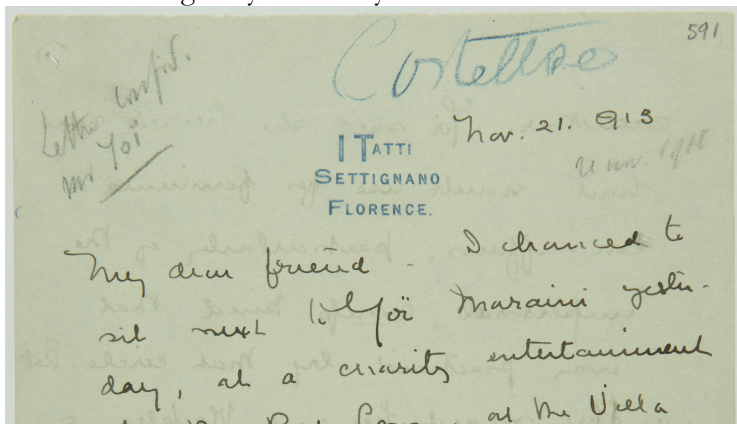


MB-SR **1915**.²⁰ __ (591-596v; f. 29-34v)
a six-page letter (numbered by Mary 1-4, 4 bis-5)
on the stationery of
I TATTI, SETTIGNANO, FLORENCE (in blue)

<Sunday> Nov. 21, 1915²¹

My dear Friend,

I chanced to sit next to Yoï Maraini yesterday, at a charity entertainment for the Red Cross, at the Villa Medici. I took the occasion to ask her for some autobiographical notes for you, concerning her connection with the Lesbian circle that so greatly interests you.



She said that she had met Renée Vivien²² only once; that the poetess was small and delicate and like a bird. It was Lady Anglesey²³ who introduced

²⁰ Filed by mistake among the letters of 1913 in the Reinach Archive at the Bibliothèque municipale in Aix-en-Provence. See John Porter, *Yoï: The Remarkable Life of Edith Cornelia Crosse (1877-1944)*, intro. Dacia Maraini (Leicester: Matador, 2018).

²¹ Mary's diary, **Nov. 20, 1915**: 'Called for Mrs. Ross and Miss Hunter and went to **the Red Cross Entertainment at Villa Medici**. The lights went out for nearly all the time, but at the end Iris' play, "The Slippers of the Princess", got its lighting. It was very pretty, and all ended well. We felt pretty tired just from seeing, and Cecil who *did* it all looked a ghost. **Yoï was there and rather played off Nello and Geoffrey**, making them both uncomfortable, and Geoffrey acutely miserable and sea-sick.'

²² Renée Vivien (Pauline Tarn, 1877-1909).

Mary's diary, Paris, Friday, July 16, 1915: 'Lunched with Reinach who is daft on the subject of Renée Vivien.'

Reinach's collection of Vivien's letters and notes is preserved in two manuscripts in Paris at the BnF, Nouv. acq. franc. 26582 and Nouv. acq. franc. 26583. See Rebekkah Dilts, '(Un)veiling Sappho: Renée Vivien and Natalie Clifford Barney's Radical Translation Projects', *Refract* 2 (2019) <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/94q869s6>

²³ Marjorie Harriet Paget, Marchioness of Anglesey (1883-1946), a writer on art and an illustrator. The eldest daughter of Henry Manners, 8th Duke of Rutland, and Marion Margaret Violet Lindsay, an artist. A frequent contributor to *The Connoisseur* and author of *Angelica Kauffmann, R.A.: Her Life and Her Works* (London: John Lane, 1924)
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them to [1.2] each other.

Yoi said she herself never had much use for feminine love-affairs, particularly of the impersonal, group kind that was practised by that circle. But as they regard her as a blackleg, and mourn over every successive child she has (her own words), it is clear that she once belonged to the *culte*, and indeed I know it from other confessions of hers which have been repeated to me. She also told me once that she and Eva Palmer²⁴ used to lie nude on a sofa together, wrapped round with the great coils of Eva's gold-red hair. [2]

However, she has been pretty busy with men ever since she was 15, and I think these women affairs haven't counted for much. She was younger than most of them, very pretty, very vicious, very sweet, and they petted her and flattered her. But her *real* preoccupation has always been men, and to men she is very dangerous, as they find it hard to forget her.

Before she was married to Maraini,²⁵ while he was trying to persuade his family to accept her and [2.2] make them an allowance, he had to be absent from her from time to time in Rome for this purpose. She got bored by her solitude and fell upon **a young man here whom I know very well**,²⁶ and began an affair with him. He entered into it lightly enough, knowing he must resign her to Maraini when he came back, and that she must ultimately

²⁴ Evelina 'Eva' Palmer (1874-1952), an American woman notable for her study and promotion of classical Greek culture, weaving, theatre, choral dance and music, married Angelos Sikelianos, a Greek poet and playwright. Together they organised a revival of the Delphic Festival in Delphi.

