

THE LETTERS OF  
D. H. LAWRENCE

VOLUME V

*March 1924 – March 1927*

EDITED BY  
JAMES T. BOULTON

AND  
LINDETH VASEY



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
  
<http://www.cambridge.org>

Introductory material and editorial apparatus © Cambridge University Press 1989. Letters of D. H. Lawrence: copyright 1932 by the estate of D. H. Lawrence; copyright 1934 by Frieda Lawrence; copyright 1933, 1948, 1953, 1954, © 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1967, 1969 by Stefano Ravagli and R. G. Seaman, executors of the estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli; © the estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli 1989.

First published 1989  
First published in paperback 2001

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930.

The letters of D. H. Lawrence.

(The Cambridge edition of the letters and works of D. H. Lawrence)

Includes indexes.

Contents: v. 1. September 1901 – May 1913. v. 2 June 1913 – October 1916 /  
edited by George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton. – [etc.] –  
v. 5. March 1924 – March 1927 / edited by James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey

1. Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930 – Correspondence.

2. Authors, English – 20th century – Correspondence.

I. Boulton, James T. II. Zytaruk, George J. III. Robertson, Andrew, 1945- .

IV. Title. V. Series: Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930. Works. 1979.

PR6023.A93253 1979 823'.9'12 [B] 78-7531

*British Library Cataloguing in publication data*

Lawrence, D. H. (David Herbert), 1885-1930

The letters of D. H. Lawrence.

(The Cambridge edition of the letters and works of D. H. Lawrence)

Vol. 5: March 1924 – March 1927.

1. Fiction in English. Lawrence, D. H. – Correspondence, diaries, etc.

I. Title II. Boulton, James T. (James Thompson), 1924-

III. Vasey, Lindeth IV. Series

823'.912

ISBN 0 521 23114 0 hardback

ISBN 0 521 00606 1 paperback

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vi
Note on text	viii
Cue-titles	viii
Lawrence: a chronology, 1924–1927	xiii
Maps	xxviii
Introduction	i
LETTERS 3091–3980	15
Index	659

## INTRODUCTION

The volume opens with Lawrence's return to USA but the excited anticipation with which he had approached the New World eighteen months earlier had been dissipated. In March 1924 he returned principally for business reasons: to satisfy himself concerning the rumours he had heard about the precarious state of his publisher Thomas Seltzer's affairs; and to enable him to pay his American taxes. New York he now regarded as 'stiff, machine-made, and against nature' – but it was more stimulating than what he had left behind: 'a machine is perhaps less distressing than a dying animal: London'.<sup>1</sup> Europe had depressed him as is evident from three stories he had started just before leaving. 'Jimmy and the Desperate Woman', 'The Last Laugh' and 'The Border-Line' 'are the result of Europe, and perhaps a bit dismal'; they share a tone that is 'wintry' and bitter; and they reveal a fascination with calculated cruelty in human relationships.<sup>2</sup> Yet, before three months were out, Lawrence asked his English publisher Martin Secker to order two periodicals so that he could keep in touch with the popular literary scene in London; in Mexico, in November, he confessed to being 'a bit sick of the American continent' and sometimes 'a longing for Europe' came over him; and by June 1925 he was quite clear that, though America was rewarding for a short time, eventually it 'makes one feel leathery in one's soul'. 'It's time I was softened down a bit, with a little oil of Europe.'<sup>3</sup>

By 'Europe' we must understand the continent, principally Italy and, later, France, but excluding Britain. Lawrence's affection for the English countryside, especially that of the Midlands, remained strong (his detailed description of 'the country of my heart' in a letter to Rolf Gardiner, confirms that);<sup>4</sup> he felt nostalgia for the Lincolnshire coast where he had spent holidays as a boy with his mother; his attachment to his sisters continued firm; but he was determined never to live in England again. At the close of this volume he is found disenchanted with USA, too: 'America puts me off', he wrote in March 1927.<sup>5</sup> The American continent had become associated with illness and, particularly in the case of Mexico in February 1925, nearly dying; he would never visit it again. 'Whatever else I am, I'm European', he declared, 'my desire to go far has left me.'<sup>6</sup> This resolution persisted for the three years of life still left to him.

Lawrence's anxiety in 1924 concerning Thomas Seltzer was well founded. Early the previous year he had disregarded the warning from his then agent in

<sup>1</sup> Letters 3092, 3093.

<sup>2</sup> Letters 3098, 3099.

<sup>3</sup> Letters 3144, 3300, 3441.

<sup>4</sup> Letter 3904.

