

THE LETTERS OF
D. H. LAWRENCE

VOLUME I

September 1901 – May 1913

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION

The volume opens with a formal letter dictated for the sixteen-year-old David Herbert Lawrence by his brother Ernest in stiff, commercial English; the last letter coincides with the publication of *Sons and Lovers* and marks 'the end of [his] youthful period'.¹ The period between – almost twelve years – in absolute terms is short: its significance can scarcely be exaggerated. In these years Lawrence grew from a provincial schoolboy into a mature man; from a working-class adolescent under the tutelage of a possessive mother he became a published writer who had eloped with a woman of aristocratic family, the wife of one of his college professors; from the mining village, Eastwood, he had moved to the metropolitan centre of literary sophistication and thence to Italy. Multiplicity of experience, emotional and physical adventure, intellectual growth, 'culture-shock' and creative achievement: these engage our attention in the letters which follow.

In an attempt to describe and account for Lawrence's remarkable development, the private and personal nature of his letters compels our attention to the writer himself, but also to the people and events that helped to create the setting to which he responded and in which he grew. The people are those with whom Lawrence chiefly came into contact either in personal relationships or by letter, or both; people who exerted influence on him and who, in turn, felt his influence. The events are diverse, including literary and cultural experiences as well as happenings either calculated or fortuitous.

Without question, his mother was the dominant figure in his early life: the portrait of Mrs Morel in *Sons and Lovers* makes that abundantly clear. (He wrote to her every week for nearly two years from Croydon:² every letter has disappeared.) Mrs Lawrence has frequently been described by her son's biographers or memorialists; all insist on the toughness of her personality, her emotional vitality and intellectual sharpness. She read voraciously, loved discussion of philosophical or religious subjects, had submitted verses to local journals (though none has been discovered in print) and generally was a person 'of considerable refinement and culture'.³ Of nearly comparable importance was the girl to whom Lawrence was unofficially engaged for six years until November 1910: Jessie Chambers. Her *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* by 'E.T.' – the most valuable first-hand account of Lawrence's early years – reveals her own emotional vulnerability; but there is also evidence of shrewd judgement, integrity and literary sensitivity. She was

¹ Letter 577.

² Letter 252.

³ Nehls, i. 9, 22.

profoundly in his debt; he was indebted to her for the shape of his entire career. 'The girl... launched me... on my literary career, like a princess cutting a thread, launching a ship.'¹

In his early manhood he relied mainly on women for both intellectual stimulus and emotional satisfaction: 'I am always opening my heart to some girl or woman', he wrote in May 1908.² In varying degrees they were women of independent mind, resolute and decisive. Mrs Lawrence was manifestly such; so was Jessie Chambers (despite certain features in the portrait of Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*); and so was Louie Burrows to whom Lawrence became officially engaged on 3 December 1910. His emotional commitment to Louie, though intense in the early stages, proved short-lived; it was probably never as complete and certainly not so enduring as hers. Academically she was his equal at University College, Nottingham, and her modest creative ability earned his praise. He expected she would write short stories 'very likely as good as W. W. Jacobs'; he regarded her as co-author of his story 'Goose Fair' and shared with her the fee received for it.³ Louie was devoted to the cause of women's rights and was in close touch with members of one of the leading suffragist societies, the Women's Social and Political Union (one member wrote to her, in November 1911, from custody at Bow Street Police Station). Frequent attempts were doubtless made to enlist Lawrence's support for the women's cause both by Louie and also by two others among his female friends: Alice Dax and Blanche Jennings. Alice Dax was the more militant: her suffragist activities brought about her transfer as a Post Office clerk from Liverpool (where she worked with Blanche Jennings) to the Isle of Man. Later, after her marriage, she was prominent in the Eastwood socialist group, on the local council in the village of Shirebrook and in the affairs of the Workers' Educational Association. It was at her home (in late 1907 or early 1908) that Lawrence met Blanche Jennings whose visit may well have been linked with a suffragist rally in Nottingham. Politically radical like her friend, she too was one of the 'new women', free of the conventional mores inherited in different degrees by Jessie Chambers and Louie Burrows. Lawrence welcomed the opportunity to write to her. She was slightly older than he; she was detached from the local scene but acquainted with it; and he could be flirtatious, indulge his theatricality and boisterous fun, and experiment with literary tone and style.

Lawrence's female companions were of great consequence. They were all highly articulate and delighted in the exchange of ideas. They composed his first audience as readers and critics of his short stories and of the early

¹ 'Autobiographical Sketch', *Phoenix II*, p. 593.

² Letter 47.

