

AL/3656

81 · OAKWOOD COURT · LONDON · W·14  
WESTERN 6000

January 12<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mrs Bennett,

I am writing to you on the strong recommendation of John Carter & Mr Arthur Cross, and on behalf of Miss Philippa Stacey, in the hope that you may be able to write an article of between 2000, & 3000 words for the T.L.S., who are most anxious to publish it, based on a small collection of letters by and about George Eliot in her last days.

Miss Stacey is now very old, 95, & she has asked me to go through her letters. Among them I found this package, consisting of letters from George Eliot herself, from Mr Cross, and from George Lewis, all addressed to Lady Stacey and to Lady Colville, her sister. The most important George Eliot letter is one which she had to break off, when she was taken ill (in fact her last letter). It has been published in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Volume of J. W. Cross's final Life of Letters. The others are still unpublished. There is a most gentle & very moving exchange of letters between Mr Cross, who wished Lady Stacey to have this letter, & Lady Stacey returning it to him because he would treasure it, & a paper from Mr Cross asking her to keep it. There are letters from Lady

Colville about his grief, & from him to her concerning  
George Eliot. Mr Lewis's letters are addy enough  
about house-hunting, which he seems to have done for  
the Shackeys.

You will know, of course, but to me the letters seem  
very touchingly to show how much George Eliot valued  
the short but great friendship between herself & Lady  
Shackey, & how it was building up, very delicately, into  
a strong bond. I think that they went together to a  
concert shortly before all this & that G. E. was so much  
moved that she gripped Lady Shackey by the wrist &  
swiftly & silently removed her in the middle of all the  
clapping.

Miss Shackey would value it immensely if you feel  
that you would care to undertake this article. I think  
that she would be immensely comforted & pleased to do  
justice to her mother's memory, in view of the rather  
cold picture which emerges in the recent life of Lytton.  
& these letters to show Lady Shackey to have been  
exceptionally gentle and civilized.

I have had the letters photographed, & should be very  
much pleased if I might bring the copies to show you  
Then, of course, you should see the originals which are,