<sup>5</sup> Letter 3970.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

USA, Robert Mountsier, that Seltzer's publishing business was in jeopardy. Lawrence was grateful to Seltzer for having published *Women in Love* in 1920 – 'it has made us friends for life'<sup>7</sup> – and then defending it against the threat of suppression in the summer of 1922. Nor should it be forgotten that Seltzer published more first editions by Lawrence than any other American publisher has ever done. But eventually Lawrence had to admit that Mountsier had been right. He conceded in September 1924: 'We are having the struggle with Seltzer that you warned me about. You were right and I was wrong about him.'<sup>8</sup>

Mountsier himself had been dismissed as Lawrence's agent in February 1923; Lawrence then tried to act on his own behalf in USA. However he was glad to accept the advice of Albert Curtis Brown, his English agent, that Curtis Brown's New York office should negotiate with Seltzer and take over the responsibilities of agent in America. Soon after arriving in USA in March 1924 Lawrence established very friendly relations with the Yorkshireman, Arthur Barmby, who ran the New York office, and he was impressed when 'The Border-Line' was sold to *Smart Set* for \$175 in June. In 1925 Barmby persuaded Lawrence to allow Alfred A. Knopf to publish *St. Mawr*: this effectively terminated the link with Seltzer.

It was obviously advantageous for Lawrence to use the same reliable agency in London and in New York. As had been the case for several years, he was frequently sought after by magazine editors, book publishers, critics and journalists. To have Barmby handling his American literary affairs and that 'golden' 'magazine girl, Nancy Pearn' handling the non-American, from Curtis Brown's office in London, meant that Lawrence profited from a consistent publishing policy as well as from business efficiency. 'I find them really very good', he assured Catherine Carswell.<sup>9</sup>

Nancy Pearn, for example, encouraged Lawrence (despite Secker's opposition)<sup>10</sup> to accept Ernest Benn's invitation to contribute to the firm's sixpenny series of paperback books of prose and verse. *Glad Ghosts* was included in the series devoted to short stories and later Lawrence readily agreed to publish a selection of poems in Benn's 'Augustan' series. When that appeared, in 1928, Humbert Wolfe wrote in his editorial preface: 'Readers require no introduction to Mr Lawrence, who has established himself as an integral part of modern literature.' This view – reinforced by the commercial interests of publishers and agents – had become generally accepted and Lawrence, acknowledged as a leading man of letters, was the focus of much public and critical attention. Herbert J. Seligmann published the first

<sup>7</sup> *Letters*, iii. 635.

<sup>8</sup> Letter 3239.

<sup>9</sup> Letter 3719.

<sup>10</sup> Letter 3827.

American book on him in February 1924; a Swedish professor of English requested his co-operation towards the writing of a students' handbook of modern English literature in which Lawrence was intended to appear; the Italian critic Carlo Linati asked for his help with the preparation of a critical article on Lawrence's works, as did the Florentine littérateur Aldo Sorani whose 'critique' was published several years later.<sup>11</sup> Lawrence became the subject of a scholarly bibliography to which he contributed a prefatory essay.<sup>12</sup> He was fêted by P.E.N. in Mexico City and Frieda was 'thrilled' to see a caricature of her husband in a market bookshop in Oaxaca.<sup>13</sup> He was mentioned prominently in a pseudo-Joycean novel by an American author; he was invited by the young John Hayward to address the Cambridge 'Heretics'; and his photograph served as an illustration to articles on Capri in the *Tatler* and *Eve*, both in March 1926.<sup>14</sup> His friend 'Spud' Johnson devoted an entire issue of *Laughing Horse* to items by and about Lawrence; among several amusing advertisements Lawrence is listed (together with Kit Carson) among the 'Celebrities [who] have had their Ice-Cream Sodas and Coca-Cola' at La Botica de Capital in Santa Fe. Or, again, along with Belloc, Chesterton, Maugham, Shaw and others, Lawrence contributed at Compton Mackenzie's invitation to a 'Symposium' of 'distinguished men and women' who were willing to name their musical favourites for publication in the *Gramophone*.<sup>15</sup> Lawrence had come a long way since his schoolmaster days in Croydon: the nostalgic letter of 10 February 1927, the last (known) to his friend and teaching colleague at Davidson Road School, Arthur McLeod, brings this into sharp focus.<sup>16</sup>

It had been Lawrence's reputation as a writer which prompted Mabel Dodge (Luhan) to invite him to Taos in September 1922; now, in March 1924, he returned there. From New York Lawrence and Frieda were accompanied by the Honourable Dorothy Brett, daughter of Lord Esher; she was the first recruit to the ideal community 'Rananim',<sup>17</sup> which Lawrence hoped to establish in New Mexico. As could have been predicted, she and Mabel vied strenuously for the position of his chief disciple; Frieda herself was resolved that neither of them should occupy the position they both coveted. Brett's claim to it was strong since she alone among Lawrence's English friends had responded positively to his call for volunteers to found Rananim. She

<sup>11</sup> Letters 3113 and n. 1; 3186 and n. 3; 3731 and n. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Edward McDonald, *A Bibliography of the Writings of D. H. Lawrence* (Philadelphia, 1925). It was prefaced by DHL's essay, 'The Bad Side of Books'.