³ Letters 144 and 149.

versions of *The White Peacock*. And either individually or collectively they were responsible, into his early manhood, for the education of his feelings. Intellectually and emotionally he developed under their influence.

The maturing process did not, however, depend solely on Lawrence's female friends. His father's contribution must be taken into account though, during the period covered by this volume, Lawrence himself was unable to recognise – much less, acknowledge – it. Later – in the essay, 'Enslaved by Civilisation', 1929 – he gloried in his father's lack of formal education, seeing him then as admirably untamed and free. A man of unsophisticated but powerful feelings, John Arthur Lawrence was one in whom a bullying stubbornness co-existed with a capacity for tenderness. He revelled in the close and boisterous male companionship that stemmed from his work down the pit; he delighted equally if not more so in the beauty and vitality of the natural world. From him Lawrence probably inherited his own astonishing familiarity and sympathy with that world, particularly with animals, that is so frequently remarked. For influence on young Lawrence's intellectual growth, however, we have to look to two other men. William Hopkin was one. Considerably older than Lawrence, he was an established local politician; he had his own weekly column in the Eastwood newspaper, the *Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser*; and Lawrence had the opportunity to meet national politicians at Hopkin's house – Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and Keir Hardie among them.¹ Hopkin was, also, a leading member of and contributor to the Congregational Literary Society founded in Eastwood in 1899 by the Rev. Robert Reid, himself a principal figure in the affairs of the Lawrence family. Reid was obviously central in that Congregational upbringing for which Lawrence expressed gratitude in his late essay (1928), 'Hymns in a Man's Life'. Reid had a keen mind, enjoyed a broad range of intellectual enquiry and loved debate: Lawrence's recently discovered letters to him take these qualities for granted. They also assume in him compassion and understanding.

Lawrence was himself a member of the Literary Society; Jessie Chambers gives the impression that they were both keen participants, but we cannot know how regularly he attended. Nevertheless, available to him through Society meetings were papers on subjects ranging from literature, politics and music (both sacred and secular) to geography, history and travel.² At an annual cost of one shilling, the 3–400 members could have heard, in the first year, papers on Burns, Thomas Hood, Browning, early English drama,

¹ Cf. Nehls, i. 134–5.

² For this information I am indebted to D. M. Newmarch, 'D. H. Lawrence's Chapel', unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of York, 1976.

Goldsmith, Tennyson and Longfellow. Alice Dax's husband, Henry, spoke several times on biological topics; the Rev. A. R. Henderson (whom Lawrence heard from the pulpit) talked on Morley's *Life of Gladstone*; a paper on Tennyson's *Idylls* was followed by a vote of thanks from Lawrence's Eastwood headmaster, W. Whitehead; and Alice Dax's frequent contributions to discussions were noted in the local newspaper. Indeed, either in its intellectual concerns or through its members, or both, the Literary Society probably stimulated Lawrence's development very significantly.

Contemporary with the early years of the Literary Society was the period (1898–1901) Lawrence spent at Nottingham High School, an independent day school of ancient foundation. The influence it exerted on his intellectual growth has been curiously underestimated. He may well have felt an outsider at the school; the distance he travelled daily from Eastwood made it inevitable that he would be debarred from many extra-curricular activities; but the quality of the education he received cannot be disregarded.¹ He was taught by some able graduate-teachers under Dr James Gow (who became headmaster of Westminster School in London at the same time as Lawrence left the High School); he studied a broad curriculum (though strangely excluding Latin), including Natural Sciences as well as English language and literature, History, French and German. Interestingly, the emphasis in English and History was predominantly on the seventeenth century; this was also to be his chosen area of specialisation in those subjects at University College, Nottingham. The three years Lawrence spent at the High School exposed him for the first time to academic rigour of a formal kind; this school year by year sent boys with Open Scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge; and to ignore its impact on him would be foolish.

Also largely ignored has been the lasting importance to Lawrence of a set of books he found at home: *The International Library of Famous Literature*, edited by Richard Garnett (1899) in twenty volumes. Potentially they offered him a wider literary education than either the High School or – the next stage of his formal education – the Pupil-Teacher Centre at Ilkeston. (The curriculum at the Centre is summarised in Lawrence's letter to *The Teacher*.)² As Jessie Chambers remarked, the Garnett *Library* was 'regarded with a reverence amounting to awe';³ originally the set belonged to Lawrence's dead brother Ernest whose passion for cultivation doubtless intensified Lawrence's own. Justifiably Jessie added: 'Lawrence must have

¹ See D. J. Peters, 'Young Bert Lawrence as pupil at city High School', *Nottingham Guardian Journal*, 22 March 1972.

