

26.

QUITE BLOOMING



Sweet chestnut tree (Castanea sativa)

The title for this chapter comes from Aesi's description of herself in the 1862 letter she wrote to Caroline from Rome, as she was preparing the Marriage of Cana for the London International Exhibition. As I recount in *Wild Love's* Epilogue, the two letters from Caroline Clark were among those recovered from a shed associated with the Redman Family, then donated to the Australian Society of Genealogists in Sydney. Thanks to that serendipitous event and the surviving letter from Aesi to Caroline which is in the State Library of NSW's Mitchell collection, we have a glimpse into the friendship between these two colonial women who were both living abroad in the mid-nineteenth century. We shall return to the content of these letters, but firstly turn to the Wentworths, another colonial family of native-born children, who were also living abroad and touring the continent with a base in London and a country estate, outside of Bristol. Although I have imagined the arrival of Sarah and her 'two pretty chicks', Laura and Eliza, as well as the activities they conducted

with the Ironsides, we know the Wentworth women visited Rome in 1860 while their father was sitting for Tenarani, as Aesi produced several portraits of both women. I have shaped the characters of Laura, and ‘Didy’, as Eliza was affectionately known, from her portraits of them which feature in *Wild Love*, as well as Carol Liston’s biography on Sarah Wentworth, *Mistress of Vacluse* (1988).

During my research, I became fascinated with the history of paint colours and of these Mummy Brown, is perhaps the most grotesque and bizarre for, as its name suggests, it is a pigment made from the flesh of Egyptian mummies or Guanche mummies of the Canary Islands, which comprises both human and feline corpses. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these mummies were believed to be medicinal and used to treat toothaches and dysentery among other complaints. By the early eighteenth-century, however, this colour was being sold in Paris artist supply stores, as ‘a la momie’, and at the end of the same century the British artist, Benjamin West, then president of the Royal Academy, proclaimed it to be the finest brown for glazing, although he also directed ‘the most fleshy are the best parts’. By 1849 the pigment was so popular that supply often exceeded demand and mummy flesh was occasionally substituted with contemporary corpses of enslaved people and criminals. I do not know if Aesi used this pigment in *The Pilgrim of Art*, but the descriptions of the modest brown robes of the pilgrim with bowed head suggest this is possible. Referencing this particular colour allowed me to signal, to those aware of it, one of the more ghoulish elements of the artistic industry from this period, and thus juxtapose Aesi’s ‘elevated’ aspirations with actual practices in ways that implicate her in that horrific trade.

Having consulted travel accounts, diaries, guidebooks, contemporary and current biographies as well as numerous scholarly studies associated with nineteenth-century artists, including those in Rome, there is no doubt that a wealthy patron could change an artists’ social standing and stimulate both admiration and envy. I was determined to portray at least

a glimpse of the complexities of class during this period by revealing a little more of the lives of local Italians, whose conditions were often impoverished and stood in stark contrast to the expatriate community. During my time in Italy I sought out such stories and lives, and was thus able to construct fictional characters such as Grazia, the name of Gibson's actual model, Rosa, the Ironsides' sullen servant and Violeta, Aesi's fictional model who lived in the Jewish Quarter, from sources such as Murray's Guides, traveller accounts and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Marble Faun* and images of nineteenth-century Rome, such as those on display in the Museum of Rome and in the archives of the American Academy of Rome.



My photographs from the Museo di Roma exhibition of nineteenth-century Rome. Left: an 'Art Board with model in 16 poses' from 1880s and on the right are images of Romans in 'local costume' posing in a studio from 1860s.



Charles Eastlake, *Held for Ransom*, n.d. One of Eastlake's early banditti paintings lead to him being engaged at a handsome income to paint only for the firm of Hurst, Robinson and Co.

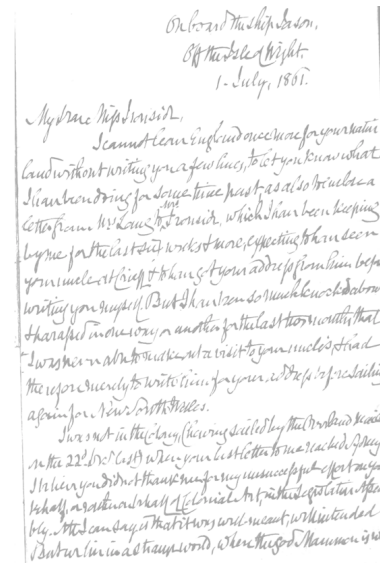
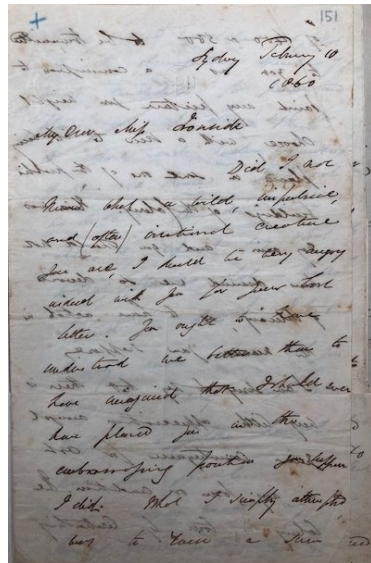
The figure of the banditti was much romanticised in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when a young Charles Eastlake was befriending John Gibson and attempting to ply his trade in Rome. This is one of his works, and there are many other comparable images from other artists. In this chapter I have drawn attention to the fact that there were also female banditti, especially during the Risorgimento, although these were rarely the subject of artistic works. Garibaldi's unfortunate marriage is gleaned from various sources listed in my bibliography, but I have speculated that this and other events were stimulants for Aesi's rather radical decision to make the bridegroom in her *Nozze* resemble Garibaldi. In a letter to Dr. Lang dated August 1861, Aesi confided:

Your letter found me in the height of a detestable Roman summer, working hard at my picture which will be exhibited in London next Spring Dr 1862. This picture The Marriage of Cana I have represented quite in the Hebrew Egyptian - There are 30 figures and I feel it is to be laborious work indeed to paint within a limited time. The Apostles represented are St Andrew (in honour of Scotland) St James, the great St John Evangelist and St Peter - Joseph the husband of Mary and Mary Magdalene - Christ and the Virgin of course being the principle personages - the portrait of the bridegroom is that of Garibaldi! - It is a secret here as yet, I may tell you safely and you will not be turned out of Sydney because you know it! - and you are a rank Republican.

As Peter Cochrane has shown in *Colonial Ambition*, this was a highly contested period of colonial politics during which the Legislative Council was required to burn the midnight candle as they argued over all sorts of questions, including the highly contested Land Act (1861) in which Daniel Deniehy played a leading part and certainly one which was intent upon frustrating conservatives such as Wentworth.

Although Aesi's Nozze does include flowers, the precise specimens are difficult to determine so I have imagined they were from her own Australian Wild Flowers folio. I have regularly quoted from Aesi's letters included the reference to 'Bibles being sold in Florence' although the actual postscript she wrote to Dr. Lang is, I think, even better: 'PP: The Bible is sold publicly in the shops and cafes at Florence everything is being fulfilled of which the dream Risorgimento speaks!' Aesi was never afraid to liberally employ the exclamation mark.

The scene when Gibson and Old Williams bring Sir Charles Eastlake to Aesi's studio is based on her description of that occasion in her only surviving letter Caroline Clark, dated Feb 1862. As so much of this chapter is based on this letter it is quoted in full at the end of these chapter notes. These confirm that Aesi recalls Gibson saying: "You see she wants to smash some of the old fellows. She wants to make sure those men are ashamed of their art!" Although I have quoted directly from Charles Nicholson's correspondence regarding the phrase 'wild, impulsive and (often) irrational creature' which features below and his comments about the disdain for art in 'the land of the kangaroos', I have imagined their exchange in Aesi's studio. There is no evidence of any intimacy between Aesi and Sir Charles, other than a few ambiguous comments in his correspondence, the gifts of Shakespeare which he sent from Paris, and his general interest in her art. Nonetheless, Sir Charles did marry Sarah Keightley in 1865, who he introduced to Aesi in one of his letters and the Australian Dictionary of Biography describes as 'a talented and artistic daughter of a London solicitor'. In one of his own letters to a friend he describes his new wife in rather unflattering terms, as plain and sensible. As sources suggest that Aesi declined many favourable offers, I have speculated that Sir Charles may have been interested in Aesi for a spell until he found he was temperamentally unsuited to her 'wild, impulsive' ways. He certainly did advise her to focus on figures from British literature rather than religious subjects.



Left: Charles Nicholson to Adelaide Ironside, 10 January 1860, Adelaide Eliza Scott Ironside, Correspondence mainly letters received, ML MS 272/188 Right: Dr. Lang to Aesi, 1 July 1861. ML MS 272/113

The colonial newspapers provide accounts of Dr. Lang and Deniehy's unsuccessful attempts to secure government patronage for funding Aesi's artistic projects. Aesi's response to Dr. Lang is drawn from the letter she wrote him a fortnight before her birthday in 1860, which is still in the Lang Papers in the State Library of NSW (her underlining).

3 November 1860

My dear Dr Lang

I received your letter dated August and I must say I was exceedingly sorry to hear that you had bought my name before the Council as a claim upon Australia. I wish very much that you had consulted me before doing so, I am sure you did it with the kindest intentions but had you asked my opinion upon the subject I should have immediately said, No —.

It is quite impossible to the uneducated in Art ever to impress upon them Art's own intrinsic value either to a country or the improvement of the minds of the People - Art requires a life education and constant intercourse with its refining and beautiful

creations to be able to fully appreciate its wants therefore how could the legislature of a young country like Australia rushed/mustered into the struggle of contrary factions be supposed to conceive that the fine arts would raise her in the eyes of the whole world as they would, and which in time I intend most certainly to do —.

My country has everything gifted of nature, wealth, unbounded climate and the glowing warmth of a southern clime/sun (?). She is worthy of being the second Italy, save Italy's appreciation and ?? from the heart of the Beautiful.

I do not call upon my country, Australia must in time call for me! The opinions of the few who do not now know xx this narrow wealth and will not be eternal and I must beg of you my dear Doctor to tell publicly these gentleman of the Legislature that I should never have taken a fraction from them and had they granted it and I had wanted as a claim upon Australia.

I don't know when or where Aesi met the Tasmanian-born Caroline Amelia Carr Clark (b. 1828), but their correspondence commences in 1861 and refers to mutual acquaintances in Rome, so I set this encounter at this period and place. Although her connection with the imaginary Catherine Alexander, Aesi's childhood chum, is imagined, I drew other details from a paper entitled 'Mr and Mrs George Carr Clark of "Ellinthorp Hall"' which was first read at the General Meeting of the Tasmanian Historical Association in 1962. This paper confirms that Caroline did have a father named One-Eye because his brother had accidentally shot him thus with an arrow. One-Eye had worked for the wealthy silk-merchant who Aesi meets shortly and was no doubt introduced to by Caroline. The story of One-Eye hiding from bushrangers is also from this 1962 paper. Caroline and her companion Mrs Wilkinson had such an interest in homeopathy they translated two well-reviewed French works by Michel Granier, *Conferences on*

Homeopathy (1859) and *The Rights of Man in the Domain of Medicine* (1860). The Gibson Papers in the RA include flirtatious correspondence between Gibson and many women, including Caroline who wrote to remind him he had promised to send his carte de visite in exchange for her own, enclosed and also requesting him to buy ‘a six penny tube of Ackermann’s Venetian Red’ for Miss Ironside.

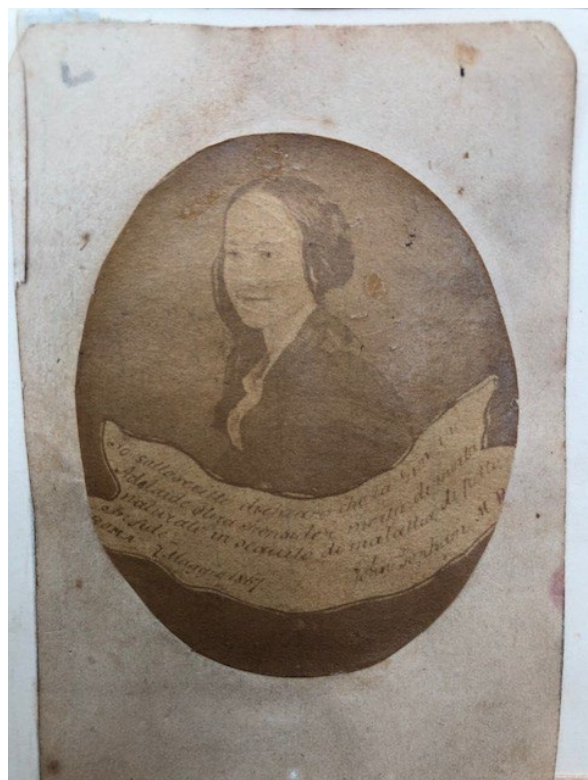


Left: Tommaso Cuccioni, Piazza Navona with the Market c. 1860, where I imagine Aesi first encountered Caroline Clark. Right: Photograph of Pietro Tenerani around the time he was producing his statue of Wentworth. My photographs at the Museo di Roma, 2019.