<sup>13</sup> Letter 3281 and n. 4; Frieda Lawrence 164.

<sup>14</sup> Letters 3569 and p. 359 n. 2; 3604 and nn. 1, 2; 3667 and n. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Letter 3879 and nn. 1, 2. <sup>16</sup> Letter 3958.

<sup>17</sup> See *Letters*, ii. 252 and n. 3, 259.

abandoned nearly all and followed him. Lawrence's explanation to Mabel Luhan was that 'he had brought Brett along to be a kind of buffer between him and Frieda. "It's a little *too* hard, alone with her".' Mabel regarded Brett, with Toby her ear-trumpet, as 'a spy upon any influence near Lorenzo . . . She was more present and pervasive than the air around him . . . She paid all her attention to him, just as I did'.<sup>18</sup> For her part Frieda recalled:

Lawrence said to me: 'You know, it will be good for us to have the Brett with us, she will stand between us and people and the world.' I did not really want her with us, and had a suspicion that she might not want to stand between us and the world, but between him and me.<sup>19</sup>

Brett's adoration of Lawrence and relative indifference to everyone else – both plain subsequently in her memoir, *Lawrence and Brett* – infuriated the other two women.

Brett was useful to the Lawrences; Frieda readily acknowledged that 'she did her share of the work'.<sup>20</sup> She helped to clean out and make habitable three filthy and primitive buildings on the ranch (which Mabel Luhan had given Frieda who later gave her in return the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*); she assisted with cleaning the spring and making furnishings. Moreover Brett could type and thus be of direct value to Lawrence. She typed 'St. Mawr', the early chapters of the second version of *The Plumed Serpent*, short essays, 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and 'The Princess'. She designed several dust-jackets for Lawrence's books<sup>21</sup> and shared his keen interest in painting. These were, of course, activities which gave her precedence, thereby increasing Frieda's resentment. Frieda regretted the loss of privacy and was irritated by Brett's hero-worship of Lawrence balanced, as Frieda sensed it was, 'by a preconceived critical attitude towards me. He was always perfect and I always wrong, in her eyes.'<sup>22</sup>

Lawrence's arrival in Taos was soon followed by tension and then the break with Mabel Luhan. The atmosphere which precipitated it can be illustrated from her account and Brett's of the same disastrous visit from the ranch to Taos on 18–23 June 1924; the two versions of the occasion when Lawrence consented to dance also demonstrate the hazards of relying on tendentious reporting. According to Mabel, her protégé Clarence Thompson was dancing with Frieda; she herself was Lawrence's partner; and Brett, drunk, was dancing alone. Brett in her memoir, admits she was drunk but claims that she was Lawrence's partner: 'I feel you *warm*; I can feel the stream of quick life in

<sup>18</sup> Luhan 166–7.

<sup>19</sup> Frieda Lawrence 168.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Two were used: for the Seltzer edn of *The Boy in the Bush* (1924) and the Knopf edn of *The Plumed Serpent* (1926).

<sup>22</sup> Frieda Lawrence 167–8.

you; it is like dancing with a faun'.<sup>23</sup> Both memorialists agree that Lawrence and his partner deliberately and roughly collided with the other dancers. Whatever the truth about this bizarre occasion, the next day Thompson denounced Lawrence as a 'devil' and warned Mabel Luhan: 'He *wants* you *dead* . . . to *know* that you are in the ground.'<sup>24</sup> Less than a fortnight later, Tony Luhan, her Indian husband, reclaimed the horses he had lent to the visitors; this in turn aroused Lawrence's anger as is shown in three letters all written on one day.<sup>25</sup> The friendships were patched up sufficiently for the Lawrences and Luhans to go together in August to the Hopi snake dance in Arizona, but no friendship can survive such strains unimpaired. 'We'll remain friendly at a distance', Lawrence told Mabel Luhan, and he kept his word.<sup>26</sup> In Italy in 1926-7, for example, he advised her about the writing of her memoirs; he also devoted much time and energy to sorting her books in the Villa Curonia (owned by Mabel's second husband, Edwin Dodge) and offering advice on what to do with them.

