

Hotel de la Poste, Berisal, Simplon

13 Sep. 1884

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Dear Friend,

As you see I am still staying on here notwithstanding the cold and rain. Being so far on the road to Italy I do not like to turn back, and yet I cannot go on although the quarantine is taken off on the Italian frontier; for Florence would be too hot as yet, and if I stopped at any intermediate place I might find myself some fine day surrounded by a sanitary cordon and liable to be shot if I tried to escape. Besides we cannot tell how soon the Cholera may spread into Tuscany, the one province hitherto exempt on the western side of the peninsula, and once in Florence it might commit ravages like those in Spezia, the sanitary arrangements not being of the best. So I shall wait here for some ten days

longer to watch the course of events.  
I should in any case look forward with  
great interest to the appearance of your  
new instalment of the Lit. Feuilleton,  
and my interest will naturally be  
increased by the references to my book  
which you so kindly promise.

My book has been reviewed by Susemihl  
in a Bericht über Aristoteles und  
Theophrastus für d. j. 1883, with especial  
reference to the Aristotelian chapters.

While controverting many of my views  
he gives me much more praise than I  
should have expected from an adherent  
of Zeller's. But probably you have seen  
the article (in which there is some question  
of you also) so I need say no more about  
it except that I have begun a friendly  
correspondence with Susemihl on the subject  
of my views respecting Aristotle. He  
seems to have a candid but at the same

time vacillating and inconsistent mind.  
However he acknowledges himself to be  
not a philosopher but a philologist.

Joett's principal contribution to Platonic  
literature so far is a translation of the Dialogues  
which I showed you at Götting and which I  
think you said was already known to you.  
It is a work of great literary but of little or  
no philosophical value. Levis Campbell  
(Professor of Greek in St. Andrew's University,  
Scotland) who as I mentioned is preparing  
a new translation of the Republic in associat-  
ion with Joett, has edited one or two  
Dialogues of Plato, the Theaetetus and Sophistes  
I think, but is best known by an excellent  
edition of Sophocles.

The other day I found in Ewald's Dichter  
des Alten Bundes a reference to the supposed  
derivation of the parallelism in Hebrew  
poetry from an Egyptian source, which re-  
called to me our conversation of last year.  
Ewald rejects this derivation on the ground

That parallelism is to be found in  
Hebrew poetry of a much older date than  
Moses and Pentateuch. But I fancy that  
more modern critics would deny the  
authenticity of the fragments on which he relies.

Have you seen Sir W. Thomson's address  
to the British Association at Montreal?  
It is interesting as a return to the Cartesian  
Physics in this sense that he tries to re-  
solve the so-called forces of elasticity attraction  
and repulsion into simple consequences of the  
collisions of the atoms with one another. This  
is attacking the Aristotelian *ὀραμα* in its  
last stronghold.

If you do not hear from me again please  
address to the Parion Lucchese Florence.

With best remembrances to your family

Yours very sincerely

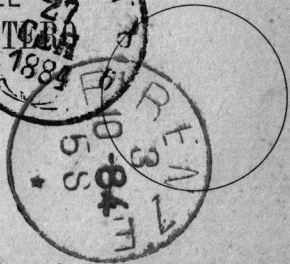
Alfred Russel

Person Lucchesi, Florence 3 Oct. 1884 | 30

On arriving here last night I was told that  
that a letter from Kupria had recently come  
for me but had been forwarded to Switzerland  
I think it must have been from you and am  
very sorry to have missed it but hope to get it  
in time. It will go first to Interlaken and  
then to Berisal which will cause some delay.  
A postcard which I sent from Berisal the other  
day announcing my return was never delivered  
otherwise this would not have happened. I feel  
so vexed about it. Yours ever A.W. Berisal



UNIONE POSTALE UNIVERSALE  
CARTOLINA ITALIANA PER L'ESTERO  
CENTESIMI DIECI



*An Herrn Professor Reichmüller  
Universität Dorpat*

*Russia*

NB. Su questo lato non deve  
scriversi che il solo indirizzo.

Pension Lucchesi Florence 15 Dec. 1884 131

Dear Friend

I have delayed thanking you for your beautiful and interesting book until I had read it through. The references to myself are most kind and obliging. At present - I am hardly prepared to discuss your arguments thoroughly, but hope to do so some day. As regards the general question of the order of Plato's Dialogues I had already formed a theory on the subject before becoming acquainted with your writings. It is entirely based on internal evidence, that is on a certain view of the steps through which I suppose Plato's philosophy to have passed, and in many points - particularly the date of the Republic it has led me to conclusions different from yours, conclusions which I feel

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reluctant to abandon. On one point  
however I find myself perfectly agreed  
with you - the date of the Parmenides.  
Here I think I can point to a piece of  
confirmatory evidence. It seems  
likely Plato means himself by Parmenides  
is it not almost certain that in  
giving the age of that philosopher at  
65 he is also giving the date of the  
dialogue? Now supposing Plato to have  
been born 427 B.C. that would give  
us 362 for the dialogue - a result  
agreeing very nearly with that reached  
by you. Some years ago I spoke of this  
theory to Lewis Campbell who thought  
it by no means unlikely. It then  
occurred to us that Plato was the  
corruption εὐπάδα δὲ προσβύτην  
which seemed unlikely on the part of a  
man who had actually attained that

age himself. But might there not  
be a little historic irony here, espe-  
cially in reference to the extreme youth  
of Aristotle? What you say  
(p. 6.) of the Platonic Ideas become  
spiritualized and self-conscious in the  
mind of man sounds like a con-  
firmation of my explanation of Aristotle's  
Creative Reason which I surely dis-  
misses as self-evidently absurd.  
I was surprised at your putting the  
Apologia so late for there seems to be  
a direct polemic reference to it in  
Xenophon's Memorabilia. You will re-  
member the passage I mean where he  
says that Socrates was not content  
with refuting but gave positive  
instruction to his hearers. Besides the  
sceptical tone of the Apologia gives me  
a most decided impression that it

was written before any of the system  
striking dogmatic dialogues. I do not  
clearly make out what your attitude  
is as regards the historical accuracy  
of Xenophon's reports. If they are  
authentic Plato must have been quite  
aware of the fact; and then his polemic  
would (as I think it was) have been  
directed not against Xenophon but  
against Socrates himself.

I feel rather distressed about the binding  
of the first volume of the Lit. Feschen  
as I wish it to be uniform with the  
second. Do you think if I sent it to  
Koebner he could have it done for me?

I am going to spend the whole of this  
winter in Florence studying Biblical  
criticism and religious history together  
with ancient history general in  
Duncker's work.

With kindest remembrances to your  
family  
Most sincerely yours  
Alfred Benn