

3

Sept 4 1871 The Manor House  
Kilmecost  
Lecklade

My dear Smitham

What eyes have passed since  
we parted! That last  
time you called when I was  
so unluckily preoccupied,  
I said I would write soon &  
meant to do so - but  
muddled, muddled! I  
have been here 2 months  
now & must soon think  
of returning to London  
though I have not been  
quite idle here. Before  
leaving town I did actually  
get that big dance to a  
sort of finish, but suppa!  
I shall drop into it again  
with indignation & hatred  
when I see it on my return,  
& find it is more taken  
back to day yet. However

we shall see! I don't  
at all suppose this will  
find you at Stoke Newington  
but send it as a fulfilment  
to hear something of you  
& you doing if it may  
be. I shall hope as soon  
as I am in London again  
that we may see each  
other ere long, and that  
I may show you my incubator  
at last. The frame has  
been made while I have  
been here, & moreover  
I have been having my  
studio thoroughly altered  
in my absence, to get a  
good light; which of course  
renders it highly probable  
that I shall now go at  
once to Italy or the Sandwich

Islands, & never paint  
a stroke at Chelsea again.  
This is a lovely old house  
- quite a genuine speci-  
- men of middle-class Elizabethan  
building, though perhaps  
built somewhat later in  
this cozy neighbourhood -  
It is really a jewel in its  
way, garden, meadows &  
all - built almost on  
the river bank (Thames,  
Oxon,) and affording  
lovely river-walks as  
you may suppose, though  
I confess such flat country  
does not help the sources  
of inspiration with me.  
Such a "haunt of this  
ancient peace" as this  
never was, I think. No

railway station at all  
near it, & only 117  
inhabitants in Helmscott  
a hoary sleepy old lump  
of beehives as ever you  
saw. From a distance  
~~the~~ <sup>the thatches</sup> ~~locks~~ like so many  
pussycats asleep in  
the sun, and as if when  
you stroked them they would  
purr. The room I am  
writing in is hung round  
with old tapestries  
which have always  
been here no doubt,  
and tell grimly enough  
the history of Samson,  
from his rending of  
the lion to his sitting  
comfortably while his  
eyes are gouged out, with

a barber's basin at  
his feet containing  
his shorn locks, & the  
amiable Dalilah  
hard by, engaged in  
a commercial trans-  
action with a Philistine  
captain, whose armor  
has been made large  
in front as for a  
successful man. I  
confess that the problems  
connected with many  
details in this tapestry  
would for years with  
me baffle all attempts  
at embodying my own  
ideas in their presence.  
The fixed gaze of abstract  
Thought is apt to encounter  
the biceps of Samson

or the patella of a  
Philistine, & to find  
that the mind can  
cope with no other  
enigma in the presence  
of that one. However  
I am getting more  
used to it than when  
I came. But now  
after all I have not  
said how I came to be  
here. Well, Morris  
& I took the house  
together, and I am  
expecting him to join  
me here soon, & tell  
such dreadful lies  
about Iceland, when  
he is at present, that

35  
even the tapestry will  
seem probable.

All this is only <sup>said</sup> to get  
to know about you  
and your movements.  
What work did you  
do all this time, &  
what are you doing?  
I looked for word of you  
at the Ref but fear  
the usual cause must  
account for my learning  
nothing there. Do tell,  
& try to believe in me  
as ever yours affectionately

D. S. Repetti  
P.S. I'll tell you what news  
there may be about friends when  
I know it will reach you.

K U  
23 D. 2:2  
MSS.

2  
20