Giacomo Caneva, Colosseum, 1852. Comparable to my imagined scene of Aesi and Caroline's evening interlude there. Nighttime tours were most popular, but British travellers such as Dickens decried the building's woeful state. My photographs at the Museo di Roma's exhibition of nineteenth-century photography of Rome, 2019.

I set the scene of Adelaide having her professional portrait taken at Signori Suscipi's studio after reading the article on Florence Freeman by Jacqueline Marie Masacchio and seeing Freeman's carte de visite, which Masacchio says was something of a publicity shot to be sent to actual and prospective patrons. Although a scribbled note scrawled beside Aesi's carte de visite in the Ironside Papers states this 'photo of Addie Ironsides taken a short time before her death, 1867', the more research I conducted into the 'wasting disease' of tuberculosis, the more I doubted this statement, which after all, was made by a cousin writing in the early twentieth century. The fullness of Aesi's face and her generally animated disposition suggests this image may have been taken when her career was in its ascendancy, and I therefore speculated that it was taken in the same studio where Freeman had her portrait done, with the same publicity purposes.



Left: Lorenzo Suscipi, Florence Freeman ca 1860s. Athenaeum Boston. Artwork in the public domain, photograph by Jacqueline Marie Masacchio. Right: 'Addie[sic] Ironsides taken a short time before her death', SL NSW ML. These portraits show an intriguing similarity of composition.

My depiction of Joseph Severn is based on Sue Brown's excellent biography of him, various accounts of his tenure as British Council, his exchanges with Seymour Kirkup and letters to Aesi and Martha. He was producing his own work of the Marriage of Cana at this period and it did sit, unfinished in his notoriously dishevelled office. My description of the Ironsides' presentation to Pope Pius IX is based on Aesi's account as well as the official regulations which were in place regarding this ritual and articulated in *Murray's Guidebook*. Dialogue with the Pope comes directly from Aesi's letters – I speculate about Severn's intercession in this episode because of his association with the British prelate Monsignor Talbot who Aesi mentions when she describes this occasion in a letter to Dr. Lang in August 1861:

Some months ago, I was presented along with Mamma to his Holiness and we kissed hands twice and received the blessings of the Holy Father at parting. The Pope speaks of the present state of Italy as her intense agitation and seemed to doubt of her being ever any better unless God's providence aided the true Church!! Ah! Said he, 'My Child we are living in a sad state of the world's history - what changes may come chi lo sa!' His Holiness asked if I wished anything from him and he would grant my request. I asked to see the Convent of St Mark's and he immediately accorded to me to visit he also presented me with a silver medal with his own portrait on one side which was a mark of much distinction to a Protestant masked for and unexpected. I shall prize it for Pio Nono's sake. In the course of conversation I said that I regarded him as a 'Romantic Pope' – 'a real monk' and he laughed enjoyingly. These lion-hearted moody Romans want a Sixtus V to rule them, Pio is too gentle hearted more suited to be the kind leader of a convent, recluse and away from the hard world of fiery yet leader sway when all is ingratitude for service.



Left: Portrait of Pius IX with the prelates of the Secret Antechamber ca. 1860, and similar to Aesi and Martha's meeting with Pio Nono. Right: Not quite a peep within the sacred halls of San Marco in Florence, but a rare glimpse of a monk in a cloister nonetheless, taken from the Santa Maria in Rome, c. 1867-68. My photographs from the Museo di Roma photographic exhibition of nineteenth-century Rome.

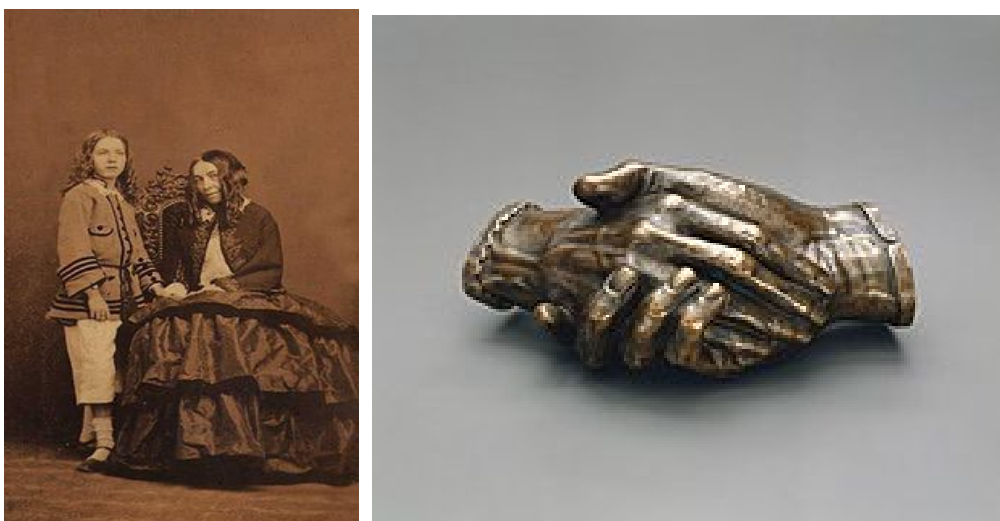
I don't know if Aesi and Martha took advantage of the Pope's permission to visit the Convent of San Marco in Florence, but their experience is based upon my own in 2019, where I was truly moved by the works of Fra Angelico therein. At the time they would have been unable to see any of the works he did within the monastic cells. Nonetheless, they would have seen the most famous of his frescos, *The Annunciation*, which is situated on the wall of the northern corridor on the upper floor in front of the staircase, and was painted on Angelico's return from Rome in 1450.

The 1861 comet is one of the last things Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote about before she died in Florence on 29 June 1861. She died in Robert Browning's arms, apparently 'smilingly, happily, and with a face like a girl's ... Her last word was ... 'Beautiful' She was buried in the Protestant English Cemetery of Florence, and the shops in the area around her

home were closed while those who knew her mourned. According to her biographers, Harriet Hosmer, the creator of the ‘Clasped hands of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1853’, left Rome to avoid engaging in the public mourning.



Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation*, Fresco, 230- x 321 cm, Convento di San Marco, Florence.



Left: Elizabeth Barrett Browning with her son ‘Pennini’ in 1860, a few years after Aesi and Martha met the Brownings in Paris. Right: Harriet Hosmer, ‘Clasped hands of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1853’, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

In the letter Aesi wrote to Caroline from Rome, she is responding to Caroline's letter sent the week before. I have included much but not all of this as it captures so much of Chapter 26. Please note where the script was illegible I have replaced my transcribed speculations with an ellipses:

My dear Caroline

Yesterday we had the great pleasure of hearing from you and to find that you are all quite well. I am delighted to tell you dearest that my Nozze is finished! The last stroke will be given tomorrow on the hands of the harpist striking the chords in honour of the festival en assigne (?) I have represented and the harpist as yourself. It will please you I hope to see that I have faithfully tried to paint your sweet face as I so well remember it and Mr Williams says it is very like you, and also Gibson sees your delicate profile in it - the harpist is one of the principal figures next to the Saviour ...

But I am telling all this when you will see it in a month for yourself and how I long to open it to your eyes you may imagine my dearest friend! Gibson and Williams are in raptures about my Nozze quite enthusiastic and are continually coming to see it!

I have had a very bad cold indeed, but, I am now perfectly well, only I have quite lost my voice for a month, tomorrow and can only speak in a whisper and I almost despair of even getting it again, perhaps you may be able to get for me little Doctors when I am with you - if I attempt to speak out the pain in my chest is very great. I sent a letter to Dr Franco but he was in Paris, so I must wait now till I get to London as I will have no allopathic treatment.

I tried many compresses and then a mustard poultice and a colorific which burnt my throat and peeled off all the skin

terribly - lemons in hot water - teas of all kinds - in fact everything and nothing did me any good, so I have given up Doctors work and shall let the voice come at its own pleasure, for I can do no more for it and I am quite well I do not trouble myself any now.

Sir Charles Eastlake was in Rome in the summer and came to see my picture - he was delighted and praised it very much indeed. He admired especially the composition, beauty and grace of the whole and even at the time - the colouring which was only then ... I am going to bring you a present - a ... monk who passed his youth in Sasorrosola and who hearing me speak of you with admiration and of your enthusiasm for the Invisible offered to send you a little painted portrait of him, done by himself and it is quite a little treasure for your studio, I know you will prize it much!

Overbeck has been to see the picture he likes it very much and was very much surprised to hear that I had come from Australia - he quite warmed up and pointed to the Pilgrim and said something about my being like him. He so much admired the little sketch of genius, took it to the light and said it was said it was exquisite, beautiful for colour and form and quite pure. He said the new picture was most brilliant and full of richness and harmony - Fancy there are 30 figures in it! Divided into two it makes just two pictures each a scene complete for composition. You know Riedel one of the distinguished German artists here - Gibson bought him up and he was quite astonished - Gibson said he praised you to your faces by George but he praised you enough after he left! My picture is the star this year as they say - you know I tell you all this praise and you will think I sound my own trumpet but I know you will enter into it all with kindest love and join with me in working to elevate our sex and "hoist the colours of our dear country" - Gibson says again " You see she wants to smash some of the old fellows she wants to make sure those men are ashamed of their art!"

Gibson is most affectionate and only anxious about my voice "make her go to bed Mrs Ironside and don't let her get at the picture any more she'll be lost to us all if you don't - " but as I told you before I am quite well and can't lie in bed to make a show of being ill I did try every Sunday as we have no church - but I was up again on Monday morning at work and once I tried a preparation but I got a worse cold after it Gibson's first doctrine is "mustard poultice" . . . he does not seem to understand homeopathy I can't put it in his reason at all. He told me that I looked quite blooming and well one day about a fortnight ago, you will be surprised I have quite a colour sometimes - am quite transparent in the skin. Gibson said that you have a beautiful profile and intended taking a bust or medallion of you if you would come to Rome. Do come next year dear one.

Adelaide Ironside to Caroline Clark, 7 February 1862,
SLNSW ML MS 272/188/97

27.

A THORNY CROWN



Common thistle, or spear thistle (Cirsium vulgare)

Aesi's letter, cited above, confirms that she would have arrived in London with a 'very bad cold'. The doctors and medical historians with whom I have shared the above concur that these symptoms are compatible with T.B., although there is no telling precisely when she would have first contracted this. There are numerous letters from Sir James Clark in the Ironside papers from 1862 and later. Each confirm Sir James was genuinely concerned for Aesi, but also in high demand with Queen Victoria due to the recent and sudden death of the Prince Consort.

Letters between those in London with colonial connections indicate Aesi was stimulating considerable interest in London as she and Martha resided at Caroline's London establishment, Kensington Park Terrace. Roger Therry, (one of two lawyers involved in the prosecution in the Myall Creek Murder trials), was particularly enthusiastic about Aesi's work in his letter to William Macarthur, one of the colonial commissioners for the London Exhibition:

On Saturday (15 March) we paid a visit to a picture "The marriage of Cana' just bought from Rome by Miss Ironsides - an Australian it is a work of high genius - the colouring and conceptual admirable. Tinmani [sic] the first living sculptor said he would be proud to have conceived such a production and Gibson says it will quite eclipse Holman Hunt's picture which all the world here running to see it in London - Tinmari [sic] wanted Miss I to send it with the Roman artists to the exhibition but she insisted as she said she would be much better pleased to have it exhibited in the Australian Department. I hope this may be accomplished ... to promote this young lady's laudable ambition. Some of her paintings of Australian flowers are very beautiful - she has been 4 years in Rome and worked hard all the time - I shall be really disappointed if she does not achieve high reputation. I wish you and your ladies when they come to London would pay her a visit. It is in her drawing room at 12 Kensington Park Terrace Notting Hill. It has attracted the attention and obtained high praise from Sir Chas Eastlake.

Rodger Therry to William Macarthur, 17 March 1862, SL NSW ML MS 272/303

In constructing these scenes of the hectic social activities associated with Caroline championing Aesi's artwork I have drawn on these and other accounts as well as a snide reference Robert Browning made in a letter to William Wetmore Storey regarding a special dinner he had been invited to in London, to meet a 'great genius just from Rome, of whom Gibson thought wondrously, —in short Aesi'. I have also introduced the names of several well-known Victorians such as Countess Virginia Somers and Mary Anne Everett Green, whose correspondence is in the Ironsides papers. Caroline's late January letter is also revealing (her underlining):

My Dear Aesi

I come to peep into your studio and hope to find you bright and well. The summer will have tired you sadly my dear little one - I

dread to hear of headaches and languor – but when this great affair is over then you will really rest, I trust – and you will deserve to live the life of the flowers and butterflies. I cannot tell you how I long to see the Nozze – let nothing prevent you being in time – and don't make yourself ill with the journey. Could you not send the picture as the Roman entry by some other conveyance or before you so you may recover from the fatigue and follow at leisure? – Do dear try and get all arranged in good time so that I may not receive a weary ghost in London.