² Letter 14.

³ E.T. 92.

made many literary acquaintances through the medium of these volumes.' The letters which follow here frequently confirm the accuracy of her supposition.

Garnett's anthology – surely one of the most remarkable even in a period of Smilesian self-help – printed substantial extracts (over thirty pages in many instances) from works originating as far afield as Russia and China, Europe and America. Horace, Euripides, Seneca, Spenser, Bacon, Shakespeare, Pope, Swift, Goethe, Renan, Tolstoy, George Eliot, Schopenhauer, Emerson and Verlaine: all are represented, among many others. Through this brilliantly selected *Library* Lawrence probably made his first acquaintance with such major writers or, say, with Mrs Humphry Ward, Björnson, Bliss Carman, Béranger, H. R. Haweis or Harrison Ainsworth. Many of the works quoted or alluded to in his early letters appear in Garnett's volumes. Browning's 'Hervé Riel', Burns's 'To a Mouse', W. S. Gilbert's 'Yarn of the Nancy Bell', Hood's 'Bridge of Sighs', Jerrold's 'Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures', Edwin Arnold's 'The Light of Asia' and Whitman's 'O Captain, my Captain' provide some examples. In his paper, 'Art and the Individual' (delivered at Easter or Whitsuntide 1908, in Eastwood), Lawrence refers to the Laocoön;¹ in August 1909 he sent postcard reproductions of it to two friends: his interest may have derived from Garnett's 4,000-word extract from Lessing's *Laocoön* illustrated by a picture of the sculpture. Helen Corke recalls lending Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* to Lawrence;² Garnett may have introduced him to the book many years before. When he rejoiced at the purchase of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* for ninepence in Charing Cross Road,³ part of his delight may have been to possess complete and in French the poems of which Garnett had printed two in translation. Or, as a final example, Lawrence's knowledge of *Manon Lescaut* and his belief that Dumas in *La Dame aux Camélias* was indebted to Prévost may have originated in a reading of Garnett's 13,000-word extract from the novel and a shorter one from the play. In any case when, on 15 June 1908, he was eagerly anticipating the experience of watching Sarah Bernhardt in the play, Lawrence's expectations had probably been shaped by Garnett's striking illustration of Bernhardt as Dumas' famous courtesan. The caption to the illustration reads: 'Sarah Bernhardt as Camille'. In Dumas' novel and play the character's name is Marguérite Gautier; but in Matilda Heron's translation (1856), both the play and the leading rôle are called 'Camille'. It was Heron's version that Garnett reprinted in the *Library*; it is therefore

¹ 'Art and the Individual', *Phoenix II*, p. 224.

² Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 184.

³ Letter 179.

tempting to link that fact directly to Lawrence's remark to Blanche Jennings: 'As Camille I think [Bernhardt] will be thrilling.'¹

Much here is necessarily conjectural: one cannot know precisely the extent to which Lawrence explored Garnett's *Library*. Yet, though single examples of 'influence' can be regarded as coincidental, in the mass they become weighty evidence; they lead to the confident assertion that Lawrence was and perhaps remained greatly indebted to this astonishing anthology. One of Garnett's intentions was to introduce English readers to American literature² (Bret Harte contributed one of the introductory essays to be found in each volume): this may prove significant to a discussion of the background of Lawrence's later work, *Studies in Classic American Literature*. In any event, together with the Eastwood Mechanics' Institute library (which Lawrence and Jessie Chambers plundered every Thursday evening),³ Garnett's twenty green-backed volumes provided the basis for a generous liberal education. They offered 'infinite riches in little room'.⁴

The letters and Lawrence's biographers afford glimpses into the formal education he received at University College, Nottingham, during his teacher-training course (1906–8); the famous passages in *The Rainbow* record, through the character of Ursula, his disenchantment with it. What has so far remained unexplored is the intellectual and moral calibre of the people with whom he was in close contact at this period. Jessie Chambers, Louie Burrows, Alice Dax and Blanche Jennings have been considered; three more (hitherto unknown or underestimated) may now be added.

First a college contemporary previously unidentified but clearly important: Thomas Alfred Smith. Like Lawrence he came from a working-class home; his father was an engine-driver, his mother a farmer's daughter. The two undergraduates struck up a warm friendship: Smith was the only male friend not from Eastwood whose home (in Lincoln) Lawrence visited, and his admiration for Lawrence was intense. Smith read Chemistry; he obtained a First Class Honours B.Sc. (London) in 1910; he was awarded a postgraduate scholarship – an '1851 Exhibition' – and went to Göttingen to study for his doctorate under the distinguished Professor Wallach. (His parents encouraged this move partly to sever his relationship with Lawrence.) Smith's subsequent career is summarised later: it is enough here to observe that, in 1945, as Director with the British Control Commission in Germany, he was responsible for the dismantling of the German chemical industry. He was,

¹ Letter 49.