In 1893, during a vacation in Maine, the seventeen year old Natalie had met Eva, a nineteen year old girl with green eyes and red hair that reached to her ankles.

During their trip in Greece, Bernhard and Mary encountered Eva Palmer by chance on the train to Corinth, as Mary mentioned in the letter to her mother Hannah of Apr. 29, 1923 and recorded in her diary on Apr. 24, 1923: 'On the train to Corinth we met Eva Palmer, now Mme Sikelianou. She used to be a friend of Yoi's and especially of Natalie Barney. Then she met the Greek sister-in-law of Isadora Duncan, the dancer, and fell in love with that lady's brother, a poet, by hearing her talk of him, and came out to Greece and captured him.'

²⁵ In London, on Mar. 26, 1914, Yoi married the sculptor Antonio Maraini (1886-1963), the father of Fosco Maraini (Nov. 15, 1912-2004) and Grato Maraini (1917-2004). The daughter of Fosco, the author Dacia Maraini (1936-), was born at Villa Kraus, where Bernard and Mary lived from 1895-1897.

Mary to her family, Sept. 23, 1913: 'I saw Mrs. Ross yesterday, very flourishing, and Yoi. **Nello's parents have at last sanctioned the marriage** and are prepared to receive her and (more important) to continue his allowance. So all is well. She looked so pretty ... but oh my what a goose. She has been seeing Isadora Duncan and Eleanora Duse and believes all their tales of betrayed innocence and cruel desertion.'

²⁶ **Geoffrey Scott!** Mary's diary, January 1, 1915: 'Yoi came up to lunch and was really silly enough to put into a lunatic asylum. I have never known a person more self-absorbed and impervious to the impression she makes on others — except, *bien entendu*, sexually — of *that* she is well aware. She went for a walk with Geoffrey in the Laghetto — the last time, B.B. says, such a thing must happen. Of course I only cared when Nello was away, by means of lies on her part, for she told me he was frightfully jealous. It was a bad beginning to the New Year.'



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marry him, owing to their child, etc., but she wouldn't leave it at that.

She likes to extract the *very last drop of excitement* from these things; she is also very literary and pseudo-romantic, [3 593] so she pretended that he was the only person she ever really cared for, and who had ever given her full sexual satisfaction, and she proposed to run off with him (both penniless), insisted (fortunately in vain!) on having a child by him (he hates children!) and all the rest, and turned it into a rather ghastly tragedy.

Fortunately, though he fell desperately in love (her real object), he kept his head, and made her go back to Maraini who, trusting fool, returned from Rome in triumph with his family's blessing to [3v 31v] claim his idealized mistress as his wife.

All this happened when I was in America.²⁷

I found my young friend²⁸ the prey to a mad passion for her, although fairly well aware of her character. She kept up the pretence of the one and only love of her life for a while, in talking to me, but gradually slid into confessions about how Nello (her husband) would kiss her for half an hour on end, and say he never found her so delicious, etc. etc., so that I realized her falseness.

I tried to cure her lover by telling him some of these [4] things — the result was a fearful torment of jealousy which now, after 21 months,²⁹ still tortures him. He utterly ceased seeing her (very wise), but by accident met her a day or two ago, and since then has been dreadfully — seasick! He says it's a disease just like hay-fever, but worse.

She knows this quite well, for she has often boasted to me that men who had once been in love with her (and had possessed her) *never* got over it, [4v] but still turned pale and trembled when they saw her. She glories in it, it is really her only "value" in life.

How she will grow old I dread to think, though it will be a blessing when she has no more power to make people unhappy. She is already 35-36, has recently had her fourth baby³⁰ (second Maraini, in spite of her "principle" that it is very bourgeois to have more than one child by the same man!), and begins to look her age. Her husband is so jealous that he scarcely lets her out of his sight. He never allows her two [4 bis] minutes' talk with another man, nor a penny of money in her pocket. Very wise of him!

²⁷ Mary and Bernard were in America: Dec. 3, 1913-Apr. 4, 1914; Samuels, *Legend*, p. 168-176.

²⁸ Geoffrey Scott, who married Sybil Cutting on Apr. 23, 1918.

²⁹ Mary and Bernard had returned to Florence in April 1914.

³⁰ Their second son Harry only survived for a year.



The lover for whom her husband divorced her, Lord Kennard,³¹ settled £400 a year on her, while the decree *nisi* was pending. This is now being used to pay her huge debts to dressmakers, etc.,³² so that she cannot touch a penny of it for some twenty years to come. She lived with Lord Kennard nine months, but after the divorce his family and friends persuaded him to leave her for the six months before [4 bis v] the decree *nisi* was made absolute. He went to Teheran, in the Embassy. He promised to marry her as soon as the divorce was granted, but suddenly, just before, he ceased writing to her. She professes not to know why, but I suspect she got tired of being alone, and took another lover (as she did here), and he heard of it. She then went to Persia to see him, but found him already engaged to Miss Barclay, the daughter of the Ambassador. She has always represented to me her voyage as very tragic and heart-breaking, but she told our young architect, Cecil Pinsent, that she met a [5] charming young Englishman on the journey, and that they were both so overcome with rapture at seeing the desert that they kissed each other ardently “without knowing it”.

