

Berlin W. Schellingstr. 6
Jan. 7th 92.

My dear Kelly

A2/3752

I slip into my mother's
letter just to thank you for your nice
& nice letter and the book you kindly
sent as present. But please do not do
so again — I mean, don't go to the
expense and trouble of getting English
books for me, because, though I value
the kindness and the preliminaries of the
gift, experience teaches me that I am
utterly unable to appreciate English
humour! Please do not despise me
for this extraordinary statement, but

consider it as an instance of the almost
incredible barriers between different
nationalities. The old saying is that
two things, i. e. humour and national
cohesion can never be appreciated by a
foreigner, and however much I am in
sympathy with most English institutions
and tendencies, I feel that these are
the limits of my own appreciative
powers. As you feel much the same
towards German poetry, I venture to
believe that you share in my ^{incomplete}
sympathies or will at least understand,

stand them. As regards light German
literature, I am always conscious of
the difficulty to find for anything
suitable for your amusement or
adapted to your taste, and the only reason
is not that our market is but poorly
stocked in this respect, but that it
requires ^{your} the special national fibre of
taste for its enjoyment. So let us in
future keep to the rule of exchanging
only what has an exchange-value in
our two respective markets, and surely
that embraces all the domain of staple
goods in sentiment and ideas, though

not the lighter cargo of ephemeral productions.
I am so sorry that your handsome book
with the fine paper and pictures should be
wrecked on us, just like the "All thoughts"
and the "Eye-typist", but I wish I had had
the courage of sincerity sooner!

Your letter on the other hand was a treat
in itself, and certainly both it and the
"kindness" of your gift helped to brighten
my Christmas holidays. They are over since
the beginning of this week and I in full
business, train. Therefore goodbye for
the present and much love from

Yours affecly
Alfred Oester.