I was very unhappy about the chances of the picture getting in until you told me a space was secured thro' the Roman government. By this means I think, you will not fail; but otherwise, I cannot tell how it could have been managed for strange to say your Sydney part of the world was very last in appointing an English Commission, tho' I knew formally the other commissioner I could get at no one precisely appointed to represent Sydney.

Of course if you were not sure of yourself through Mr Severn, you would have written to your friends in Sydney as suggested and got them to settle the matter positively with the commissioners positively and thereby seeing they applied and secured space to the London Committee – It has since been decided that no pictures can be exhibited by English artists but those who have already appeared in the Royal Academy. They were forced at last to draw some boundary line for the application were far too numerous even if the exhibition had been ten times as large as it is. Therefore, you now see your chances lies between Rome and Sydney! I hope you have clearly secured one or the other and if you go for Rome pray, put yourself down as Australian. If you overlook thus to hoist our colours I don't think I can ever forgive my countrywoman.

There is another chance of exhibition in London this year. I mean the Royal Academy and at the risk of wearying you with suggestions let me remind you that if you would but see that your way clear about the International Exhibition you might bear this

in mind ... - besides I so want to see all the other picture pale at the splendour of your Nozze - I can be wonderfully ambitious for my friends you know -

Caroline Clark to Aesi, 30 January 1862, Society of Genealogists
ML MS 272/303

During my 2019 travels I retraced the Ironsides journey from Rome to Scotland, via London and visit Montrose where Rossie Castle once stood. While the MacDonald correspondence with the Ironsides confirms they lived there and Aesi and Martha also visited in 1862, my research uncovered the following potted history, from *A Series of Picturesque Views of Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*. Note the reference to the splendid views of the German Ocean:



"ROSSIE Castle stands on an elevated site about a mile from the town of Montrose. The house was built by Hercules Ross, Esq., from a design by Crichton, about the end of last century. The elevation is certainly

magnificent from the greatness of its features, and the arrangement of the interior is most admirable. The entrance hall is thirty feet by twenty, which opens to a great drawing-room... The prospects from Rossie Castle are of the finest description. On one side there is a splendid view of the German Ocean, the town and bay of Monrose, and the magnificent bridge over the Esk; thriving and beautiful shrubberies... Over the hall door of the castle are the words cut out In stone, AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.

I have imagined Lieutenant-Colonel MacDonald of the Perthshire Highland Rifle Volunteers and Archer of Her Majesty's Scottish Bodyguard as something of a Scottish patriot with a taste for Ossian which was still very popular at this period of the nineteenth century. This also allowed me to introduce some Scottish customs of the period including a practice of curing TB with the warm breath of a cow. In a letter Aesi wrote to Dr Lang on 17 Sept 1862, Aesi includes a letter from Sir William Stirling praising her art, which I have quoted in this chapter. Although she explains how she met Sir William once at Rome when she introduced to the celebrated critic of Spanish art and history by the very well-connected MacDonalds, I transposed this scene to Scotland to situate him within his Scottish context so I could elaborate on his connections to the colonies and legacies of slavery and contrast these with the hagiographical tome devoted to 'the Stirlings of Keir'. To do so, I drew on the excellent work of Beth M. Robertson, who is based at the State Library of South Australia. In *Edward Stirling: Embodiment and beneficiary of slave-ownership* (see bibliography), she discusses her familial connections with Stirling dynasty, via Edward Stirling, the first son of Archibald Stirling (1769-1847) and an enslaved woman, who may have been named 'Jeanne' or 'Jeannie' from Stirling's Jamaican holdings. As Robertson shows, Edwards was sent to South Australia in the 1840s

to be kept ‘out of sight and out of mind’ so that William, Archibald’s second son, could inherit the family fortune.



The two Stirling brothers. Left: Edward Stirling c. 1870, published in Beth M. Robertson, 'Edward Stirling: Embodiment and beneficiary of slave-ownership', *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, 2022, 6: 104. Right: and Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, 9th Bt, by Thomas Rodger, 1870s, British National Portrait Gallery.

I have no record of Gordon Forlong visiting the MacDonalds during the Ironsides' visit, however, the newspapers confirm that he was still active as a preacher in those parts at the time. Aesi does appear to have changed her moniker around this time. Where she had previously received and signed letters ‘Aesi’, she is more often referred to as ‘Aei’ or ‘Miss I’ from this time onwards. I have speculated that this was because of the uncomfortable associations which were revealed during the Scottish sojourn but there is nothing in her archive to reveal her actual attitudes to slavery or the Civil War in America which had broken out in April 1861, the year before. Nor do I know what clothes she was wearing at the time, but Garibaldi red shirts and Vouave jackets such as those described in this chapter were then all the rage.

The British Library has an extensive body of primary materials relating to the 1862 International Exhibition in London, which, in comparison to the 1855 Exhibition was something of a fizzer, due to the sudden death of the Prince Consort in December 1861 which threw much of England into something of a pall. Such was Queen Victoria's grieving that she did not make the expected public appearances hoped to create the sense of extraordinary pageant clearly envisioned by those who wrote poems and symphonies in honour of the occasion. Nonetheless, the colonial contingent was better organised than it had been for previous international exhibitions, and all sorts of enterprising and influential gentlemen including Daniel Cooper, T S Mort and Charles Cowper set up in London where they socialised with those like William Macarthur who was there on official business and others like Roger Therry and Charles Nicholson who no longer lived in the colonies but still had business associations.



The Great International Exhibition, featuring the giant fountain which ran with perfumed waters where I imagine Aesi and Caroline retreating during the baking heat. Michael Tongue, *3D expo 1862: A Magic Journey to Victorian England: 3 D Photography at the International exhibition of 1862*, London Discovery books, 2006, sourced from the British Library.



Left: Harriet Hosmer, *Zenobia in Chains*, 1859 The Huntington, Library, Art Museum and Botanic Gardens. Right: John Gibson, *Tinted Venus*, 1851-1856, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Above are the sculptures exhibited in the Roman Court of the 1862 Exhibition by Hosmer and Gibson, where Aesi displayed *The Pilgrim of Art*. Both works were a source of considerable controversy, albeit for different reasons. Again, Cherry has written about why Hosmer's forthright *Zenobia* challenged expectation of what a 'lady sculptor' could and should do. In contrast, Gibson's *Tinted Venus* caused a scandal because of its realistic carving and tinted features which were thought to be vulgar because they were too life-like. Gibson was among the first neoclassical sculptors to paint his statues which was, in fact, a common practice in ancient Greece.

Flour-miller and sometime member for West Sydney in the Legislative Assembly, James Pemell was certainly there, accompanied by his daughter

Amelia who may have been visually impaired already at this stage but certainly became so later, her obituary suggests. In a letter possibly dated 1906, Amelia Pommel, then a leading figure in the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union wrote to the Art Gallery of New South Wales with the intention of selling Aesi's painting of Saint Catherine to that institution. This painting, she explained, had been purchased by her father for her in 1862, 'the first Australian artist of any repute'. I have imagined Aesi walking fourteen year old Amelia about the exhibition and describing the paintings to her as a means of allowing for an exchange between these 'two colonials far from home' so that I could 'show rather than tell' the transformation which may have happened as Aesi studied the extensive artwork on display in this chapter which are all listed in the catalogue. In so doing, Aesi finally comes to terms with the stark contrast in public attitude regarding the work of those aligned with the now established, even old guard neo-classical traditions espoused by Gibson and others in Rome and the much more daring sensibility associated with the Pre-Raphaelites which Ruskin championed in the early 1850s and which was now in the ascendancy throughout England.

As Deb Cherry recounts in her excellent work on the female artists of this period, the story about Ruskin's comments about A.M Howitt's *Boadicea Brooding Over Her Wrongs* is true. Ruskin dismissed this work and the artist by telling her to go and draw 'pheasant wings'. A.M was so crushed she never attempted serious works again, but confined herself to what she called 'scribble-scrabbles'. It was a devastating, condescending and surely unnecessary end to a young and promising artist who had been so full of enthusiasm. Here the story demonstrates the highly precarious nature of the art world and serves as a cautionary tale for Aesi who will be invited to study with Ruskin in a few years.

Aesi's wrote Dr Lang two letters from the International Exhibition—both in September—which detail first her hope and then her great disappointment regarding the potential, then thwarted the purchase of her painting. I have triangulated these with references in the colonial

newspapers and other correspondence as well as later events to speculate about what may have happened, but there is nothing to link Sir Charles Nicholson to the decision which her prospective colonial benefactors made.

International Exhibition
 Sept 25 1862
 My dear Doctor Lang -
 I wrote you a few days back by the same mail that my picture of the "Marriage" was very likely to be purchased by a gentleman from Australia. I am sorry to tell you now that it is not the case, both Dr. & Cooper Mr Cooper fully understood that he would purchase

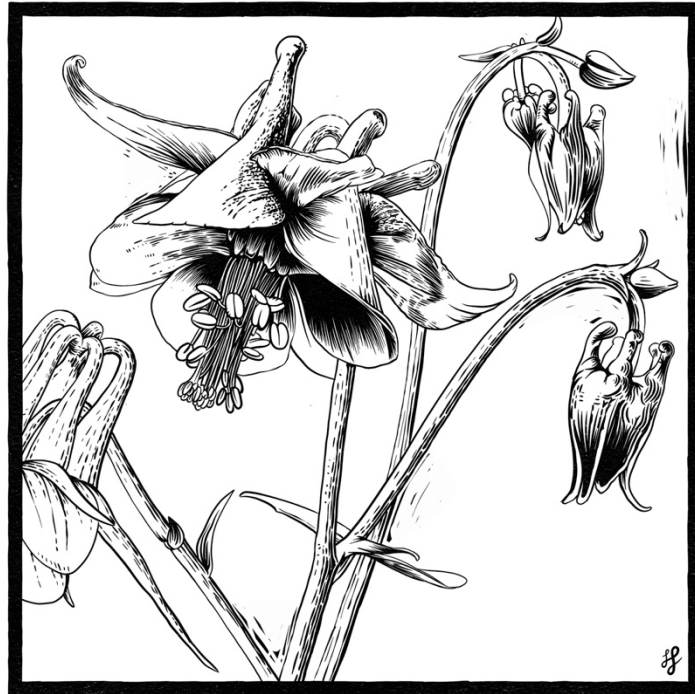
it - but when asked to decide he ^{said} thought that it would be better for the colony to do so, for some public institution - This is my wish - I would like of above all things for it to be placed in some public building of ~~the~~ my native land. They have the story but that the picture is already sold to the

Aesi to Lang, 25 September 1862, SL NSW Mitchell John Dunmore Lang Papers vol 9, ML A2229/224

Nonetheless, I found this episode so heartrending, given Aesi's financial precarity and failing health, which is evident her in the hurried nature of her once flowing handwriting, that I chose to dramatize it as she may have experienced it while writing this letter 'in our court at the International with 60000 thousands traipsing over head'.

28.

STILL ACHIEVING; STILL PURSUING



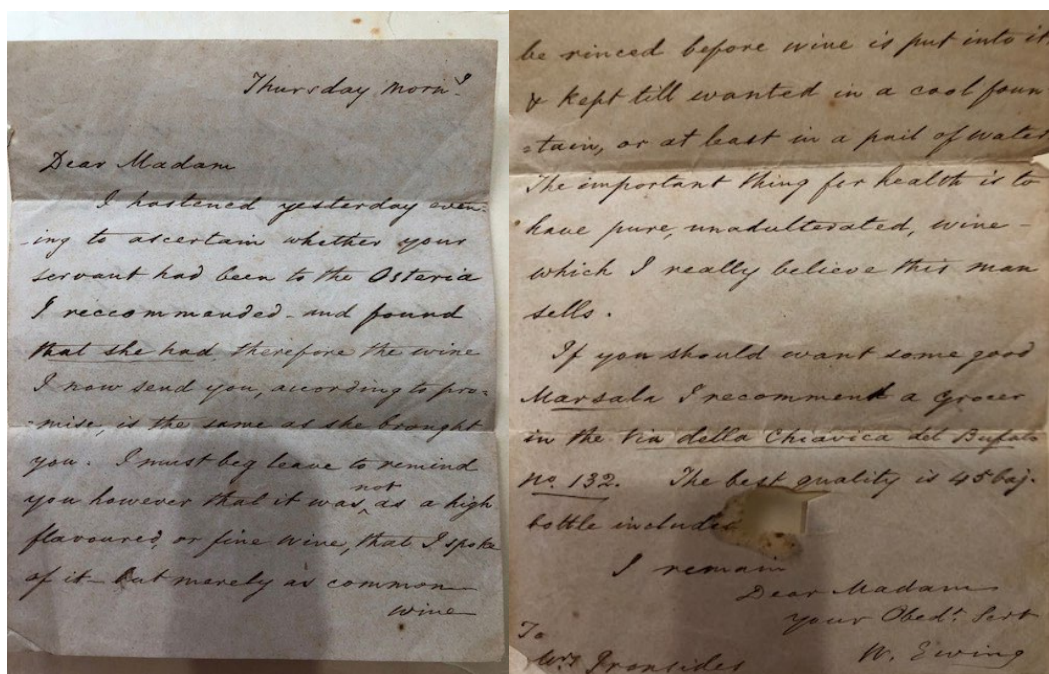
Dark columbine (Aquilegia atrata)