Frieda's irritation over Brett's stifling intimacy with Lawrence erupted into open hostility when the trio moved to Oaxaca, Mexico, for the winter 1924-5. Her feelings were made plain, as Brett herself recalled: 'Frieda is in a rage. . . She is attacking me . . . says I spoil all her fun, that I laugh at her and so on.'<sup>27</sup> Lawrence followed this, on 9 January 1925, with a letter which was unambiguous:

You, Frieda and I don't make a happy combination now. The best is that we should prepare to separate: that you should go your own way. I am not angry: except that I hate 'situations', and feel humiliated by them. We can all remain decent and friendly, and go the simplest, quietest way about the parting, without stirring up a lot of emotions that only do harm. Stirred-up emotions lead to hate.<sup>28</sup>

He made clear his wish that Brett should leave Oaxaca and return on her own to the ranch in New Mexico. When the Lawrences themselves arrived back at the ranch in April 1925, Frieda insisted that Brett should distance herself from them but, despite even that, the disciple clung closely to the master and he felt obliged to write:

You are, you know, a born separator. Even without knowing that you do it, you set people against one another. It is instinctive with you. If you are friendly with one, you make that one unfriendly to the others: no matter who it is. It's just a natural process with you. – But it usually turns everybody into an enemy, at last. – It's no use your talking about friendship . . . Among three people, always two against one.

It's no good our trying to get on together – it won't happen. Myself, I have lost all desire for intense or intimate friendship. Acquaintance is enough.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Luhan 224-7; Brett 109.

<sup>24</sup> Luhan 238, 240. See also p. 60 n. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Letters 3156-8.

<sup>26</sup> Letter 3163.

<sup>27</sup> Brett 200.

<sup>28</sup> Letter 3330.

<sup>29</sup> Letter 3391.



This did indeed force a break. Yet Lawrence's anxiety about Brett on her solitary way via New York to Europe in October 1925 is evident from his letters to her. Frieda was reported to be implacably resolved never to speak to Brett again.<sup>30</sup> However, when the Lawrences were in Spotorno, Brett, in Capri, was typing 'Glad Ghosts'; when Lawrence angrily left Frieda in Spotorno in February 1926, it was to Capri that he eventually went, warning Brett by telegram that he was coming. Many years later she claimed that during his stay on Capri Lawrence attempted unsuccessfully to make love to her.<sup>31</sup> In April, when Brett's plan to return to New Mexico was known, Frieda made peace – though not without a touch of malice: 'dont think that we hate each other, only I am so impatient of any will that's put over me – You have given us much support also – But do get somebody to live with you at the ranch – You'll go queer alone'.<sup>32</sup> Brett and Lawrence were never to meet again. Lawrence's second attempt to establish Rananim had ended and his one convert went back to USA alone to live out her long life in Taos.

In March 1924 there had been a third reason for Lawrence's return to America: to rewrite his novel, 'Quetzalcoatl' (published as *The Plumed Serpent*). However, as early as 4 April he knew that he would not get to Mexico until late autumn 'which means I shall not finish "Quetzacoatl" . . . this year'.<sup>33</sup> In the meantime he corrected proofs of *The Boy in the Bush* (rewritten from Mollie Skinner's novel), arranged for the publication of Maurice Magnus's *Memoirs of the Foreign Legion* (with Lawrence's own introduction) and wrote the three novelettes which have New Mexico settings: 'St. Mawr', 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and 'The Princess'. (Mabel Luhan claimed to recognise herself as the heroine who rode away; Brett was certainly the model for 'The Princess'.)<sup>34</sup> Lawrence had revised the novelettes and written two versions of the essay on the Hopi snake dance, together with several other short pieces, by the time he set out for Mexico in October 1924.

The day after the Lawrences moved into rented accommodation in Oaxaca, on 18 November, he began work on 'Quetzalcoatl'.<sup>35</sup> Into the first draft, which he had put aside in the summer of 1923, he incorporated details of his trip to western Mexico in September–November 1923 and of his present stay in Oaxaca. He wrote a number of other things, including four essays later included in *Mornings in Mexico* – but his main preoccupation until late January 1925 was the completion of the novel. It is the most compelling of what are referred to as Lawrence's 'leadership' novels; characteristically he

<sup>30</sup> Letter 3615.

<sup>31</sup> Brett 11–111: in the Sunstone Press, Santa Fe reprint, 1974.

<sup>32</sup> P. 425 n. 1. <sup>33</sup> Letter 3099.

<sup>34</sup> Luhan 237–8; see p. 136 n. 1. <sup>35</sup> See p. 179 n. 2.

considered it his ‘most important novel, so far’.<sup>36</sup> He had studied Aztec and earlier religions intensively and the work was specifically intended to provide a blueprint of a quasi-religious and political system to govern the country, a vision of how the world itself should develop. Its completion coincided with Lawrence’s becoming very seriously ill. No wonder, then, that he told Amy Lowell in April: ‘I daren’t even look at the outside of the MS. It cost one so much.’<sup>37</sup>

In the period covered by this volume Lawrence’s health became a matter of prime concern to him and others close to him. He refused to admit the seriousness of his illnesses but it was evident to Frieda and Brett. Brett remembered that, in August 1924 –

You suddenly spit. You constantly spit, so there is nothing new in that: but this time a splash of bright red blood comes with it, which is new. You cast a look of consternation at Frieda: she looks flabbergasted – while I pretend not to see at all. You already have a bit of a cold, and during the morning this gets worse. After lunch, looking white and ill, you go to bed . . .

