

26 St. John's Street  
June 27th 1853

My dear Lydie

I am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in getting me the *Polchicum*; the last specimens you sent were really very fine ones and do credit to your judgment. I have not succeeded in drying them of a good colour indeed some of the succulent plants will not dry green, no matter how much trouble we may take with them.

I have finished reading the last work of Mr. Layard, a narrative of surpassing interest and the perusal of which suggests many reflections on the relations of the past with the present.

The land of the Egyptian Nimrod has not and the wondrous monuments he wrought alone remain to tell us that a mighty nation hath passed from the earth. A shapeless mound is all that is left to show us where once stood Nimrod and the power of the Egyptian hath departed for ever. The wild

Bedouin sleeps in the plain where erst rose the  
 towers of Babylon and the Herd pastures his  
 flocks amid her temples and palaces. Who gazeth  
 the Sun with visions and watcheth his setting with  
 prayer? The fire of the Persian burneth not on the  
 Mountain and the conqueror of Asia sleepeth in  
 the dust. Where are now the arts and arms of  
 polished Greece. Her sage teachers not wisdom in  
 her pockets, and the voice of eloquence rings not in  
 her walls. No soul stirring strains rise within her  
 groves and the tongue of her poet is mute. The  
 skilled hand of her sculptor hath forgotten  
 its running and the shallow temples look down in  
 silence gloom on a mixed and despised race who  
 tread her soil but own not her lineage.

The power of the Roman hath gone from him  
 for ever and the master of the world hath be-  
 come but a serf. A coward monarch sitteth  
 on the throne of the Caesars and the Power of  
 Superstition broods o'er her cities.

Despoiled by the Egyptian, carried captive by

the Assyrian, plundered by the Persian and the  
 Greek, sold by the Roman and successively  
 the slave of every power that hath risen in the  
 East the Jew alone remains of all the peoples  
 of antiquity the inheritor of all the attributes of  
 his race. The life of a Mendelshohn kindles  
 the soul of the Syrian and of the, the disservices  
 of Marshall give dignity to the country of his birth  
 whilst before the arms of a Napoleon and a South  
 the thrones of Europe have tottered. In almost  
 every cabinet and army of Europe the Hebrew  
 is found, whilst master of much of this world's  
 wealth he silently wields a power constantly  
 felt if reluctantly acknowledged.

To take him altogether, in his antiquity, the extra-  
 ordinary incidents of his history, his suffering,  
 his indomitable energy, the tenacity with which  
 he has clung to the traditions of his race and  
 the religiosity of his fathers these every opinions  
 and events the Jew is one of the most remark-  
 able men now in existence. The every phase

of his history he has carefully preserved as the  
record of his race a work containing loftier  
and more majestic poetry, sublimer wisdom  
and more remote history than any other work  
in existence and were it for this alone he  
would demand our sympathy and interest.

The beautiful illustrations of Biblical history  
afforded by the Discoveries of Layard give  
a value to his work beyond the mere interest  
attaching to a vivid and life like description  
of countries and of things in themselves wonder-  
ful enough. You may anticipate a great  
benefit from the pencil and I should advise  
you to get the book out of the library as  
early as possible.

Believe me  
Yours sincerely  
John Leigh

Miss Becker