I do not know the nature of Aesi and Martha's return journey from London to Rome, only that correspondence during this period suggests that Aesi was unwell and no doubt Martha was fatigued by London. I drew inspiration for this scene from the accounts in Margaret Foster's biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, which describes how this journey was particularly demanding for invalids. 'Weary ghost' is a term Caroline uses in one of her letters, which likewise, confirm her interest in homeopathy, which as previously discussed, has been confirmed by other sources. As pioneer scholars of Victorian spiritualism Alex Owen and Janet Oppenheim have shown, seeking out spiritualists for special healing was becoming increasingly popular during this period. Aesi mentions peppermint tea in her 1862 letter to Caroline and must have sworn by it, for in a 1865 letter from Laura Wentworth to her Sydney-based sister, Timmie Fisher (Thomasina) she writes:

We have heard from Miss Ironside, who has been staying a day or so with us, that when she was sick after every she took the only thing that did her any good was mint tea - which was ordered by an old herbalist at Greenwich

Laura Wentworth to Timmie Fisher, n.d. SL NSW ML -
Wentworth Family Papers, ML A868

Like many nineteenth-century novels, mid-century Rome was full of fascinating sub-characters. Among them was William Ewing, who, according to Sue Brown's biography of Joseph Severn, once scoured the streets of Rome looking for an ice which might sooth the parched throat of the poet, John Keats. The same impulse towards practical assistance in evidence in this letter he sent Martha advising on the best location to purchase marsala. This letter fell out of a folder in a Private Collection when I was visiting with the Redman descendants and provided useful information into lives early in my research, namely, that the Ironsides had domestic assistance in Rome and also that they were not teetotallers which was common among many nineteenth-century Presbyterians.



William Ewing to Martha Ironside, n.d. Private Collection.

Keen to better understand Aesi's sickness and ascertain if it was, as Martha confided to Dr Lang in an 1867 letter, 'the rapid consumption', I read widely on the medical and cultural history of tuberculosis in both the British Library and Wellcome Library, London. I benefitted enormously from the work of historians cited in the bibliography including Frank Snowden, who I met while visiting the American Academy in Rome and who shared unpublished chapters of his book, *Epidemics and Society*. This investigation led me to produce a comparative analysis of the well-documented death of Keats in 1821 and Aesi's in 1867, as both artists died in Rome and were under the care of Sir James Clark. See Bibliography, 'Grave-Paved Stars'. While the first documented signs of Aesi's TB appear in her 1862 letter to Caroline, clues become increasingly evident from this period onwards, not only in her increasingly unstable handwriting but also the way friends and acquaintances often respond in exasperation to what they consider erratic or what John Ruskin described as her 'fireworky' reactions. I drew upon my research to 'show not tell' some of the tell-tale signs of TB, including vicious boils, so that readers could witness its unpredictable but debilitating effect upon her body and being. The same research was invaluable when it came to understanding the broader milieu in which Aesi was 'consumed' by her 'wild loves' and illness. As I argue in 'Grave-Paved Stars', Romantic attitudes combined with common misconceptions about TB during this period were such that many believed it was an illness exclusive to the upper-classes and geniuses who were destined to live intense, brilliant but short lives. I believe that one of the reasons Henry Wrenford and others referred to Aesi's 'heightened sensibility' and 'genius' was because as she became increasingly unwell she embodied many of these qualities.

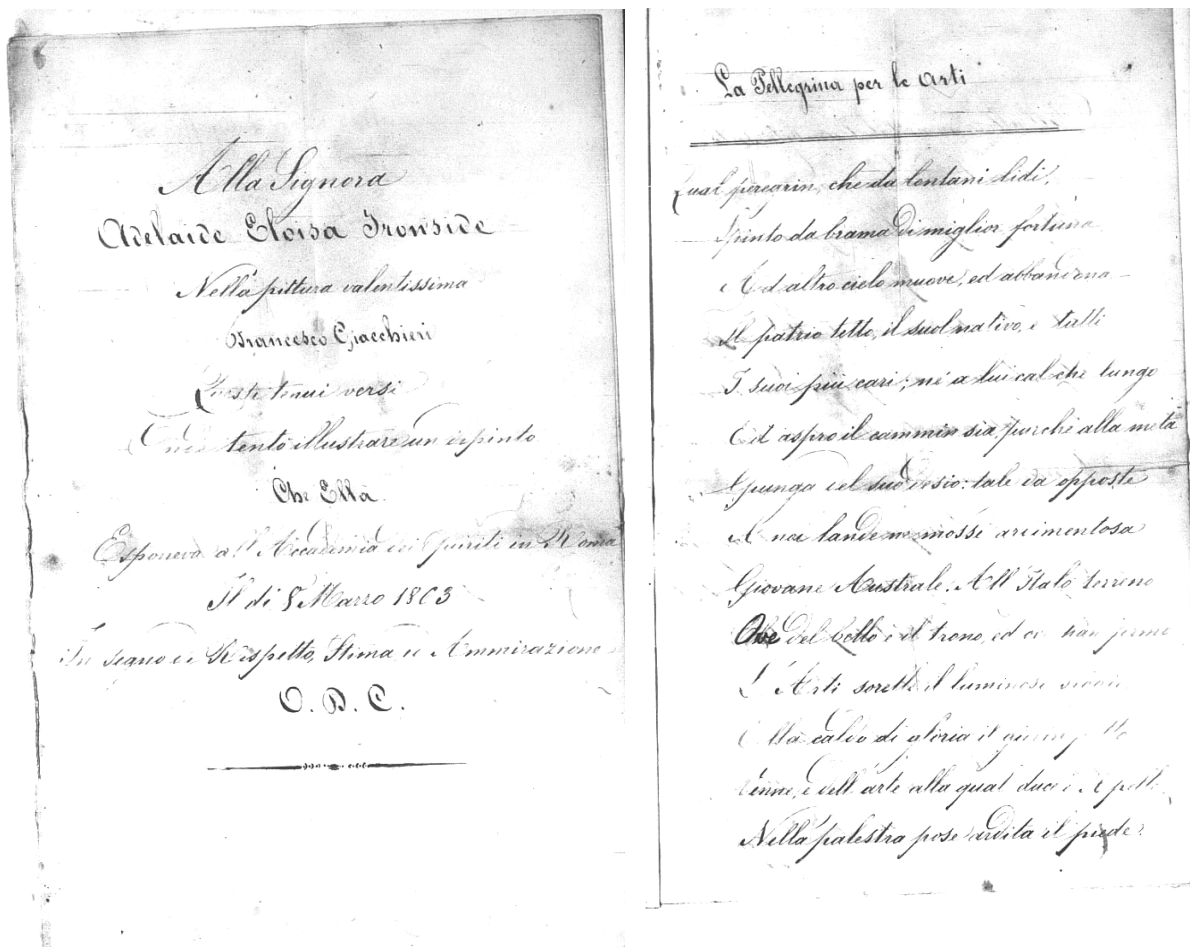
Although I struggled to transcribe the handwriting of many of the correspondents in the Ironsides' Papers, Dr. Lang's handwriting was by far the most challenging. Despite protracted efforts, I was unable to discern key passages and therefore speculated that Aesi may have

likewise struggled. Nonetheless the account of Dr. Lang attempting to rally colonial support for the purchase of Aesi's Marriage at Cana is evident in their exchange of letters as well as those she received from colonists such as T.S. Mort and John Fairfax, which are also in her archive. Interestingly, Lang stimulated support from W.H. Severn, one of the sons of the then British Consul, Joseph Severn. In her biography, Sue Brown implies, somewhat wryly, that Severn's son might have found the colonies a welcome respite from his rather inflated and self-absorbed father.

Aesi certainly was made a 'Socio Onorario' of the 'most distinguished Academy of the Quirites', which awarded her the Diploma cited below as well as the title of 'Most Illustrious Lady Artist and Historian, Artistic Secretary in Sydney Australia'. Aesi expressed a sense of triumph about this when she wrote to Dr. Lang explaining other members were 'most distinguished artists, sculptors (including Hosmer and Gibson), Cardinal, prelates and princes'. Like Aesi's first biographer, Jill Poulton, I struggled to find any evidence of the Academy of the Quirites. 'Quirites' itself is based upon the name given to a Roman citizen in peacetime, and seems to have something to do with local art academic culture in Rome. Poulton notes that the institution was known to exist in 1849 with fifteen non-Roman seats, including one in Melbourne, which may explain why Aesi's title included 'Artistic Secretary in Sydney Australia'. No library, archival repository or museum remains, only a 1860s report that the Academy organised 'two magnificent Exhibitions of Fire Arts where professors of architecture, painting and sculpture' sent their work 'over the mountains and over seas'. It seems likely that Aesi's work was included in this and the Ironsides Papers includes an invitation to 'Mr Ironside' to do so.

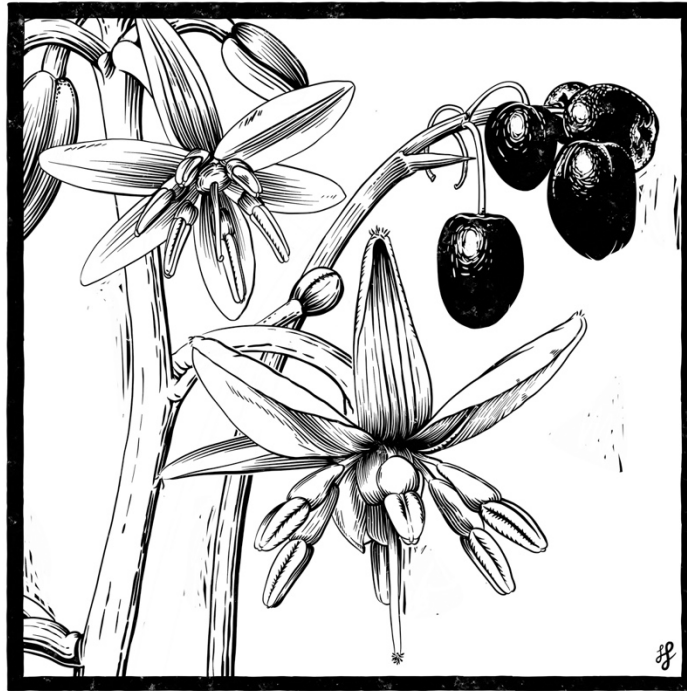
Equally astounding is the poem, *Pilgrim of Art* which was composed by Francesco Giacchieri and dedicated to her on the day she was awarded her diploma (see below). I had this work translated several times

and eventually decided to include only a few stanzas using a combination of different translations. To imagine the scene when Aesi receives her Diploma and Giacchieri performs the poem as a dance in the company of Bentinelli, a local artist with whom Aesi also corresponded according to the Ironside Papers. I drew inspiration from Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, in which the namesake is an Italian count who dances with the elegance and agility of a mythic faun.



Above: The frontispiece of Francesco Giacchieri's poem *The Pilgrim of Art*, which he dedicated to Aesi on the day she was awarded her diploma and given membership to the Academy of the Quirites.

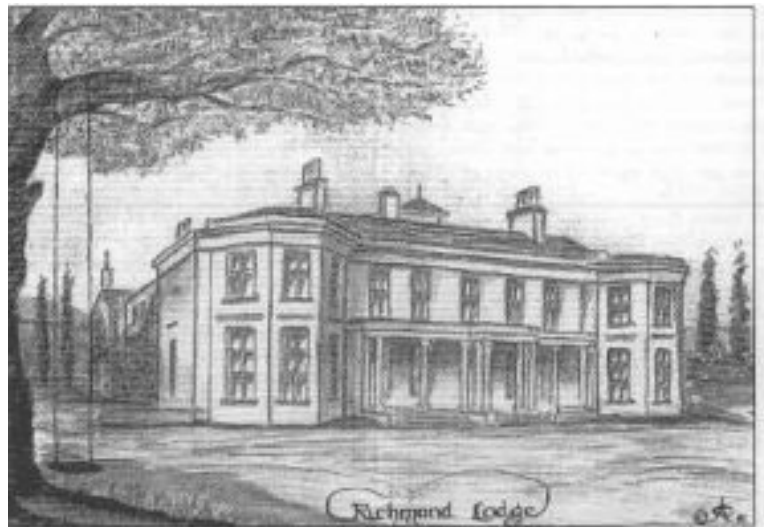
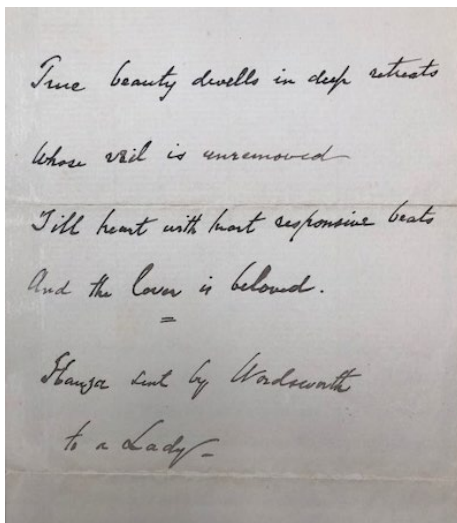
29. DEEP RETREATS



Blue flax lily, or pokulbi in D'harawal (Dianella caerulea)

According to Margaret Foster, EBB did compare her *Aurora Leigh* with *Corinne*, even stating that her poem was a modern reworking of de Staël's novel, but without the tragic ending for the heroine. In 1863, the Ironsides become acquainted with the wealthy whisky merchant, William Dunville and his sister, Sarah. There are several letters in the Ironside Papers from William Dunville which refer to mutual acquaintances, Padra Serafino and Charlotte Cushman, suggesting brother and sister may have spent a protracted period in the Eternal City. The Dunvilles, whose best-known whisky was named V.R. after Queen Victoria, were in Rome long enough for Dunville to send Aesi two stanzas of poetry by Wordsworth. The first excerpt is dated March 1863, and comes from 'Lines Written in Early Spring'. The other excerpt ("True beauty dwells in deep retreats"), below, was self-consciously chosen from Wordsworth's 'To —', and provided the inspiration for the title of this chapter. While in Rome, Dunville also commissioned Aesi to produce a portrait of his sister, who was to die within a few months of their meeting.