The following day you are still in bed, and in the afternoon you spit blood again.<sup>38</sup>

He was irritated when Frieda called in a local doctor to examine him. Despite the signs, Frieda insisted – and Lawrence told his correspondents – that he was suffering only from a bronchial infection and sore throat.<sup>39</sup> But, after more colds and the traumatic break with Brett, Lawrence became so ill about 2 February 1925 that his life was feared for. The causes were probably various: possibly a recurrence of the malaria he contracted in Ceylon in 1922, combined with typhoid fever which was endemic in Oaxaca, and now tuberculosis, with the additional worry over Brett and exhaustion from completing *The Plumed Serpent*. Frieda also recalled an earthquake: it was not severe enough to merit a mention in the local newspaper but it was an added strain to her and Lawrence.<sup>40</sup> According to Frieda he thought he would die: ‘that night he said to me: “But if I die, nothing has mattered but you, nothing at all.”’<sup>41</sup>

After much nursing by new but devoted friends in Oaxaca, Lawrence was moved by train to Mexico City. There Frieda had influenza, he suffered another relapse or even two, and when she called in Dr Sidney Ulfelder, perhaps at the instigation of the poet Luis Quintanilla, tuberculosis was confirmed. Frieda claimed that the doctor told her his diagnosis in front of Lawrence – ‘and Lawrence looked at me with such unforgettable eyes’ –

<sup>36</sup> Letter 3439.

<sup>37</sup> Letter 3385.

<sup>38</sup> Brett 139.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 141; Letters 3184, 3185, 3193, 3234, 3256.

<sup>40</sup> Parmenter 318; Letter 3352 and pp. 210–11 nn. 3, 1; p. 209 n. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Frieda Lawrence 165.

whereas Quintanilla's account insists that Lawrence was not told. Frieda further remembered the doctor's prediction that Lawrence had only a year or two to live. 'After the great strain of his illness', Frieda wrote, 'something broke in me. "He will never be quite well again, he is ill, he is doomed. All my love, all my strength will never make him whole again."' <sup>42</sup> Lawrence had hoped to return to England but, as he told his sister Emily on 11 March: 'Another blow. After various examinations and blood tests, the doctor won't let me take a sea voyage nor go to England. He says I must stay in Mexico in the sun, or return to the ranch. So we shall go back to the ranch as soon as I can travel: am still in bed here.' <sup>43</sup>

Despite his precarious hold on life Lawrence's writing suffered only a brief hiatus in February – and even then he dictated the opening of 'The Flying-Fish' to Frieda. (Later he admitted that he could not bear to finish it because it had been written so close to death.) <sup>44</sup> In March he corrected proofs of Secker's *St. Mawr*; he then began two plays based on biblical stories, apparently at the suggestion of the actress Ida Rauh, a friend of Mabel Luhan. He started with *Noah's Flood* but quickly abandoned it in favour of *David*; he had Ida Rauh in mind for the part of David's wife, Michal, but when she read the play in June 1925 she thought herself quite unsuited for it. <sup>45</sup> Lawrence tried to interest members of the Theatre Guild in a production of *David* when he and Frieda were in New York en route for England in September 1925, but without success. The play was published in England and America in the early months of 1926, and had a London production in May 1927 (with Angela Baddeley as Michal).

At Kiowa Ranch, where they returned in early April 1925, Lawrence made a slow recovery and Frieda endeavoured to shield him from Brett and others as much as possible. 'I potter about and lie on a camp bed on the porch', he told Emily King on 21 April; 'I don't work yet'. <sup>46</sup> An Indian couple, Trinidad and Rufina Archuleta, were responsible for domestic chores, but by the end of May Lawrence was well enough to assist with projects on the ranch such as laying pipes for a waterway or building a corral, and daily jobs like milking Susan the cow. Nevertheless he was disinclined to see people and did not leave Kiowa even to go to Taos by car. Friedel Jaffe, Frieda's nephew, who was an exchange student from Germany and visited the ranch May–July, still recalls Lawrence's reluctance to have visitors that summer.

Kiowa was a source of great pleasure for Lawrence: he often told correspondents about the practical responsibilities it entailed and the animals he had acquired; and the restfulness of his surroundings, first noted when he re-

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 166–7; Nehls, ii. 396.

<sup>43</sup> Letter 3368.

<sup>44</sup> Brewster 288.

<sup>45</sup> Brett 60, 220; Letters 3300, 3362.