² Richard Garnett, *International Library of Famous Literature* (1899), i. xv f.

³ E.T. 92–3.

⁴ Richard Garnett, *International Library of Famous Literature*, i. xiv.

then, a man of considerable distinction; Lawrence derived pleasure from his company; and Smith's achievements should dispel any lingering doubts about the quality of mind Lawrence met with during his college years.

The second person to be noted is one of Lawrence's teachers, possibly one of the only two for whom he admitted any respect whatever:¹ Ernest Alfred Smith, popularly known as 'Botany' Smith. Though he was doubtless partly responsible for Lawrence's achieving a Distinction in Botany in his Teacher's Certificate, he made a major contribution in other ways. At a time when Lawrence was undergoing a painful struggle to reach a religious and philosophical equilibrium, Smith was important. He had some academic competence in philosophy, sociology and ethics (he was a particularly successful extra-mural teacher in these subjects); his interest in theology later led him to become a Unitarian minister. Lawrence had cause to be grateful to him: 'You were my first live teacher of philosophy.'² Smith was not, like Robert Reid, speaking from an achieved dogmatic position; rather was he, like his young pupil, philosophically adventurous and religiously undogmatic. He helped Lawrence to grow. 'You showed me the way out of a torturing crude Monism, past Pragmatism, into a sort of crude but appeasing Pluralism.' It would be foolish to inflate Smith's importance on the basis of this rather opaque sloganising; equally perverse would be to suggest that it contributed nothing to the Lawrence of 1927 who believed that 'Monism is the religion of the cut-off. . . There is a *principle* in the universe, towards which man turns religiously.'³

Lawrence's uncle by marriage, Fritz Krenkow, is the third person worth particular attention. His largely intellectual influence was reinforced by his wife's interest in Lawrence as a painter. Lawrence sent his aunt Ada three 'sketches' in November 1908; in April 1911 he started a painting for her – 'she needs another' (possibly suggesting that she occasionally sold paintings for him); and he was prepared to lend her money in October 1911 from his own scarce resources.⁴ Ada may, then, have had some importance; her husband certainly had. It must be admitted that, in April 1912, Lawrence wrote from the Krenkows' house in Leicester: 'I hate this house – full of old books, gloomy as hell, and silent with books';⁵ but what these remarks chiefly reflect is his excitement at having just stayed overnight with Frieda Weekley and his eagerness for their elopement four days later. A truer picture comes earlier. On a postcard from Leicester, 21 September 1908, he wrote: 'My friends here are books – nothing but books. . . Uncle is always working

¹ Letter 60.

² Letter 135.

³ Letter 3 August 1927.

⁴ Letters 85, 260 and 316.

⁵ Letter 424.

away at his Arabic, and I sit reading French, wishing I could tackle Spanish and Italian, of which there are such a lot of delightful books here.¹ What we see here is a young man's excited reaction to perhaps the only private library he had yet intimately explored; his reaction, too, to a private scholar (later to have an international reputation) who made the inadequacy of most of his college teachers even more obvious. Fritz Krenkow, a German national (until his naturalisation in 1911) worked as a cashier in a Leicester hosiery firm; in his spare time he was a scholar-editor and translator of Arabic texts, and lexicographer. From 1907 he published frequently in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* and other learned journals, mainly German; his edition of the *Poems Tufail Ibn Auf al-Ghanawi and At Tirimmah Ibn Hakim At-Ta'yi* was ready in 1906, though it did not appear until 1927; and he continued to produce editions and other important work until shortly before his death in 1953. He was Professor of Islamic Studies at the Muslim University of Aligarh 1929–30; the University of Leipzig awarded him an honorary Ph.D. in 1929; and at Bonn he held an honorary professorship in Arabic Language and Literature in the early 1930s. Krenkow's dedication to scholarship and his intellectual energy could not fail to have their impact on the young Lawrence. Krenkow, we know, prompted Lawrence to translate into English verse some Arabic Fellaḥ songs which he had himself translated into German. It is inconceivable that his influence ceased there.