At least, by 25 June when Aesi received a letter from William Dunville it was addressed Richmond Lodge, his Belfast estate and black-boarded. In this, Dunville confirms receipt of Aesi's painting which 'concur with my expectations and excites the admiration of all who have seen it' and also talks of Sarah in the past tense. In an undated letter from Caroline to Aesi she refers to this work as 'Sorella', which is Italian for sister and the suggestive of the Sorella Trust, which William Dunville established in memory of Sarah, who he described to Aesi in that letter as 'she whose warm and sympathetic heart appreciated all that is beautiful'. I do not know if Sarah died of consumption but imagined the scenes of Aesi was sketching her according to contemporary descriptions of how the mood of those with the illness, including Keats, often shifted from listlessness to animation and rage as they wrestled with mortality.



William Dunville, Extract from Wordsworth's 'To —', here labeled as 'Stanza sent by Wordsworth to a Lady', nd. But probably March 1863, Ironside Papers, SL NSW Mitchell, ML MS 272/105. The Dunville's Belfast home, Richmond Lodge where Aesi sent her painting, 'Sorella', and it once hung above William Dunville's bed, according to the letter he wrote her.

As the Sorella Trust was established to improve the houses of the working classes in the area associated with the Dunville distillery, I speculate that Dunville may have assumed his sister contracted the disease during her charity visits. Sorella is another of Aesi's paintings which is yet to be recovered and unfortunately, my ARC funding could not be stretched

for me to travel to Belfast to pursue these possibilities of it being among the surviving property of the several large estates associated with the Dunvilles in Belfast. Nonetheless I would welcome others doing so.

There are references in the Ironside Papers, including Giacchieri's poem which suggest that even though Aesi had been made a Socio Onorario of the Accademia dei Quiriti, her decision to depict the bridegroom in her *Nozze* (Marriage of Cana) was subjected to severe criticism. Poulton speculates that this came from Roman Catholic members of the Academy. This is likely but I suspect was not exclusively so. In *The Pilgrim of Art*, Giacchieri warns Aesi that

But O my daughter, 'twill be hard to live
Your mortal life down here among the mortal —
With even great and rage of coward dogs, and little
For the crown that I now place upon your head
The thorns will add.

In a letter to Aesi, the Italian artist Luigi Bentinelli also writes that he had heard 'news' regarding her 'nice painting' which made him 'very sad', because he knew it would have 'great hurt your kind heart'. But, he consoles her, 'I don't think that the criticism that was made was really valid because long experience has taught me of the intrigues and decept men use ... be brave and ... take greater courage to produce works like this one, which is full of merit. By triangulating these slim shards of the archive, it is possible to gain a glimpse into this period of Aesi's life. On the one hand she was clearly growing in the esteem of the art establishment, securing membership and diplomas which recognised the results of her training while also procuring wealthy patrons such as William Dunville. On the other, now that she was no longer simply a student of art, she was also being taken seriously and therefore subject to more sustained criticism. Though it is tempting to assume this was exclusively focused upon her choice to feature Garibaldi in her *Nozze*, I wonder if there was also some ruminating about her ability and choice of

topics, as per Kirkup's correspondence, for at least one of his letters to Severn is dated 1864. This, coupled with the events which happened to Hosmer in this chapter, suggest that the lady artists in Italy were being subjected to sharper scrutiny during this period.

According to biographies about Cushman and Hosmer, Flori Freeman was known to 'latch on' to more established figures in Rome and was happy to serve as something of a 'fag'. As I suspect she was the woman who wrote the testimony Henry Wrenford included in Aesi's obituary in the *Athenaeum*, I decided to bring her back into Aesi's story. The Imp's performance in the annual Steeplechase is described in the newspapers and although I do not know how the crowd responded to her that day, biographies report that Hosmer was then a subject of increasing envy, particularly among the American men in Rome's expatriate community who resented her professional and financial success as she had now established her own studio and had many affluent patrons. While Cushman was an ambivalent supporter, John Gibson proved a much more faithful, even fierce friend. When nasty rumours began to circulate that Hosmer did not produce Zenobia herself, he leapt to her defence and wrote a forceful denial in the art journals. Never the fainting flower, Hosmer went on the offensive, hiring a lawyer and threatening to sue for defamation against the papers which printed such gossip, until the comments were retracted, and apologies made. Determined not to be bullied, Hosmer then produced her Doleful Ditty poem which mocked the scheming ways of certain expatriate artists who had nothing better to do but skulk about Caffè Grecco, brooding over bitter coffee and chewing on their cheroots. It was Hosmer at her defiant, wisecracking best. Nonetheless, both Hosmer and Aesi suffered reputational damage during this period and suggests those who were once content to indulge the amusing fad of lady artists were increasingly concerned about the threat these hardworking women posed to their complacency. I also speculated that their shared experience forged an alliance between Gibson's two 'pets'. Hosmer's comments about admiring any woman

who ‘puts aside other possibilities ... to become an artist’ are verbatim from her letters. The comparison of clay and air are mine, but do, I think, evoke the fundamental difference between ‘the Imp’ and ‘Spirit’.

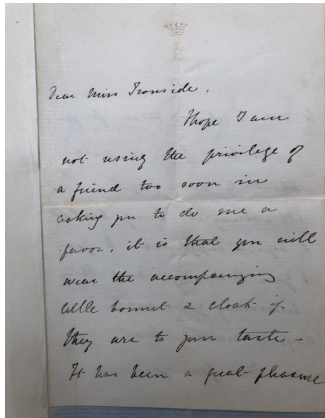


This is one of my photographs at the Museo di Roma in 2019 from their exhibition of nineteenth-century Rome. It captures the picnic adventures on the Campagna, where Charlotte Cushman and Harriet Hosmer took their ponies for a gallop. This location is the Aurelian Walls near Porta San Paola, between 1865 and 1866 just before Hosmer competed in the steeplechase.

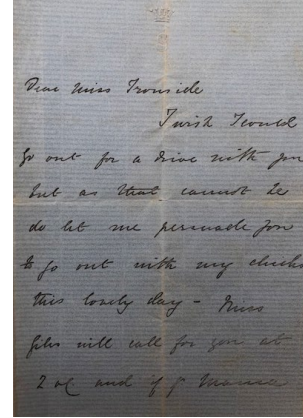
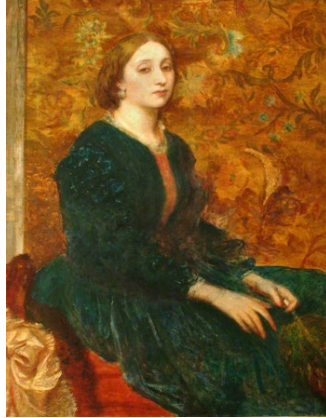
I imagined the exchange between Gibson and Aesi, as some explanation was required regarding the shift Aesi began to make during this period from her allegiance to Minardi’s manifesto of purity and the Neo-classical doctrine of divine proportion espoused by Gibson to the contrasting philosophical sensibility associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and Ruskin. The letters between Aesi and Dr Lang from this period are largely concerned with him regularly imploring her to send the Nozze to Sydney ‘on spec’, as she describes it so that the work can speak for itself and inspire colonists to purchase it for £1000 to £15000. Aesi, probably burnt by her experience at the 1862 London Exhibition is more cautious, and continues to ‘improve the finish’ on this work as she consults John Fairfax & T S Mort about other prospects for display and purpose. Eventually, she tells her old Patriot Father: ‘It (her Nozze) must have a certain and safe direction with the care of someone

interested in its welfare in a business way for you know, my dear Doctor, you are somewhat a visionary, you are certainly not a worldly businessman'. Despite all the condescending comments from nineteenth-century gentlemen such as Sir Charles Nicholson and John Ruskin who dismissed Aesi as 'wild, impulsive, (and often irrational)' — Nicholson—, or as struggling 'to separate the sense from the nonsense' —Ruskin—, these and other letters, confirm Aesi's strong sense of self and clear-eyed view of her circumstances, both in the colony and the European art world. She may have had her exuberances and enthusiasms, but she also possessed some of her mother's steel and Mary Redman's business acumen.

Further evidence of Aesi's growing status in the European art world during this period can be found in the correspondence with Countess Virginia Somers-Cocks (née Pattle), then a famed beauty and central figure in the greatly admired Pattle cultural circle, who is now better known as the great, great-aunt of Virginia Woolf, after whom the latter was named. The details I refer to in this chapter regarding Somers' family and upbringing are all based on fact. Somers certainly had inspired fascination from William Holman Hunt and poetry from Thackeray who wrote of her: 'When she comes into the room, it is like a beautiful air of Mozart breaking upon you; when she passes through a ballroom, everybody turns and asks who is the Princess, that fairy lady? Even the women, especially those who are the most beautiful themselves, admire her.' As Somers letters are undated, I have speculated she was the inspiration for the figure of the Virgin Mary in Aesi's last religious oil painting, *The Three Magi*. Sadly, this photograph is now the only visual evidence we have of Aesi's last oil because while this work was returned to Sydney in the 1870s, it was sold to a private owner and its whereabouts are currently unknown. Note the resemblance in hair and complexion.



Dear Miss Ironside,
I wish I were
not using the privilege of
a friend too soon in
asking you to do me a
favor, it is that you will
wear the accompanying
little bonnet & cloak if
they are to your taste -
It has been a great pleasure



Dear Miss Ironside
I wish I could
go out for a drive with you
but as that cannot be
do let me persuade you
to go out with my chicks
this lovely day - Miss
John will call for you at
2 o'clock if you please



Top left and right: Somers to Aesi, n.d. Ironside Papers, SL NSW Mitchell ML MS 272/291.

Top middle: Lady Virginia Somers by George Frederick Watts, 1860. Below: Adelaide Ironside, *Three Magi*, c. mid 1860s. Photograph in Slade Family Collection.

To construct the scenes with Somers, I have drawn directly from her correspondence and quoted her directly, but speculated about Martha's attitude to her, and the latter's failure to support the Ironsides when they returned to London. Somers's sister, Julia Margaret Cameron was a pioneer in British photography, renowned for her soft-focus approach as well as her allegorical themes. According to her unfinished autobiographical manuscript, *Annals of My Glasshouse*, she did

transform a coal-house into a dark room and ‘a glazed fowl house’ into ‘a glass house’.

Little is known about Louise Australia Blaxland, other than her years of birth and death (1807-1888) and the fact that she was ‘a member of the aristocratic Blaxland family’ as well as sixth of eleven children. Biographical details typically note that she was encouraged to sketch flowers by her mother, made an unsuccessful petition to preserve Newington, the family home in Parramatta and made her first visit to Britain in 1863 after Newington was sold, renamed as Silverwater, after which it was eventually converted into a minimum-security prison. Nonetheless, the Blaxland Family Papers SL NSW MLMSS 9704 contain many materials by and relating to Louisa, suggesting more details can be added. Louisa’s correspondence to Aesi reveals a convicted and well-connected character who shared a love of her native land and its flowers, and was committed to supporting Aesi in her artistic aspirations. Although the existing scant sketch make no references to Louisa visiting Rome, a letter to Martha from Mark Munshall, another expatriate based in Rome, refers to ‘the good pious Miss Blaxland’, suggesting they probably met while she was visiting the Ironsides’ in Rome and I have imagined these scenes accordingly. As Louisa was from a more aristocratic and wealthier background than Martha and Aesi, I have depicted their relationship accordingly, suggesting the latter may therefore have enjoyed their greater familiarity with all things Italian when their somewhat imperious patron arrived in Rome. Her knowledge about the Dibbs brothers, John and Catherine Blue are all imagined, although the details are factual. The Dibbs boys were making their way in the world. John Blue did die of consumption and poor Catherine had remarried a violent man who assumed control of the Commodore Inn.

