to Monte Mario. ~~Hadst~~ Hadst thou and Bags been with me, how different it would have been!

Versailles itself is all that can be desired. The park is exquisitely beautiful. How dear Baby would revel in ~~the~~ such a marvellous "French garden" as it is. It must certainly be the most magnificent thing of the sort ever conceived. The enormous marble edged bassins (~~the~~ it takes an hour and a half to walk round the chief one) the dense avenues of box, the splendid shady woodland alleys, the marble statues, the grand flights of stone steps and the large expanses of green lawn -are incomparably beautiful. I can only describe the Park of Versailles as ~~the~~ a fusion on an immense scale of the Borghese, the Ludovisi, the Quirinal and the Tuileries. The Park is at one's very door, and under other circumstances I should think Versailles a most charming and convenient place for thee to pass the summer in. But at present it is of course out of the question. It is impossible to get even a bad bedroom for 200 fr. a month (Wodehouse has been paying 500 for one) and the State of France is terribly precarious. I daresay however that thou mayest find it advisable and agreeable to pass next summer here. -I forgot yesterday to insert my advice about thy journey. Here it is:

Leave Verona 2.12 afternoon. Arrive Innsbruck 11.20 Night

Next day Leave Innsbruck 7.45 morning; arrive Salz. 4.30 afternoon

I have not yet received a letter from thee. I kiss thee a thousand times. Thy E.

Auteur(s) de la transcription Geoffroy, Sophie
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Présentation

Date 1871-05-23

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Mentions légales

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