Krenkow was significant for another reason: as well as acquiring an increasing reputation in the world of scholarship, he represented contact with Europe, its literature and culture. By contrast, when Lawrence moved to his teaching post in Croydon in 1908, he was provincial. He had indeed lost his 'mental and moral boyhood' and gained in 'scepticism';² he was no longer 'the sweet, innocent, mystical lad' of earlier years;³ but he remained severely limited in experience. Except for family holidays at Mablethorpe and Robin Hood's Bay, and a couple of other visits to the Lincolnshire coast, his world was bounded by Eastwood and Nottingham. That is, his physical world. In reading and in his imaginative life, he was richly equipped. He had already eagerly begun and was to continue to exercise his painterly skills by copying the works of others – Brangwyn, Girtin, Peter de Wint among them – and in consequence to develop his 'visionary awareness'.⁴ In terms of education he had been thoroughly taught at a grammar school for three years, been placed in the first eleven candidates in England for the King's Scholarship (which would pay the fees for his college training) and in the First Class in the Teacher's Certificate. And he had the advantages of the nonconformist

¹ Letter 63.

² Letter 47.

³ Letter 53.

⁴ 'Making Pictures', *Phoenix II*, p. 605.

culture into which he was born. Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford's record of a visit to Eastwood provides insights into the living quality of this culture: 'All the while the young people were talking about Nietzsche and Wagner and Leopardi and Flaubert and Karl Marx and Darwin... the French Impressionists and the primitive Italians and [they would] play Chopin or Debussy on the piano.'¹ Ford's vivid description may be fanciful to some extent, but it was an exaggeration in degree, not an invention of kind. Yet, despite Lawrence's cultural sophistication he remained closely identified with particular people and specific places. His profound attachment was to his mother and Eastwood, the Chambers family and Higgs Farm. In October 1908 when he had to move to Croydon, outside the familiar group, he shocked Jessie Chambers with a letter 'like a howl of terror... everything was strange, and how could he live away from us all? He dreaded morning and school with the anguish of a sick girl... cut off from us all he would grow into something black and ugly...'²

This reaction is not surprising; more so was the speed with which he accommodated himself to his new circumstances. He maintained contact with his familiars by letter; he proposed visiting George Hill whom he had known as a clerk in the Eastwood office of the mine-owners Barber, Walker & Co. but who was now head of the firm's sales office in London; and he was quickly on intimate terms with the London branch of his mother's family, particularly with his cousin Ellen ('Nellie') Inwood. (She developed a passion for him; when he fell in love elsewhere she suffered a total nervous collapse.) Manifestly, then, Lawrence's first instinct was to strengthen the bonds which held him to his past: he was 'a stranger in a strange land'.³ Yet within a fortnight he was overcoming his 'loneliness and despair'.⁴ As Jessie Chambers was shocked by the intensity of his homesickness, so she probably was by the speed of his recovery from it. Helen Corke presented her fictionally in *Neutral Ground* as Theresa and attributed to her the comment: 'London *has* isolated him... He, of all men, needs his own folk near him – their sympathy is essential to his life and work.'⁵ This dependence on 'his own folk' proved not to be so complete as expected. The explanation is necessarily complex, but its principal elements must again be presented in terms of culture and personalities.

Lawrence certainly needed and quickly developed intimate relationships. Many of his teaching responsibilities in Croydon were irksome, but his

¹ Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (1931), p. 392.

² Letter 68.

³ Letter 69.

⁴ Letter 71.

⁵ Corke, *Neutral Ground* 301–2.

sympathies were at once engaged by his pupils. Some of them endured poverty such as he had seen in Nottingham but had not directly encountered before. Davidson Road School Log records on 13 December 1907 (before Lawrence's arrival, but his letters confirm that the situation continued): 'Free breakfast given to the number of 102 during the week. . . 28 children were discovered to be in want of boots. Many of these scholars were in a deplorable condition.' They aroused his compassion; his headmaster testified that Lawrence for his part enjoyed his pupils' 'entire regard, respect and confidence'.¹ As for his peers, although the headmaster and some colleagues were unexciting, Lawrence discovered one who shared his own interests and others from neighbouring schools who were congenial. Outstanding on his own staff was Arthur William McLeod; over sixty letters were written to him over the years. He was more academically inclined than Lawrence; he read for a degree (London B.A. in Greek) – which Lawrence explicitly refused to do – and so was qualified to transfer to grammar-school teaching; but devotion to books cemented their friendship. McLeod's library, particularly of classical literature, modern poetry and fiction, supplied Lawrence and Frieda when they were later in northern Italy and almost totally deprived of books. Conventional and conservative though McLeod was, his literary sensitivity and scholarship together with his personal integrity (he was the only colleague in whom Lawrence confided about Frieda), made his friendship of considerable and continuing importance.