I was thrilled to find the letter (see p.41) in John Gibson’s Papers in the RA archives. Although I do not know who requested this letter and how they used it, I have quoted it verbatim and believe it is plausible that Louisa Blaxland was the recipient. The letter on the right from Louisa is

particularly sad as Aesi would have been about six weeks from her death when she received this in late February 1867. She was no doubt then incapable of responding to Miss Blaxland who ‘sincerely regrets to finer her ‘an invalid’ she nonetheless urges Aesi to take action ‘respecting her ‘book of Flowers’ because she has seen that ‘a lady” to going to bring out a work of the flowers of Australia’ and does ‘not like that you should be supplanted in your priority of right in the Australian Flora’. I have drawn upon the spirit of these words, the address of her London correspondence — Upper Berkeley Street— the fact that Louisa mentions both John Day, the London publisher, and Mr William Leaf in this letter to speculate about the scenes from the period from 1865 to 1866 when Miss Blaxland and the Ironsides’ are in London.

Mr William Laidler Leaf (1791-1874) is another fascinating character in the Ironsides story who provides a window upon mid-nineteenth-century London life. Leaf was a self-made man from Yorkshire, who discovered a love of literature and the arts and once he became one of the town’s wealthiest silk merchants, began collecting books and paintings. References suggest that he commissioned Aesi, to produce a work (now lost) entitled *Martha and Mary*. Caroline Clark’s father, One-Eye had worked for Leaf before he emigrated to Van Diemen’s Land and the families must have maintained connections, for Caroline was most likely the one who introduced him to the Ironsides. Leaf was a strict teetotaller with extensive business interests in France and like many other businessmen, served as a chairman on numerous boards relating to insurance and railway companies. As a young man, he had suffered a chronic disease which was then healed by his friend Jean Barthelemy Arles Dufour, an early homeopathist. This stimulated Leaf’s lifelong interest in these alternative forms of healing, and in addition to establishing institutions devoted to the care of impoverished genteel women and London’s working classes, and also providing financial support to orphanages, schools and missions and appeals for victims of accidents and disasters, Leaf also instituted

a small Homeopathic Hospital.



Mr William Leaf and his family featured on the steps of their Park Hill mansion where Aesi and Martha spent much of their time in the 1860s.

In the 1820s he had amassed sufficient fortune to purchase a prestigious estate in Streatham, then a part of London which had ‘more first class residences ... than any other locality about London’. The original ‘Hill House’ on that land was demolished and Leaf commissioned a leading architect to build a mansion in the fashionable Grecian revival style. It was, however, the gardens which most interested Leaf and he was said to have spent a fortune on the grounds, establishing a bowling green, massive rock caverns, a monkey puzzle and Gothic summer-house as well as a curvilinear conservatory, within which grew an Australian wattle, the only known plant of that species growing in Britain at the time. He specialised in pineapples, cucumbers, strawberries and melons as well as an orchid house and many species were planted to advance his homeopathic interests.



One side of Park Hill was an 80 ft balustraded terrace, complete with vases as well as a parterre where I imagined Aesi and Martha strolling with Miss Blaxland.

Copy
 Dear Madam
 I comply with your request & with pleasure submit my opinion upon the merits of Miss Ironside. I am well acquainted with her productions in drawings and in oil paintings. Among the number of ladies who labour in the arts few we find who produce original works, Miss Ironside has this power from nature, also that feeling of grace & delicacy of sentiment so necessary to make a great artist. With this natural gift she is devoted to her labours. To enable Miss Ironside to see English herself one thing is wanting and that is encouragement. She well deserves the consideration of our Country men.
 I am —



W. Pittman
 Courtenay
 Feb 26th 1867
 My dear Miss Ironside
 I have been very glad to hear that you are so well & in London. I do truly hope that ere long you are returning and that you are able to give more definite orders respecting your Book of Hours. I have been again to Mr. Day who tells me he offers you £200 for the copy of the Book of Hours that you will have the original.

Left : Copy of an undated letter from Gibson to an anonymous woman, RA GI/1/383. Middle: My photograph of Aesi, Louisa, c 1850s now held by the Benalla Art Gallery. Right: Louisa Blaxland to Aesi, 26 February 1867, Ironside papers, ML MS 272/1-4

John Blue Junior's tomb stone still stands in St. Thomas Rest Park, Crows Nest where he was buried there with his daughter Amelia. The affectionate inscription suggests that Catherine's relationship for her first husband may have been a stark contrast to her relations with the man she married after his death, who was eventually forced to answer an

allegation from Catherine's sister and daughter that his violence towards Catherine had caused her death. Martha's response to the idea of returning to London so Aesi can train with Ruskin is also speculative but based on references to her homesickness, her desire to return home which she expresses in later letters to the Langs and the decisions she makes after Aesi's death in 1867.

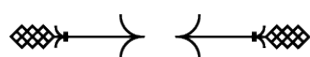


"John Blue Jnr
Who died 13th June 1863,

Aged 28 years

The pains of death are past
Labour and sorrow cease
And life's sad warfare closed at last
His soul is found in peace."

- "Also in memory of Amelia Georgina Blue
Daughter of the above
Who died 31st [sic] March 1863
Aged 6 months."



If the challenge of writing about the Brownings was not sufficiently terrifying, then the thought of integrating John Ruskin into Aesi's story was even more paralyzing. After all, Ruskin's cultural influence extends well beyond art to social and political reform, and extends far into the twentieth century, including famed figures as diverse as Leo Tolstoy, Oscar Wilde, T.S. Eliot, Le Corbusier and Mohandas Gandhi. There are still significant clusters of scholars devoted to Ruskin's life and legacy who are deeply familiar with his vast archive, which is scattered across numerous holdings in London, Manchester, Lancaster and Leeds, as well as Brantwood, the house in the Lakes District where he

removed with Joan Agnew after they disbanded Denmark House, the Ruskin family home in London. The many fictional portrayals of Ruskin tend to focus, almost exclusively, upon his brief but troubled relationship with his wife, Effie Gray, his support of the Pre Raphaelites and his obsession with the works of J.M.W. Turner, including a collection of erotic art and also make it difficult to encounter Ruskin the man as he appears in the primary sources which now survive in the Ironside Papers. While such depictions, including the six-part drama *Desperate Romantics* about the Pre-Raphaelite border on representing Ruskin as a caricature of Victorian perversity and pomp, which was often at odds with the man who composed 23 letters to Aesi and 1 to Martha (2474 words to Aesi and 61 words to Martha).

Aware of the significance of his influence upon Aesi's at a critical moment in her health and career, I set upon diffusing these distracting influences by spending time with the man himself. Or at least, as he presented himself in the thousands of letters and diary entries, which are held in the archival institutions listed in the bibliography. Much to my disappointment, I soon learned Ruskin was in the habit of destroying correspondence received, which means that although I visited each location to commune with his correspondence and hoping I might also find a trace of Aesi and Martha therein, I did not find a single letter from Aesi, although many of his letters were clearly written in response to her's. I also attended a Summer School devoted to Ruskin and the PRB, spent a week at Brantwood reading his published work and walking about the gardens he designed as well as various biographical works devoted to him, including Tim Hilton's encyclopaedic two-volume offering.

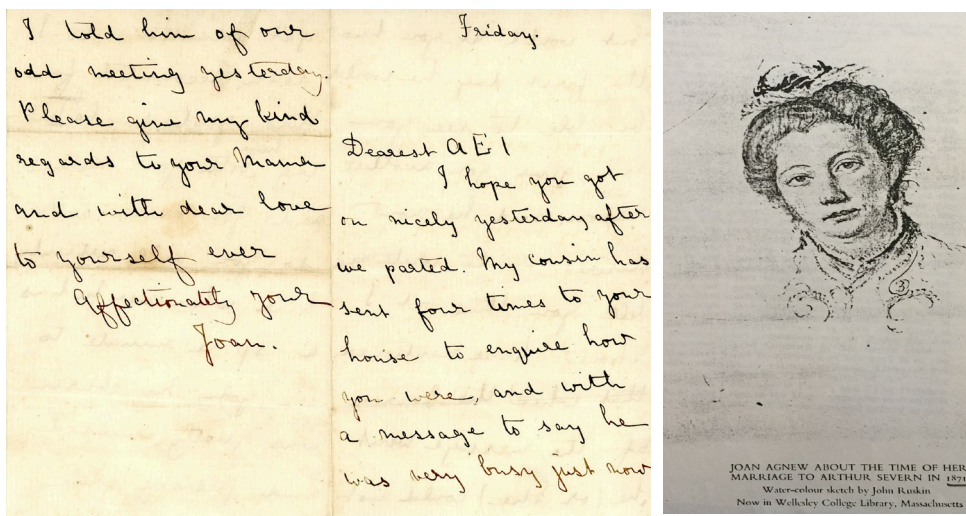
One of my most exciting discoveries came when I was visiting the Ruskin Library, Museum and Research Centre at the University of Lancaster, which boasts the most extensive collection of Ruskin's works in the world —thousands of paintings, drawings, diagrams, daguerreotypes which capture the depth and breadth of Ruskin's polymathic passions in everything from architecture and the arts to

political economy and the natural sciences. It was, however, having the opportunity to talk with Rachel Dickinson, a Ruskin scholar then based at that university, who had authored a book devoted to Ruskin's Correspondence with Joan Severn, which proved most illuminating. I had previously struggled to make sense of a peculiar body of letters which had been found among those which only survived because they had been deposited in the Society of Australian Genealogists by a tenant who found them within a box in a shed attached to a family home once belonging to the Redman family.

In her forensic analysis of the letters between Ruskin and his much younger cousin, Joan, Dickinson, now a distinguished Ruskin scholar and the first elected female Master (Chair) of the Guild of St George, the charity for arts, crafts and the rural economy founded by John Ruskin in the 1870s, argues that the nonsense language the cousins developed was intrinsic to Ruskin's world-building. It allowed Ruskin to divest himself of his professorial pressures which defined his life and assume more playful child-like, even infantile intimacies with Joan, in which they often enjoyed a more equal relationship. In fact, over time, the nonsense world they had only begun developing in 1865, when Aesi was introduced to Denmark Hill, provided Ruskin with a barrier against the demands of the world and allowed Joan to assume greater authority over the Ruskin household and Ruskin's day to day life. Dickinson shows, what I likewise observed from examining hundreds of letters Ruskin wrote in the 1860s, that he never employed this nonsense language with anyone but Joan.



Left: Ruskin’s self-portrait, note the blue necktie he often wore. Right: Margaret Ruskin.



Joan to Aesi, n.d. c 1865. Australian Society of Genealogists, 4/12973 Ironside. Right: : Joan (Ruskin’s sketch).

Nor does Joan appear to have used what Dickinson calls their ‘idio-speak’ with others. And yet, Joan’s letters to Aesi suggests that at this threshold period when Joan, the seventeen-year-old country cousin from Wigtown in Scotland was establishing her place in the Ruskin family within the sophisticated London home at Denmark House, these later exclusive rules of engagement were yet to be established. In short, it seems that Joan used this same baby-talk with Aesi, or ‘AEI ‘as she repeatedly refers to her in ten letters to the colonial painter who was then thirty-four years old. It is possible, I wondered when I was speculating about how to write these scenes, that at this period in 1865, when relations between Joan and the Ruskins were still being negotiated, Aesi enjoyed an unusual degree of trust and intimacy within

the family. Ruskin's letters to Aesi suggest this is possible, for he uses terms of affection such as 'My dear child' in 8 of the 24 letters he writes to Aesi, but rarely in the letters he wrote to other women such as Anna Blunden, Miss Owens and Evelyn Noyles during the same period. Although Ruskin maintains his position of professional drawing master, the nature of many of his letters to Aesi is often surprisingly warm and friendly, even affectionate.



Sketch of Denmark House by Ruskin in the University of Lancaster archive.