On the whole, Lord Kennard got well out of it. But Yoï raised a fearful row, and as she is so pretty and taking, she got a certain number of people to feel that she had been horribly ill-used, and she made it very uncomfortable for the young man.

Her first husband was Captain Buckley, and they lived a good deal in Wales. She had two children. She complains of his crossness [5.2] to her, but probably he found out about her lovers among the neighbours there, and about her second child not being his.

When he went to S. Africa, she let herself go, and “tried” everything that came her way, going so far as to have three or four lovers on the same day. She enjoyed it immensely, but said she had had enough of it.

³¹ Sir Coleridge Arthur Fitzroy ‘Roy’ Kennard, 1st Baronet (1885-1948). While serving at the foreign office, he became infatuated with the wife of James Frances Buckley. After Kennard made his intentions of marriage known, Buckley and his wife divorced.

While waiting for the statutory six-month period to expire, Mrs. Buckley went to Italy and Kennard went to Persia. In Tehran, Kennard met Dorothy Katherine Barclay (c. 1890–1953), the daughter of the Ambassador. Roy and Dorothy fell in love and when Mrs. Buckley travelled to Tehran to meet him, he refused to see her.

³² Yoï is mentioned in the letter to **Eugénie Sellers** of March 19, 1913: ‘I do wish you were coming to stay again. Perhaps you will late in May. **Mrs. Buckley** and I would get you some nice dresses for America, for there are good dressmakers here, and Yoï has excellent taste in dress. We expect to stay until the middle of June.’



After Kennard threw her off, she came to Italy,³³ and shortly caused a lot of talk in Rome by her flirtations with the young men in the English Embassy.

She wrote *A Year of Strangers*³⁴ and also *Those that Dream*,³⁵ a novel idealising herself.

I used to find her attractive, but now she bores me to death with her lies and poses. She cannot speak a word of truth.

I am trying to gradually to break off our friendship, but B.B. is very fond of her husband, so I cannot quite drop her.

Is there anything more you want me to tell you about her? Of course you are very discreet — even about my not liking her any more. I am sure she writes to “Nathalie” that I adore her.³⁶ She bores B.B. stiff, **although at first he rather fell in love with her.**

What of Eugénie? I know nothing of her.³⁷

Yours,
M. B.

³³ Yoï is mentioned by Mary for the first time in the letter to her sister Alys of Mar. 6, 1912: ‘Then we had tea with a young woman named **Mrs. Buckley**, who lives up on a fifth storey just at the entrance to the Piazza Trinità dei Monti, overlooking *all Rome* — a wonderful view. She ran away from a very bad-tempered and nagging husband with Lord Kennard, whom she expected to marry when her husband divorced her. Instead of this, he went to the Embassy in Teheran, and refused even to see her when she madly followed him there, and finally married the daughter of the Ambassador, whose mother had long been scheming for him.

So she had to come home alone and found her two children taken away from her, and almost no money to live on. She is pretty, but of that sort of “smartness” that is so close to bad form as to be undistinguishable from it. She is absorbed in her wrongs and her revolt against Society, but evidently derives much satisfaction from thinking herself charming and her situation a thrilling one.

She is a goose, but pretends to be intellectual, sub specie feminine-charm. A really impossible little person, but somehow living there poor and Bohemian, I felt to envy her. It brought up so many years of my youth. I daresay I was quite as much of a goose, but in a heavier way. Anyhow, I enjoyed those years immensely.’

³⁴ Yoï Pawlowska, *A Year of Strangers* (New York: Duffield, 1912). **Widener Library Offsite Storage Geog 4309.12**

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082469457&view=1up&seq=11>

³⁵ Yoï Pawlowska, *Those that Dream* (London: Duckworth, 1912).

³⁶ Mary’s diary, February 17, 1916: ‘Reinach came and took me to call on Miss **Nathalie Barney**. A pre-historic (and stuffy) milieu à la Stenbock (poor fellow) with the most hideous paintings and sculptures done by some female artists patronized by her. Note: incense very strong, mélange of cheap Eastern things, good silver and flowers, white furs, pictures of nude or intense females everywhere. She has an incorrigible “way back” American twang, a good-natured, warm manner, is no longer pretty, and not at all tidy. The house was crowded and not dainty, all except the best bedroom (a circular Empire one) where she said Yoï made her decision to run away from her husband.’

³⁷ Mary’s letters to Eugénie are preserved in the Archive at Girton College Cambridge. No letters survive from the period from June 4, 1913 to Feb. 25, 1917.