Two other Croydon teachers were significant for Lawrence: one fleetingly, the other much more profoundly. The first was a vivacious and attractive girl, Agnes Holt; for a short time he contemplated marriage with her. She had other plans and a mind of her own. Lawrence was introduced to the second, Helen Corke, by the senior mistress in his own school, Agnes Mason. Helen Corke was undoubtedly his most important woman friend in Croydon. She shared many of his interests – literature, German, art and music; she supervised and assisted in the copying of the final manuscript from which *The White Peacock* was set up in proof; her own private tragedy was transmuted by Lawrence into subject-matter for *The Trespasser*; and concurrent with these shared activities there developed an intense emotional attachment. Helen Corke was at times a focus for Lawrence's extremes of feeling – passionate physical desire or bitter irony verging on hatred. While writing *The Trespasser* Lawrence imaginatively 'became' Siegmund and in consequence suffered an agonising conflict between his impersonal, artistic self and his personal feelings; but it became clear that no permanent,

¹ Nehls, i. 150.

harmonious relationship was possible. 'Repulsed', 'Coldness in Love', 'Release' and 'Passing visit to Helen': such poems written at this time vividly convey Lawrence's passion and frustration, tension and pitiless scorn.

His teaching responsibilities, his colleagues like Agnes Mason and McLeod who at once took a personal interest in him, his deep affection for the children of his landlord and the vicarious intimacy with Eastwood sustained through Hill and Ellen Inwood: all such factors enabled Lawrence quickly to adjust to his new surroundings. So also did his fascination with London; he soon came to feel 'remarkably at home in London, remarkably cheerful and delighted'.¹ The beauty of the countryside close to the city surprised and excited him; it helped to compensate for the loss of that beloved rural scenery near Eastwood celebrated in *The White Peacock*. His letters frequently refer to a new range of cultural opportunities which dwarfed those available to him in Nottingham: concerts and theatres in Croydon and London; exhibitions at the Royal Academy or the Dulwich Art Gallery; or the architecture of the 'capital of commercialdom... magnificent temples built by the swelling intelligence of Men'.² Yet Lawrence's world remained book-centred: plays, concerts, lectures may have been momentarily enthralling but 'the true heart of the world is a book... The essence of things is stored in books.'³ 'I don't seem to need, at least I don't feel the need, of much food of new ideas, or of too new sensations. My books are enough.'⁴

In this respect one of the crucial events during Lawrence's stay in Croydon – coinciding almost exactly with his arrival there – was the appearance of the first issue of the *English Review* in December 1908. He obviously bought each number as it came out; he persuaded the Chambers family to do so;⁵ he hectored Blanche Jennings – 'Do you take the *Review* – if not, then you ought';⁶ and more courteously encouraged Louie Burrows to subscribe to this 'very fine and very "new"' journal. 'It is the best possible way to get into touch with the new young school of realism.'⁷ His own reading, both of the contents of the *Review* and also of what it reviewed and recommended, came at once under its influence. And in terms of his personal life, directly and indirectly the *English Review* was to have a more formative and ultimately transforming effect on Lawrence than any other experience before his meeting with Frieda Weekley.

The leading spirit in founding the *English Review* was Ford Madox Hueffer

¹ Letter 67.

² *Ibid.*

³ Letter 88.

⁴ Letter 95.

⁵ E.T. 156.

⁶ Letter 102.

⁷ Letter 127.

as he then was. The periodical, he announced in his first Editorial, was 'devoted to the arts, to letters and ideas'.¹ The first issue amply justified him (and sold about 2,000 copies). It opened with Hardy's 'Sunday Morning Tragedy'; then followed Henry James's 'The Jolly Corner', Joseph Conrad's 'Some Reminiscences', John Galsworthy's 'A Fisher of Men', W. H. Hudson's 'Stonehenge', Tolstoy's 'The Raid' and H. G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*, Volume 1. And socio-political 'ideas' were not neglected. The journal's political colouring is suggested by the explicit commendation given to Stephen Reynolds' *A Poor Man's House*, the inclusion of W. H. Davies's observations on 'How it Feels to be Out of Work', together with proposals for a contributory old age pension scheme devised by Arthur Marwood for 'John Doe, a member of the proletariat'.² (It becomes perhaps easier to understand why a miner's son from the Midlands, when he was a 'genius' – as Hueffer invariably described him – should be so warmly and immediately fêted by the *Review's* inner coterie.) Contributors to the second number included Anatole France (writing in French), R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Vernon Lee and Theodore Watts-Dunton (who printed and discussed a previously unpublished poem by D. G. Rossetti). This level of distinction among the contributors was sustained to such a degree that when, in June 1911, Hueffer's successor as editor, Austin Harrison, felt obliged to rebut the *Spectator's* charge that the *English Review* dumped 'garbage... on the nation's doorstep',³ he could adduce the signatures of over ninety writers of the first and 'top second' rank: all had written for the *Review*. In addition to those already named, the list included Shaw, Bridges, Yeats, Bennett, Gorky, Chekhov, De la Mare, Lowes Dickinson, Edward Thomas, and Ramsay MacDonald as well as Lawrence himself. No other English literary periodical of this century could assemble a comparable array of contributors.