<sup>46</sup> Letter 3401.

turned to the ranch in 1924, was a perpetual delight. 'We are awfully glad to be back at the foot of the Rockies, on the desert', he assured William Siebenhaar in Australia, 'to smell the sage-brush, and hear the Indians' drums, and ride a pony once more.'<sup>47</sup> The Lawrences were experiencing for the first time some of the pleasures of working and living in a place which they (strictly speaking, Frieda) owned.

However, by mid-1925 Lawrence had, as so often in the past, become restive. His disappointment over Seltzer, the strained personal relationships with Mabel Luhan and Brett, his near-fatal illness, coupled with a growing distaste for 'this rather malevolent continent' and the conviction that 'One needs a *rest* after America': all such factors cumulatively generated 'a bit of a heimweh for Europe'.<sup>48</sup> Moreover he was perhaps aware that since his arrival in New York eighteen months earlier, though he had written some important pieces, none of them is in the first rank of his achievements. It was not surprising, therefore, that he was 'glad to be going out of America for a time: I feel like Europe.'<sup>49</sup> He wrote thus at the end of September 1925, on *S. S. Resolute*, just two days from Southampton.

London had depressed him before he left it in March 1924; his reaction to it on his return was even more scathing: 'it's much worse than when I was here last time, almost gruesome'. He caught up with some old friends, visited the Carswells 'buried alive in a hole of a horrid little cottage in damp and dismal Bucks', entertained Compton and Faith Mackenzie, discovered that Mark Gertler was in the Mundesley sanatorium, failed to find Koteliansky and concluded: 'There's no *life* in anybody.'<sup>50</sup> His principal visits were made outside the capital – to his sisters, Emily King in Nottingham and Ada Clarke in Ripley, spending a week with each. This marked concern for them was normal: he invariably interested himself in their financial state and business affairs, their general welfare or their children's health and education, and regularly remembered their birthdays; and since his father's death a year before, they were the closest members of his immediate family. Many old friends were also still in the Eastwood area; one for whom he felt a special anxiety was Gertrude Cooper whose tubercular condition gave them a shared misfortune and drew from Lawrence some particularly sympathetic letters. He was extremely affectionate, too, towards Frieda's mother and after a second week in London, following the fortnight in the Midlands, the Lawrences headed for Baden-Baden to see her. He could be humorous about the 'departed grandeur' surrounding the Baroness Anna von Richthofen and the whist he played with her ancient friends,<sup>51</sup> but his tender concern for her was

<sup>47</sup> Letter 3112.

<sup>48</sup> Letters 3296, 3318, 3438.

<sup>49</sup> Letter 3489.

<sup>50</sup> Letter 3501.

<sup>51</sup> Letter 3529.

manifest. It provided the impetus for some of Lawrence's most engaging letters.

Family relationships were, then, important to both Lawrence and Frieda; they could, however, be the cause of considerable tension between them. A vivid illustration of this occurred with the simultaneous arrival of Ada Clarke and a friend on the one hand, and Frieda's daughters on the other, in February 1926, half-way through the Lawrences' stay in the Villa Bernarda rented from Angelo Ravagli in Spotorno. Lawrence had issued a threat, if the young Weekleys came: 'When they appear, I shall disappear.' 'I can't stand Frieda's children', he told Brett. 'They have a sort of suburban bounce and *suffisance* which puts me off.'<sup>52</sup> The knowledge that their father, Ernest Weekley, preferred them not to stay with the Lawrences was additionally galling. For her part Frieda believed that Lawrence had invited his sister in order to provide a counterbalance to her daughters: 'Ada felt he belonged to her and the past', Frieda wrote; 'I had, of equal necessity, to fight that past'.<sup>53</sup> The result was an explosion of anger and hostility between Lawrence and Frieda. She joined Barbara and Elsa Weekley in their hotel; he, 'absolutely swamped out', left for Monte Carlo and Nice with Ada and her friend; then for the whole of March he made a 'little "giro" round Capri and Ravello and Rome and Umbria and Ravenna' with a variety of friends, mainly female.<sup>54</sup> Reconciliation was gradually achieved, Frieda taking the intelligent view that 'we must live more with other people . . . and not cut ourselves off'.<sup>55</sup> When he returned to Spotorno on 3 April Lawrence found 'all very quiet and welcoming'; 'for the moment I am the Easter Lamb', he told Frieda's mother.<sup>56</sup> With Ada gone he discovered that he enjoyed the company of the Weekley daughters; he and Frieda had a brief holiday with them in Pisa and Florence. The explosion was over.

At Spotorno from November 1925 till he temporarily 'left off writing' in early February 1926,<sup>57</sup> Lawrence was as productive as usual. Several reviews and essays were written for America and England; 'Sun' and 'Glad Ghosts' were written and then typed by Brett; 'The Virgin and the Gypsy' was completed and sent to Secker in London for typing; and *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays* (largely written at Kiowa in mid-1925) was published in Philadelphia. The publication of 'Sun', first in *New Coterie*, Autumn 1926, and then separately by 'E. Archer' in September, marked the

<sup>52</sup> Letter 3535.