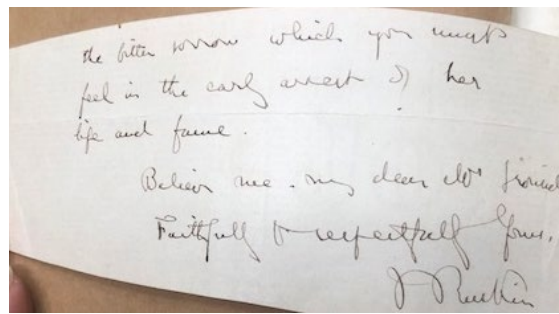
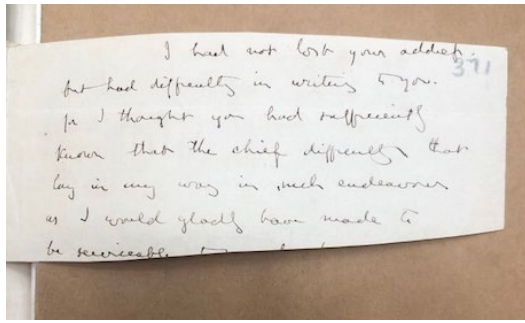
In one of his rarely dated letters (22 July 1865), addressed to 'My dear child' Ruskin commences, 'You shall come here if you like; I think it will be better and if you're too fireworkey, I'll give you some iced cream. But do be good and quiet ; - or you'll kill yourself and then you will never be able to draw shells nor faces neither. Friday if you don't hear from me', before concluding it, 'Your faithful friend'. Other letters include references to magic, spirits and angels, suggesting that Aesi felt sufficiently at ease to discuss metaphysical matters with the author of *Modern Painters* (and so much more). Given Ruskin's preoccupation with Rose La Touche which was reaching a crisis point at this period, as I suggest in this chapter, there is nothing to suggest there were romantic feelings between Ruskin and Aesi, who were, after all both single, rather indulged children of devoted mothers. Nonetheless, there does appear to have been a genuine interest, and a letter to Aesi from Charles Nicholson during this period suggests that she may have even resided at

Denmark Hill, for a time. In another from 5 June 1866, Laura Wentworth tells her sister Timmie Fisher that ‘Mr Ruskin has rather a great interest in her and will be of great use to her for he is taking a great deal of trouble and time ... she really is very clever painter and but very poor - I pity them so much’. This is the only evidence that the relationship persisted until 1866 and there is some question in the handwriting if this is 1865 or 1866. Although many of Ruskin’s letters are undated I speculate that the rupture occurred in 1865, as the last of his dated letters are that year and that it had something to do with Aesi referring to Ruskin as a materialist and she ‘a Spiritualist and therefore in a higher sphere’. I have quoted this as well as others letters by and between Joan and Ruskin reproduced by Dickinson in her book (see bibliography) to create a sense of these relations but also the deeper tensions which shaped this period, not only for Aesi as she attempted to navigate the capricious world of complex family intimacies, but also for Joan, whose position as the simple country cousin from Scotland endeared her to Margaret Ruskin as the latter was mourning her husband, and provided Ruskin with a much needed confidante and playmate who was also prepared to play the part of housekeeper.

Another intriguing remanent remnant from Ruskin in the Ironside papers is a damaged letter to Martha which was clearly prompted by the latter, after Aesi’s death, for it reads:

First page: 'I had not lost your address but had difficulty in writing to you as I thought you had sufficiently known that the chief difficulty that lay in my way in such endeavour as I could gladly have made to be serviceable

Second page: ‘ ... the bitter sorrow which you must feel in the early arrest of her life and fame ...’ Believe me - my dear Mrs Ironside, Faithfully and respectfully yours, J Ruskin.



Ruskin to Martha Ironside condolence, n.d. ML MS 272/1/371

These few lines suggest that there was some ‘chief difficulty’ which Ruskin assumed Martha knew which prevented him from responding to Martha’s request. I have had to speculate about what this was, and drew upon the primary sources as well as biographical sketches in a way that I hope does justice to Ruskin’s complex character. I believe he was genuinely interested in Aesi and treated her with generous good will, even encouraging the friendship with Joan. Then, something happened and he did not. We will never know what that was, but as Rose La Touche was scheduled to visit London at the end of 1865 I have imagined that it may have been related to that.

The account of Deniehy’s death is from the colonial newspapers. I do not know how Aesi learned of this, although there is a source which claims that when she received the news she called out, ‘there is nothing left to live for’. This utterance, although dramatic, is in keeping with Aesi’s character and state of health at this period, so I included it, even though it comes from an unverified source.

30. SIGHING FOR AUSTRALIA



Black wattle (Acacia decurrens)

The title for this chapter comes from an undated letter a woman named Mrs Wormald sent Aesi in the 1860s, in which she discusses all sorts of spiritualist and artistic matters before sending her love to Martha and begging her ‘not to sigh for Australia’. I was moved by the ambiguity of this instruction as it suggest that Martha was not only suffering homesickness during her time abroad, but perhaps also sighing with disappointment about the state of colonial society, including its then highly fractious politics. The phrase certainly captures many of the themes of this last stage of the Ironsides’ story and I chose the black wattle as the flower for the chapter opening, not only because Mr Leaf, the wealthy silk merchant and philanthropist who hosted the Ironsides often during their stays in London, was known to cultivate exotic plants from across the British empire, including *Acacia decurrens*. The species is common around the Sydney region and convicts and settlers used it for

their huts, thus signalling the time when Martha's father, John Redman arrived in the waters of Warung (Sydney Harbour) and may have cut the line of limitation around what then became known as 'The Camp' and eventually Sydney.

Correspondence in the Ironside Papers as well as those Laura Wentworth sent to her older sister, Timmie Fisher, confirm the Ironsides spent much of 1865 and 1866 living between Mr Leaf's London estate at Park Hill and the Wentworth family's town and country properties. I speculate that the Ironsides spent much of the Christmas season with the Wentworths. Although sporadically dated, Laura's letters to Timmie register alarm about Aesi's condition. In one she confides that 'the Ironsides are staying with us now - the poor little thing still has a most dreadful cough and is so thin when undressed that it is wonderful how she can get about as she does'. I have triangulated these with other letters in the archive as well as my research into TB to evoke her increasingly invalidism.

When I first encountered the Ironsides' personal possessions which are still in the care of the Redman descendants, I was immediately struck by Aesi's 'ideal' portrait of Daniel Deniehy which is the only portrait in her entire collection which is treated with gold fabric and enclosed within a handmade frame. As this was also the only portrait which Aesi signed with two names: "AEsi, Ada Ironside" in further suggested in held particular significance to her and I therefore created the scene in this chapter when she lovingly treats this work accordingly.

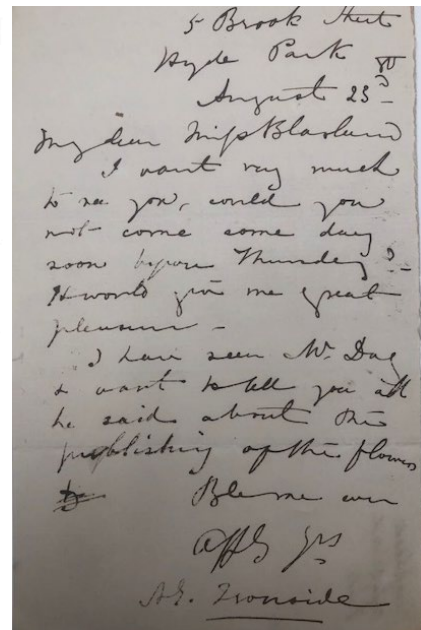
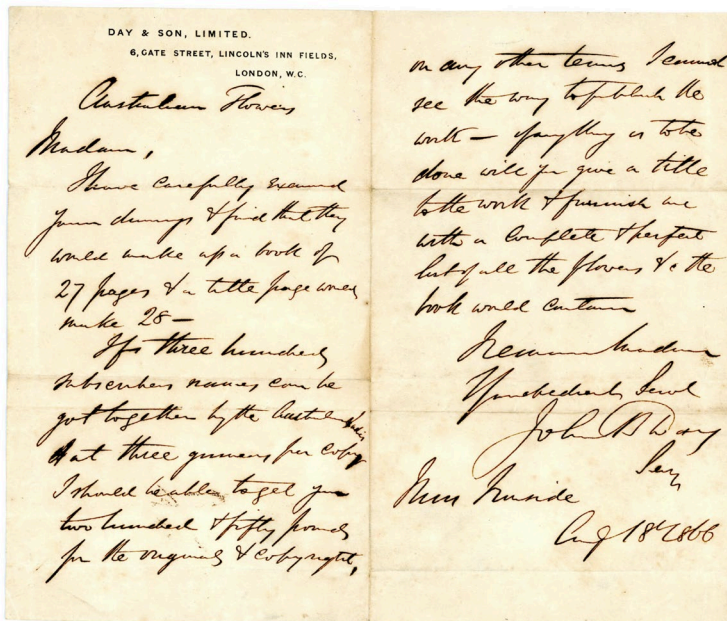


Aesi, Daniel Deniehy, 1854, Private Collection.

I have quoted from the article about Aesi's paintings in London's Daily News verbatim, although I do not know if Miss Blaxland was the deliverer of this good news. However, as the fierce but loyal Louisa as played the *Deus ex machina* (god from the machine) in Part Two when Aesi had given up on her wildflower folio because she had failed to find a Waratah nor reach her intended goal of fifty watercolour illustrations, it seemed fitting to bring Miss Blaxland back for this final moment of triumph in Aesi's career. After all, the letter she wrote to Aesi in February 1867 confirms that she was certainly involved in the efforts to procure the London publisher, John Day to produce Aesi's flower folio, if not perhaps entirely as I describe.

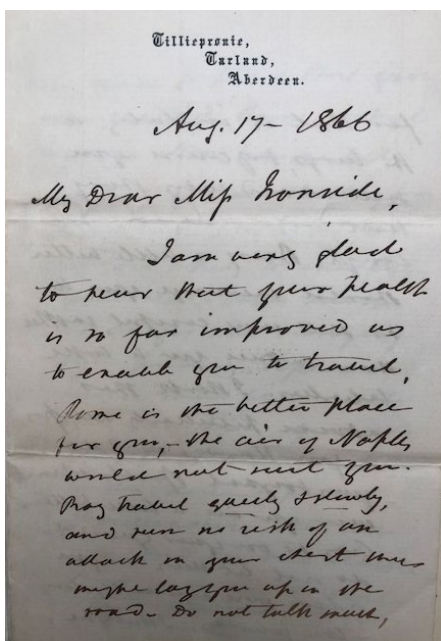
The colony numbers several gentlemen who are prominent in letters and science. The Rev. W. B. Clarke has a European reputation as a geologist; Dr. Bennett is well known as a naturalist; and Mr. J. Tebbutt, jun., has attained distinction in astronomy. Some of Mr. Henry Kendall's poems have been favourably noticed in England, Miss Ironside's paintings have been admired in Rome, and Miss Chambers has been regarded as a "*prima donna*" in Florence. Thus the country promises well in letters, science, and the fine arts.

A 1 Jan 1867 description of NSW's 'Natural and Industrial Products' notes Aesi's works in Italy. *Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia, Melbourne 1866-67: Official Record*, (Melbourne: 1867), 354.



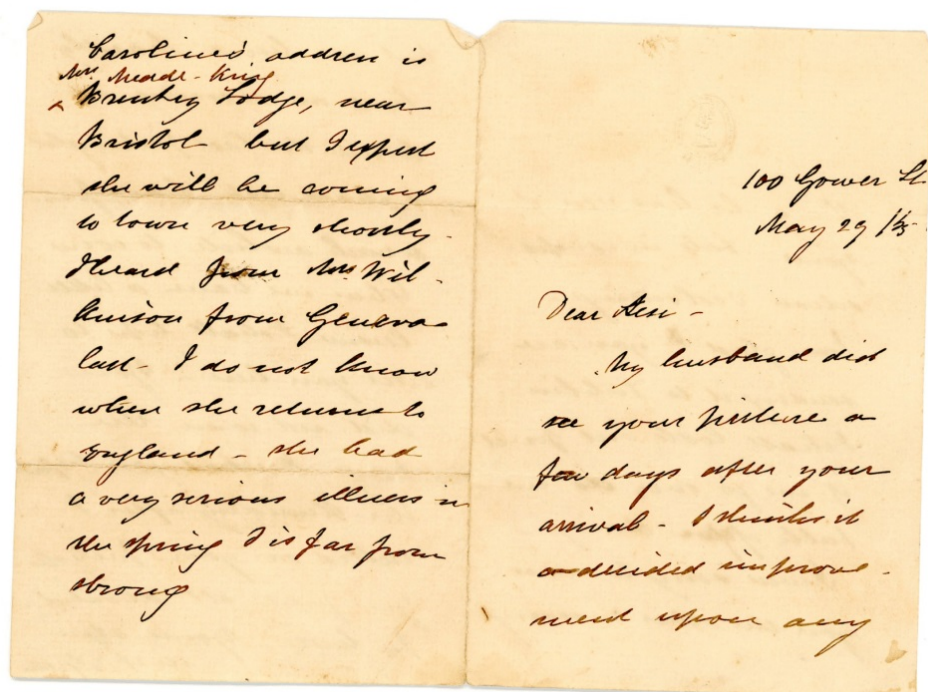
Left: John Day & Sons letter confirming publication terms Society of Australian Genealogists, 4/12973. Right: Aesi's hasty letter to Louisa 23 August 1866, requesting her presence so they can discuss these. This letter was original indexed as written by a Mr Ironside in the SL NSW Mitchell - Blaxland Family Papers MLMSS 9704. Imagine my delight when I followed my hunches, and discovered one of Aesi's last letters.

The many letters from Sir James Clark in the Ironsides papers from this period confirm that although he was now an elderly and retired widower, he continued to show an active interest in Adelaide's career and health. Here is one of many examples from the same period when Sir James expresses relief that Aesi's health appears to have improved, but concern about her intention to travel back to Rome.