Its concern with 'ideas', the general political and sociological issues of the day, must be underlined: the *Review* was not merely belletristic. Hueffer announced that there would be 'no party bias';⁴ in fact there was a bias and it was left-wing. Nor was it accidental that the affairs of Russia and eastern Europe were fairly prominent. For several years Hueffer had been acquainted with leading Russian revolutionaries such as Prince Kropotkin, Stepniak (Kravchinsky) and Volkhofsky; Hueffer's brother-in-law, David Soskice, had only recently escaped from Siberia. Indeed Soskice's attempts to save the *Review*, when Hueffer's funds could not sustain it beyond the first twelve issues, offer a valuable insight into the journal's readership both actual and hoped-for. Part of his endeavours were directed towards engaging the

¹ *English Review*, i (December 1908), 158.

² *Ibid.* i. 163, 168–75.

³ See Letter 276 and n. 8, p. 277.

⁴ *English Review*, i. 159.

support of Cambridge dons and an interesting correspondence developed with Edward Granville Browne, Professor of Arabic, who had himself written for the *Review*. This distinguished scholar believed it essential to keep the journal alive if only 'for the sake of having open for us a channel whereby to put forward sound views on Foreign Policy . . . it has become *vital*, I think, to encourage an independent *Review* like the *English Review*'.¹ Browne regarded the *Review* as a medium for 'advanced', intellectually searching as well as politically challenging opinions. His letters to Soskice make clear that the journal was keenly read by some academics but, having canvassed financial support for it among other Cambridge Fellows, Browne was confirmed in his first suspicions – that 'the "intellectuals" are generally not rich, while the rich are not intellectual'.² There was irony in the sequel. Hueffer decided that Soskice and his friends were 'revolutionary' extremists and he persuaded the wealthy industrialist and anti-socialist Sir Alfred Mond (later Lord Melchett) to buy the *Review*. He did – and at once replaced Hueffer as editor by Austin Harrison. Harrison was by no means an incompetent editor, but it proved impossible to sustain the *Review*'s high achievements. By February 1913 Lawrence could be sarcastic: 'the *English Review*, – a shilling monthly, supposed to be advanced and clever'; four months later, sadly, he thought it 'piffling'.³

However when, in June 1909, Jessie Chambers sent some of Lawrence's poems to Hueffer, she could not have acted more decisively. At a stroke, albeit unwittingly, she 'launched' him on his literary career. She introduced him to a discriminating editor, to a highly intelligent public and to the world of professional authorship.

'Hueffer is splendid', Lawrence assured Louie Burrows in November 1909.⁴ Not only did he publish in the *English Review* the first writing to appear under Lawrence's own name; he established a link between Lawrence and the *Review* which was to persist until 1923 (thirty-five issues included his works). Hueffer also acted as a constructive critic of *The White Peacock* (he was to be more destructive of *The Trespasser*), and gave Lawrence entry to the literary circles of the capital. 'I *do* so much', Lawrence had said in December 1908, 'want to know, now, the comrades who are shuffling the days in the same game with me':⁵ he was referring to the writings of his contemporaries; Hueffer made it possible for him to meet the writers themselves. In mid-November 1909 he was introduced by Hueffer to the

¹ Letter, Browne to Soskice, 9 July 1909 (Soskice MSS).

² Letter, Browne to Soskice, 2 June 1909 (Soskice MSS).

³ Letter 547; letter to Edward Garnett, 10 June 1913.

⁵ Letter 92.