<sup>53</sup> Letter 3563; Frieda Lawrence 194.

<sup>54</sup> Letters 3622, 3667.

<sup>55</sup> Letter 3646.

<sup>56</sup> Letters 3659, 3661. (Ada Clarke was told, on 20 April 1927: 'I have made a permanent agreement with Frieda that . . . This mix-up of relations is no good - we'll keep them apart. And that's final.')

<sup>57</sup> Letter 3614.

beginning of Lawrence's association with Charles Lahr; he was the publisher responsible for both and, in 1929, for the unexpurgated edition of *Pansies*. Lahr, an anarchist, was one of the most vivid and eccentric publisher–booksellers of this century, with whom Lawrence had an extensive correspondence until a fortnight before his death. Lawrence was immediately attracted by the tone of *New Coterie*, a journal which, even in its brief life, included among its contributors Augustus John, Stanley Spencer and William Rothenstein.

'We are getting to the age when we shall really have to think of establishing ourselves some little spot on the face of the earth.'<sup>58</sup> This uncharacteristic remark was written in July 1926 at the Villa Mirinda in the tiny, remote hamlet of San Paolo Mosciano outside Scandicci, itself on the edge of Florence. Mirinda did not become a permanent residence for the Lawrences, but its upper floor provided them with a home until June 1928 and that, in Lawrentian terms, was as near permanence as any spot on earth. Lawrence took great pleasure in the Mirinda, living in it and describing it and his neighbours to his correspondents – as on one occasion to his niece Margaret King:

there are two gardens, and lovely slopes of vines and olives, and three families of peasants to work the place – It is quite lovely in its way. – We have one family of English neighbours, who would sent you into fits if you saw them: he's got the wildest red beard, sticking out all round – and wife and daughter and son, all with sandals and knapsacks. But they're jolly and very clever . . .<sup>59</sup>

Near Christmas 1926 Frieda told Mabel Luhan: 'We are very cosy and quite "elegant" for us, rushmatting all over the floor in a big, good room with bright, light things in it, and a piano and cyclamens, Lawrence painting on an easel – a Boccaccio picture *not at all* proper.'<sup>60</sup> They had a good-humoured, tolerant relationship with the eccentric Wilkinsons and Lawrence wrote them many high-spirited letters; the Lawrences enjoyed entertaining their peasant neighbours on Christmas Eve, 'with the children washed beyond recognition',<sup>61</sup> and, despite some disclaimers, Lawrence's social life was as energetic and varied as he wished it to be. He used the well-known Vieusseux circulating library in Florence, frequently lunched with the bookseller–publisher 'Pino' Orioli and the English expatriate novelist 'Reggie' Turner, and dined regularly with Norman Douglas 'and the boys', probably at the Gambrinus bar.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Letter 3743.

<sup>59</sup> Letter 3705. The English family consisted of Arthur Gair Wilkinson, his wife Lilian and their two children.

<sup>60</sup> Letter 3909.

<sup>61</sup> Letter 3932.

<sup>62</sup> Letters 3700, 3919, 3924, 3855 and see p. 445 n. 1.

He and Frieda lunched with Sir George and Lady Ida ‘parents of the writing Sitwell trio’ at their Castello di Montegufoni about fourteen miles away; they gave tea at the Mirenda to the wealthy writer, composer and painter Lord Berners.<sup>63</sup> They went to the popular theatre in Florence with friends; they took tea with the writer Helen Zimmern in the Via dei Bardi; and on one occasion Lawrence lunched with Giorgio Chiavacci whom he described (slightly inaccurately) as ‘the world’s champion fencer’.<sup>64</sup> In the light of this evidence, Frieda’s comment to Mabel Luhan – ‘I think in Florence we’re a myth. We hardly see anybody’ – was somewhat exaggerated.<sup>65</sup>

In February 1927 Lawrence quite excitedly informed some of his correspondents that ‘the two Misses Beveridge and Mabel Harrison’ were about to move into ‘a little villa across the dip’ from San Paolo Mosciano. He had known them for several years so there was a general pleasure to be expected from their company but, more significant, Millicent Beveridge and Mabel Harrison were painters (the former painted Lawrence’s portrait in Sicily in 1921). ‘There’ll be great competitions painting!’ he told his sister Emily.<sup>66</sup> This was of particular importance to Lawrence. Since November 1926 he had become more than ever absorbed by his love of painting, ‘a much more amusing art than writing’.<sup>67</sup> He loved ‘discovering one can paint one’s own ideas and one’s own feelings’; he found Tuscany ‘*beautiful painting country*’; and he had the good fortune to be given by Maria Huxley several canvases ‘that her brother had daubed on’ but that could be re-used.<sup>68</sup> He found himself ‘bursting into paint’.<sup>69</sup> The result was that, in three months, Lawrence completed *A Holy Family*, *Men Bathing*, *Boccaccio Story*, *Fight with an Amazon*, *Red Willow Trees*, *Negro Wedding* and *Flight Back into Paradise*.