'Pray travel quietly and slowly ...
do not talk much for that is irritating to the lungs ... avoid every strain that could increase the cough ...
being a little better should encourage you ...but be more careful -- rather than take liberties.
I think the advice peculiarly suited to you, knowing you as I do and your buoyant spirits whenever you are a little better ...
I shall be very glad to hear that you

Sir James Clark to Aesi, 17 August 1866, Ironside Papers, SL NSW ML MSS 272/1/39.



The beginning of Mary Ann Everett Green's 29 May 1865 letter to Aesi, Society of Australian Genealogists, 4/12973.

I have listed the names of well-known Victorians who corresponded with Aesi or were known to her. Mary Ann Everett Green was a historian and Ellen Heaton a wealthy art patron who once wrote to Ruskin in praise of Aesi. I do not know if they actually subscribed to her *Australian Wild Flowers* book. Nor do I actually know how the folio of flowers disappeared, but I was unable to find a single watercolour of an Australian native flower by Aesi. There are early pastel works of *Christmas Bells* and the watercolour which features on the front cover of *Wild Love*, which may have been prompted by the convolvulus which Ruskin asked her to pick from Mr Leaf's garden and then sketch.

'Wild Fire' as Mary Edmonia Lewis, preferred to be known, was an American sculptor of African-American and Mississauga Ojibwe heritage who went to Rome in the first half of 1866. Although Aesi and Martha's journey back to Rome occurred later that year I conflated the two voyages as I wanted to orchestrate their meeting to signal a passing of generations of female artists making their way to Italy in search of greater personal and professional liberty and feature a little of Wild Fire's story. As a child, she describes living a 'wondering life, fishing and swimming ... and making moccasins' until she was sent to school. Eventually Wild

Fire attended Oberlin Academy Preparatory School, also known as Oberlin College, which had been established during the Second Coming in the 1830s as they blazed through the Burnt Out Districts thanks to the zeal of Charles Finney discussed in Part One when Dr Lang returns from his visit to America. Wild Fire struggled to gain support in America but eventually became known in the abolitionist press for making works inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's work, including his epic poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*. She was accompanied to Rome for the first time by Flori Freeman and enjoyed the support of Charlotte Cushman, setting up a studio just off Piazza Barberini and working in the neoclassical style.



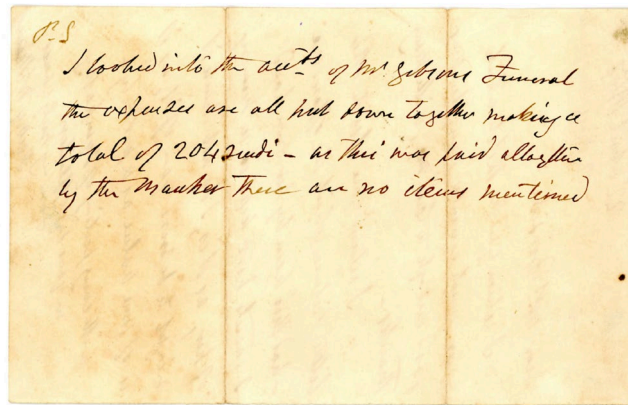
Left: *Hiawatha*. Right: *Minehaha*, both by Wild Fire and produced in 1868. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The account of Gibson's funeral, including the muffled drums and Legion of Honour, are based on descriptions from the newspapers, Penry William's letters and Lady Eastlake's biography on her old friend, John Gibson. These also detail how, although Gibson had suffered a terrible stroke which left him paralysed down his right side, he was able to hold onto the telegraph he received from Queen Victoria and died with this in his hand. After his death, Queen Victoria also sent a letter of condolence to Penry Williams,

acknowledging the Welsh painter as Gibson's intimate friend.

I have imagined these final scenes with Penry Williams, Martha and Aesi, although there certainly is a letter in the Ironside Papers which was sent to the Roman Address from Dr. Lang and dated 1865 advising Aesi that her countrymen would like her to contribute her work in the Paris International Exhibition. I have speculated that such an invitation would have had the effect described upon Aesi. There is nothing in the record to indicate this and certainly no bitterness in the final letter she wrote Dr. Lang, dated 10 January 1867, 'eleven years' to the day she and Martha 'first entered Rome'.

Aesi's final letter to Dr. Lang is quoted verbatim and was written three months before she died. I have imagined the scene of her death based on my research into TB and the way Roman officials were known to react to it, which is well-recorded in what happened in the immediate aftermath of John Keats's death in Rome in 1821. Although some forty years had passed since then, and Rome had become a key destination for health tourists, travellers often complained of the cruel and 'ignorant' treatment of local officials. Interestingly while expatriates mocked locals for believing TB was contagious, their instincts proved to be correct. The letter below is one of two pages from Penry Williams to Martha and is providing advice on the cost of Gibson's funeral and burial at the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome. This indicates that Martha was thinking of burying Aesi there, where she would have been in the company of her old Master as well as Shelly and Keats. Within a few weeks however, she had decided to return to London and then Sydney with Aesi's embalmed remains.

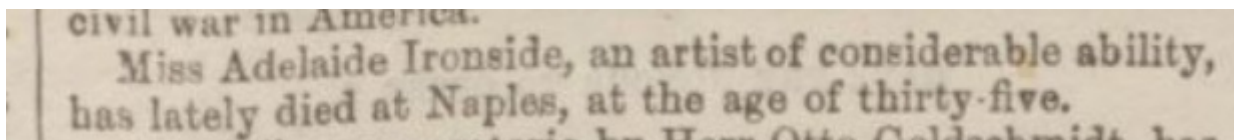


Penry Williams to Martha, Society of Australian Genealogists, 4/12973

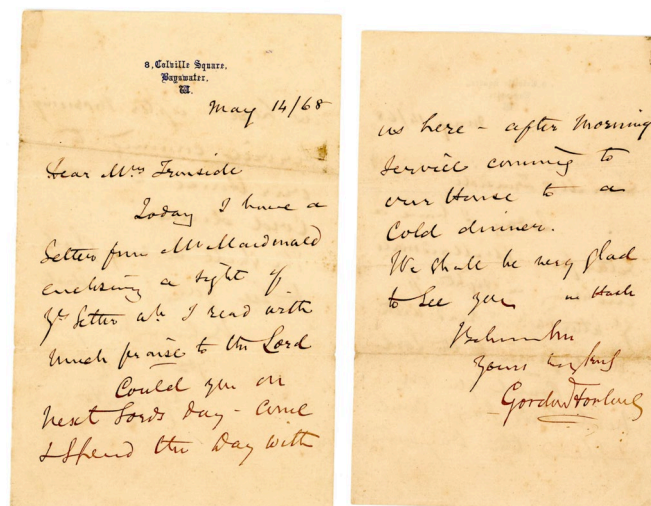
After Martha returned to London she appears to have maintained a correspondence with Munshall. In the two surviving letters he writes he expresses great concern for Martha and begs her to ‘preserve the strength ... required to go through the difficult task’ she had assigned herself and ‘to nourish’ her shattered health’. ‘It will be Alas! Impossible for you to accomplish all that your attachment to your darling Child has prompted you to do’. Munshall also suggests ‘the famous Chlorodyne in small, very small doses’ might provide relief (his underlining). Munshall’s tender concern was so moving I decided to portray he and Mr Ewing as kindly figures who provide Martha with support during the terrible time when this devoted mother lost the daughter who, as she later confided to Laura Wentworth, she had made her ‘earthly idol’.

There is a letter from Hosmer which is as Martha describes. I do not know who wrote the description of kissing Aesi’s ‘high white forehead’, but I speculate that it was Flori Freeman, who was known to be sentimental. Again, I have referred to Browning’s poem, *The Patriot*, as Martha leaves Rome for the last time with her grim cargo following in her wake. I based Mr Leaf’s treatments of Martha on those I gleaned from homeopathic remedies from the period. Mr Leaf did kindly organise for Aesi to be interred in the catacombs at West Norwood Cemetery, where he had a large family plot, had buried several children and his own wife. While many of the condolence letters written to Martha after Aesi’s death

are very thoughtful, including a very moving one from Lady Eastlake, I admit I was incensed by the coldness with which Gordon Forlong agreed to meet with Martha in May 1868. The offer of a cold dinner after the morning service smacked of ‘cold Christian charity’ indeed.

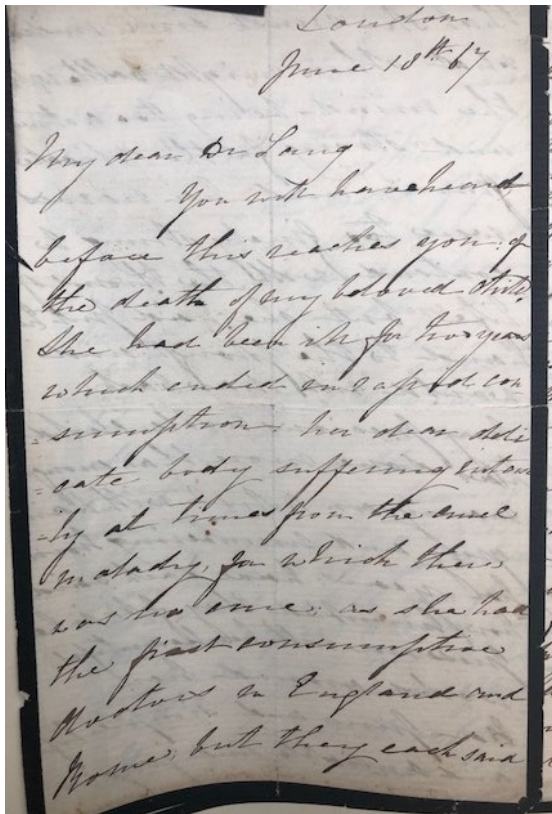


The *Bath Chronicle* announces Ironside's death, mistakenly placing it in Naples rather than Rome. Writing to Martha on 21 May, Lady Eastlake would describe herself as "struck to the heart on reading in the Times the unspeakable affliction that has fallen on you -- I know only the terrible fact." *Bath Chronicle*, 16 May 1867, 7; Eastlake to Ironside, Society of Australian Genealogists, Ironside papers, 4/12973.



Gordon Forlong to Martha 14 May 1868, Society of Australian Genealogists, Ironside papers, 4/12973.

Once she was back in London Martha wrote three letters to the Langs; two to Dr Lang, the first in June 1867 and the second a year later in 1868. Her very final letter was written to Willie Lang a month later, 31 July 1868. I found these letters so moving they shaped the way I developed Martha's character and voice as well as her relationship with Aesi. They were the inspiration behind my decision to very loosely depict Martha as Demeter, the grain goddess and mother of Persephone, who was abducted by Hades, god of the underworld while she was out picking flowers.



You will have heard before this reaches you of the death of my beloved Artist. She had been ill for two years so much ended in rapid consumption; her dear delicate body suffering intensely from the cruel malady for which there was no cure; as she had the first consumptive in England and Rome but they each said that she must sink under what others might and others battle with the mind being too active and strong for the delicate frame; and her nerves too finely strung to contend with the thorns of life; but she had "put her hand to the plough and would not draw back". My precious noble child has done more than enough many an artist with hair grey and numbering twice her years have each said how humbled they felt in her presence with her beautiful works around her. Her pure and simple life and amiable and joyous nature has endeared her to everyone who knew her.

I know you will be pleased to hear that she died full of hope in Christ and was enabled to 'rejoice in the hope of glory'. You may imagine my deep affliction to see very adored child sinking day by day, weaker and weaker and in the last two days her noises became like a young child's; but with all the precious mind she was perfect to the last. She said many beautiful things which I cannot write now but will tell you when I see you; which will be some few months (DW) as I expect to leave here for

Martha to Lang, 18 June 1867, SL NSW Mitchell John Dunmore Lang Papers vol 9, ML A2229/251.

In Martha's letter to Willie Lang, she expresses a desire to leave for Australia in the coming spring with 'the immortal remains of my beloved one', before explaining how she has been 'compelled to remain in this city' for which she has no love. She then describes how she often cries while 'delivering tracts' and always says a pray for their 'soul's eternal welfare'. In a letter to Timmie Fisher, Laura Wentworth also mentions how Mrs Ironside wore herself out handing out tracts and failing to eat properly and in another to Timmie dated 26 January 1869 she confides that she does not think Mrs Ironside, will 'reach her own country again'. In the account Laura then wrote to Timmie after Martha died she describes accompanying her mother to farewell the recently departed Martha as she lay in the room which she and Aesi had often shared at Mr Leaf's home in Park Hill. I have imagined the scene with Martha marvelling at William Leaf's golden wattle in bloom before she heads off through the late winter woods to visit Aesi in the catacombs.

FASHIONABLE WOMEN.—Read the biographies of our great and good men and women; not one of them had a fashionable mother. They nearly all sprung from plain, strong-minded women, who had about as little to do with fashions as with the changing clouds.

Small clipping in the Society of Australian Genealogists, Ironside papers, 4/12973.