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Lettre de Vernon Lee à Mary Robinson - 15 décembre 1925

Auteurs : Lee, Vernon (Violet Paget)

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Dossier génétique

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Texte & Analyse

Analyse Critique favorable de la biographie de Racine par Mary Duclaux

Transcription Dec. 15 XXV R6□

Dearest Mary. I hav'nt yet finished your *Racine*, but I want to tell you my indignation and loathing for the brute = fool reviewer in the *Statesman*. It's merely a display of *his* having read a book about Racine which you don't happen to mention ; on a par with the way reviewers correct one's lapsus calami and (as so often !) one's printer's errors. Your book, my dear, is a beautiful, interesting, *most persuasive* (I mean that you make one take *your* view) a most delightful one. And I who say it am very ill-disposed to the Grand Siècle and all its works (except Molière of course! [and] La Fontaine, who owe nothing to it ; as you know Louis XIV is ~~my~~ a in [without] Patterns to me -- ~~un~~ and I cannot *see* -- or hear, in Racine anything beyond a (forgive the x sacrilegious words!) local celebrity suited exclusively for home-consumption (your translations often seem ever so much more interesting than the original French verse ! You have given colour, gesture, individuality -- ~~but~~ *is that because I am English* ?) What I want to say is that your work is wonderfully *delightful* -- I can find no other word. I was ill-disposed towards it owing to ~~my av~~ Racine boring me. And I have really had difficulties in letting the book go, refraining from it at undue moments : I have read it in ~~the~~ at meals -- the greatest of compliments, especially while having my solitary tea on the landing which is my winter sittingroom (it sounds cheerless but *is* delightful, warmed by the invisible calorifère and by the sun (when there *is* sun) through a big south window & with a view of Fiesole over cypresses through the (double!) window to the north), and of an evening, by the wood fire in my study, I have found myself (tell it not in [Path] !) laying down *Le Côté de Guermantes* to read *you*. By the way this course of (borrowed from Berenson) Proust may account for my involuted style....

Dear Mary, your book is delightful ! And I believe every word of it.

~~And~~ And it is varied & ~~alive~~ : the terrible chapters on the Poisoning scare after the sweetness of Port Royal. ^Your Racine is perfectly intelligible.^ The way you have brought in your *Comparses* Madame, Mme de Sévigné, St Cyr etc etc -- Boileau -- all alive.

In short I am very grateful for the pleasure your book is giving me; grateful also for the way you have carried out that tiresome money commission. Grateful for your affection and *excellence* dearest Mary. Indeed only one subject for gratitude is still lacking me, viz : that you should come and stay with me under this little roof not shown in this photograph and sit on this bench under the cypresses occupied by the photographer Grizel Bonde. My love and best wishes to Mabel.

Yours Vernon

[caption] Cypresses at end of my grasswalk & towered Villa of Maiano in the distance ; these cypresses are about 200 metres from my house.

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Destinataire Robinson, Mary

Persons cited

- Berenson, Bernard
- Boileau, Nicolas
- Bonde, Grizel
- de La Fontaine, Jean
- Louis XIV
- Mme de Sévigné
- Price, Mabel
- Proust, Marcel
- Racine, Jean

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