Lawrence had stayed with Millicent Beveridge in Inverness during a visit to Britain in the previous August and September (which in turn followed the visit he and Frieda paid to Baden-Baden for his mother-in-law’s seventy-fifth birthday). The northern dampness made him shrink ‘a trifle inside [his] skin’, he told Brett;<sup>70</sup> nevertheless on ‘one perfect day’ the Scottish landscape was quite enthralling:

There is still something of an Odyssey up there, in among the islands and the silent lochs: like the twilight morning of the world, the herons fishing undisturbed by the water, and the sea running far in, for miles, between the wet, trickling hills, where the cottages are low and almost invisible, built into the earth. It is still out of the world, and like the very beginning of Europe. . .<sup>71</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Letters 3732, 3749.

<sup>65</sup> Letter 3909.

<sup>68</sup> Letters 3897, 3934.

<sup>70</sup> Letter 3785.

<sup>64</sup> Letters 3921, 3924, 3741.

<sup>66</sup> Letter 3963.

<sup>67</sup> Letter 3938.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Making Pictures’, *Phoenix II* 602.

<sup>71</sup> Letter 3791.

The opportunity to 'get outside the made world, if only for a day' refreshed him, but that world insistently impinged upon him. Leaving Scotland he, with Frieda, took a fortnight's holiday on the Lincolnshire coast and then, alone, in mid-September he briefly called on his sisters in Nottingham and Ripley. This was the occasion when he made what proved to be his final visit to Eastwood. There in the Nottinghamshire–Derbyshire coalfield, Lawrence was confronted by the disastrous political and social, as well as economic, consequences of the prevailing miners' strike; he was profoundly disturbed by what he saw and intuitively grasped. 'I'm afraid it's a wound in the famous English unity, our dear Body Politic, this strike . . . I wish they'd come to a settlement. I am afraid of the class hatred which is the quiet volcano over which the English life is built.'<sup>72</sup> For the first time in his experience the miners seemed 'class-conscious, and full of resentment'; 'this will be the beginnings of a slow revolution . . . but a serious one', he told Arthur Wilkinson; and in October, back in Italy, from the perspective of the Villa Mirinda the strike appeared 'one of the greatest disasters that has ever happened to England'.<sup>73</sup>

On 26 October 1926, two days before that last letter was written, a dog belonging to one of the peasant families near the Mirinda had smudged page 41 of the manuscript on which Lawrence was working. He was writing 'a story – shortish – don't feel like a long effort'.<sup>74</sup> By mid-November he was describing it to Martin Secker as 'a novel in the Derbyshire coal-mining districts – already rather improper'; on 8 February 1927 Secker was told: 'It won't take me very long, I think, to finish the novel . . . I want to call it *Lady Chatterley's Lover*'.<sup>75</sup> Into that novel, the second version of which was completed by 27 February, went much of the apprehension Lawrence had felt on his recent visit to the Midlands. It is more than mere coincidence that Connie Chatterley raises the question of whether there will be 'a coal strike', or that Parkin's response to the oppressive industrial system is to become a Communist, or that Duncan Forbes – exactly like Lawrence himself in September 1926 – gets 'an awful feeling of hopelessness, of death, in [Connie's] part of the country'.<sup>76</sup> In September, too, on a walk with his old Eastwood friend Willie Hopkin, Lawrence had recognised the spot where 'a forest ranger's cottage' had stood; he also visited Robin Hood's Well.<sup>77</sup> The novel in which he made use of those and other experiences in 'the country of [his] heart', and turned to creative effect his perception of 'resentment' and

<sup>72</sup> Letter 3796.                      <sup>73</sup> Letters 3824, 3826, 3874.

<sup>74</sup> Tedlock, *Lawrence MSS* 20; Letter 3872.

<sup>75</sup> Letters 3890, 3956.

<sup>76</sup> *The First Lady Chatterley* (New York, 1944), pp. 119, 299, 306 (Parkin in the first two versions of the novel becomes Mellors in the third.)

<sup>77</sup> W. E. Hopkin, 'D. H. Lawrence's Last Visit Home', *Nottingham Journal*, 11 September 1942.



class-consciousness among the mining population, would occupy his attention beyond the period covered by the present volume. The need for a 'flow of life from one to another' which Duncan Forbes recognises was later to be central in Lawrence's own 'message' to the miners in December 1928: 'We want a revolution not in the name of money or work or any of that, but of life.'<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 306; Letter to Charles Wilson, 28 December 1928.