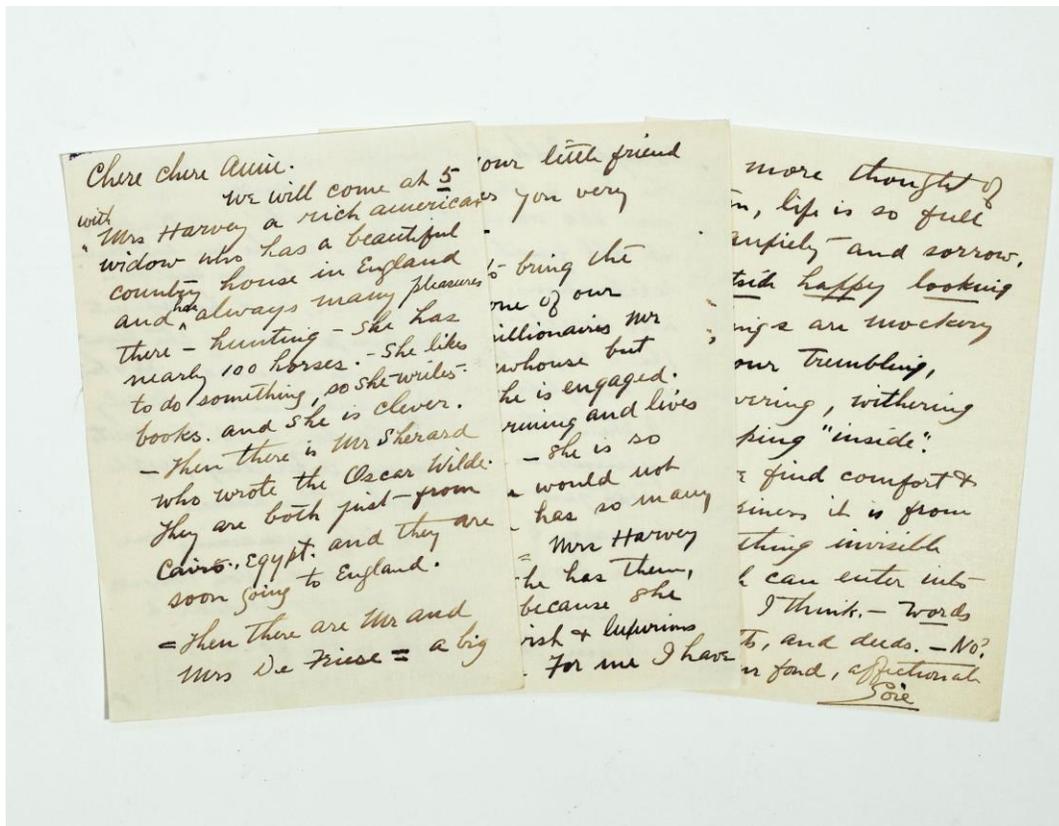


Fuller, Loïe (1862-1928). American dancer. [Autographed letter, signed "Loïe"]. [Paris, 1908].

Tall 8vo, 5 pages on three sheets, folded. In English. A dense, five-page letter to Mme Jules Clarétie, the wife of the important critic and writer Jules Clarétie, briefing her friend on wealthy guests who are coming to a soirée at the Clarétie home. Fuller writes with obvious affection for her friend, in language evocative of her very creativity, but with no love for the wealthy guests.



excerpts:

Chere, Chere Ami. We will come at five o'clock with Mrs. Harvey, a rich American widow who hunts, has a hundred horses and writes books... Robert Sherard, the biographer of the Oscar Wilde who is returning from Egypt... Mr. (and Mrs.) De Friese... Catherine Van Rennes, a great folk songwriter and friend of Willem Mengelberg, the most brilliant conductor. I wanted to bring the sister of one of our greatest millionaires Mr. Samuel Newhouse who is admirably simple despite his millions, unlike Mrs. Harvey, who loves luxurious things.”*

“And ‘me’ dear- I am just - ‘me’ you know, your little friend who loves you very dearly. For me I have no more thoughts of them, life is so full of anxiety. - and sorrow. Outside happy looking

things are mockery to our trembling, wavering, withering weeping ‘inside.’ If we find comfort & happiness it is from something invisible which can enter into us. . . .”

Written at an important period in Fuller’s life when she began work on her autobiography, encouraged by Jules Clarétie. At this time, she was also staging her ballet-pantomime *La Tragédie de Salomé* (1907). She also intended to form a school and company L’École de Loie Fuller**.

The guests were wealthy potential patrons of Fuller who could financially assist her in her theatrical pursuits. The letter may be helpful in dating her Parisian activities and documenting her fundraising attempts.

Mr. and Mrs. Jules Clarétie were important friends of Fuller. Jules Clarétie was an influential theatre critic, director of the Théâtre Français, and a playwright himself. He was a champion of Fuller’s dancing, which was controversial in Paris at this time. He writes, “She has no more learned to dance than she has learned to breathe” (Garelick, p. 13, quoting Clarétie in Loie Fuller papers, NYPLPA). On another occasion, “I had the immense pleasure of seeing [Fuller’s] *Salome* in everyday clothe dance her steps without the illusion created by theatrical costume. She has installed her footlights, her eclectic lamps, all this visual fairyland which she has invented and perfected, which has made of her a unique personality, an independent creator, a revolutionist in art” (Fuller, p. 286, quoting Clarétie from an unidentified article, 1907).

Most importantly Clarétie encouraged Fuller to write her autobiography *Fifteen Years of a Dancer’s Life* (1913). While there is no dedication in the book, she titles the last chapter “How M. Clarétie induced me to write this book” and writes, “it is thanks to his insistence that I decided to dip my pen in the inkwell and to begin these memoirs.” Fuller met the Claréties in 1900. Over the next few years she was occasionally invited to lunch at their home: on one occasion to an afternoon party; on another, to a box at the Theatre Francais. In return, she invited the couple to a rehearsal of her *Salome****.

Jules Clarétie (Arsène Arnaud Clarétie; 1840-1913) was born at Limoges. After studying at the Lycée Bonaparte in Paris, he became a journalist, achieving great success as dramatic critic to *Le Figaro* and to the *Opinion nationale*. In 1885, he became director of the Théâtre Française. In 1901, he assumed sole responsibility for choosing the modern plays to be performed at that theatre. He was elected a member of the Académie française in 1888 and took his seat in February 1889, being received by Ernest Renan.

***Robert Sherard** (1861-1943) was an English writer and journalist. He was a friend, and the first biographer, of Oscar Wilde, as well as being Wilde's most prolific biographer in the first half of the twentieth century.

Mr. & Mrs. de Friese (L.H.): Hoyt DeFriese (1858-1928) was American lawyer and graduate of Harvard. He went to England in 1883. His wife Katherine (née Sarah Catherine Johnson), was a member Society of America Women in London and known for her charitable works.

Catherine van Rennes (Catharina van Rennes) (1858-1940) was a Dutch music educator and composer. Van Rennes established her own singing school and developed her own teaching technique.

Willem Mengelberg (1871-1951): Dutch conductor of Toonkunst d'Amsterdam, and Orchestre du Concertgebouw.

**Her company first performed in 1909 at the Théâtre Marigny.

***This 1907 version, her second version of *Salome*, was undoubtedly influenced by Oscar Wilde's 1907 play *Salomé*. Importantly it "inspired both Sergei Diaghilev's 1913 ballet *Salomé* featuring Tamara Karsavina at the Paris Opera House and Ida Rubinstein's 1919 restaging at a post World War I fund raising Gala" (Bristow, 72).

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