⁴ Letter 132.

fashionable and formidable Violet Hunt; she was Hueffer's mistress but she was, besides, generally recognised as one of the leading women novelists of the time. On the same day, through Hueffer again, Lawrence met Ernest and Grace Rhys, and H. G. Wells; two days later, this time through Violet Hunt, he met Ezra Pound and the actress Ellaline Terriss, as well as Elsie Martindale (Hueffer's wife) and Mary Cholmondeley, both of them novelists and essayists. He was indebted to Rhys and Hueffer for a second meeting with Pound and also with Yeàts, Ernest Radford and Rachel Annand Taylor. Through Pound he became acquainted with the American singer Grace Crawford, and the Australian singer Florence Schmidt (married to the sculptor, Francis Derwent Wood); and through Rachel Annand Taylor he briefly encountered a brilliant young architect, Adrian Berrington. So was Lawrence's circle enlarged. Hueffer did more. He gave Lawrence a letter of introduction and commended his first novel to the leading publisher of the day, William Heinemann; he may also have introduced him or spoken of him to Heinemann's partner Sydney Pawling, whom Hueffer had known for years. Later he certainly invited Harley Granville-Barker, the well-known dramatist and critic, to read and comment on Lawrence's plays. It seems clear, too, that Lawrence had the freedom of the *English Review* office at 84 Holland Park Avenue, where literary manuscripts were 'stuffed into the splendid but shabby Spanish cabinet that had, [Hueffer] liked to say, once belonged to the Duke of Medina-Sidonia'.¹ At any rate, in November 1909 Lawrence incorporated into a letter to Grace Crawford a hitherto unpublished poem by Francis Thompson: Hueffer published it in the *Review* two months later.²

Whatever Hueffer's personal defects – and they were many – Lawrence's debt to him was inestimable. Lawrence acknowledged it: 'he is a really fine man, in that he is so generous, so understanding, and in that he keeps the doors of his soul open, and you may walk in'; he 'was the first man I ever met who had a real and a true feeling for literature'.³ By 1912 Lawrence was complaining to De la Mare – 'I suffered badly from Hueffer re Flaubert and perfection'⁴ – but, inscribing for Hueffer a copy of *Love Poems and Others* in 1913, he acknowledged his profound indebtedness: 'Remembering that he discovered me.'⁵

Perhaps Hueffer's most significant contribution to Lawrence's career and development as a professional writer was the introduction he provided to the

¹ Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (1971), p. 167.

² Letter 133, p. 145 and n. 5.

³ Letter 128; 'Preface to *Collected Poems*', *Phoenix*, p. 253.

⁴ Letter 461.

⁵ Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge* (1943), p. 63.

man he dubbed ‘London’s literary – if Nonconformist – Pope’,¹ Edward Garnett (son of Richard Garnett). Hueffer and Garnett had been acquainted since boyhood; it was through Garnett that Hueffer had met Conrad and the trio had taken the lead in the discussions which led to the founding of the *English Review*; and Garnett’s brother Robert was Hueffer’s (much used) legal adviser. It was virtually inevitable that Garnett and Lawrence would meet. And, as is plain with hindsight, it was quasi-symbolic that Lawrence’s first letter to him was written from Quorn, Louie Burrows’ home.² Here was the point of intersection between Lawrence’s old and new lives: the fading attraction of teaching – an orthodox and secure profession, associated in his mind with a traditional home and family life – opposed to the increasing fascination of the adventure and self-fulfilment possible to the full-time writer. Many years later Louie recalled how Lawrence became ‘avid for new experiences’ during the Croydon period.³ She was inescapably the loser.

Soon after letters were first exchanged with Garnett, in August 1911, Lawrence almost *sotto voce* began to warn Louie that he might leave the teaching profession. So much had already changed. He had broken his unofficial engagement with Jessie Chambers in November 1910. The loss of his mother on 9 December 1910 wrenched him apart, left him permanently scarred and snapped the strongest link with his birthplace. He continued to write to and be generous towards his Eastwood friends (and particularly his sister Ada), but he recognised that ‘the old clique is broken: it will never be restored’.⁴ ‘I *don’t* want to come to Eastwood’, he wrote to Ada in February 1911.⁵ The literary world had become all-absorbing. Martin Secker in June 1911 offered to publish a volume of his short stories; in August Austin Harrison was requesting contributions to the *English Review*; and Edward Garnett offered assistance in placing his stories, critical advice on his manuscripts and, as reader for Duckworth, influence with yet another publisher. Lawrence himself knew that he was writing quickly, prolifically and well. The end of the old life with its conventional aims was foreshadowed in a letter to Louie Burrows, 15 September 1911:

Should you be cross if I were to – and I don’t say I shall – try to get hold of enough literary work, journalism or what not, to keep me going without school. Of course, it’s a bit risky, but for myself I don’t mind risk – like it. . . I am really rather, – very – sick of teaching when I want to do something else.⁶

Within two weeks of his first meeting Garnett on 5 October 1911, Lawrence

¹ Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 107.

² Letter 302.

³ Private family letter, 26 February 1962.

⁴ Letter 168.

⁵ Letter 228.

⁶ Letter 309.