

# Guide to the Dante Gabriel Rossetti Letters to William Houghton Clabburn

MSS 31



YCBA Library Court. Photograph by Richard Caspole, YCBA, 2016.

compiled by Mairead MacRae; edited by Francis Lapka

2017

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Yale Center for British Art, Rare Books and Manuscripts  
Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts  
1080 Chapel Street  
P. O. Box 208280  
New Haven, CT 06520-8280  
203-432-2814  
ycba.rarebooks@yale.edu  
<https://britishart.yale.edu/about-us/departments/rare-books-and-manuscripts>

**CALL NUMBER:** MSS 31

**CREATOR:** Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

**TITLE:** Dante Gabriel Rossetti Letters to William Houghton Clabburn

**DATES:** 1863-1865

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** .42 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection comprises 11 letters from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William H. Clabburn written from 1863 to 1865. The last of these is addressed to Clabburn's wife, Hannah Louisa. The letters are accompanied by 8 envelopes addressed to Clabburn by Rossetti. Rossetti's letters primarily relate to Clabburn's commission of an oil replica of Rossetti's *Mary Magdalen at the door of Simon the Pharisee*. The correspondence records in detail Rossetti's artistic process pertaining to this work. In his letter on 6 July 1865, Rossetti provides an extensive interpretation of the work.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ycba.mss.0031>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ycba.mss.0031>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The collection is the physical property of the Yale Center for British Art. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts.

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## Preferred Citation

Dante Gabriel Rossetti Letters to William Houghton Clabburn. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund.

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## Biographical / Historical

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was an English poet, painter and translator. Born in London, Rossetti hailed from an artistically prodigious family; his Italian father was a Dante scholar while his sister, Christina Rossetti, became a renowned romantic poet and his brother, William Michael, an accomplished writer and critic. Like many members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Rossetti received his early artistic training at Sass's Drawing Academy, London, entering the school probably in 1841. In 1848, alongside William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and others, Rossetti founded the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, a group of English painters, poets and critics. The Pre-Raphaelites sought to reform British art through a return to honest simplicity and the use of luminous colors and literary themes. Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites advocated for "truth to nature" in art, their work reflecting a mimesis of nature, rich detail and influences from Quattrocento Italian art. The Pre-Raphaelites received praise and endorsement from the influential art critic John Ruskin who boldly predicted that the Pre-Raphaelites would "lay in our land the foundations of a school of art nobler than has been seen for three hundred years" (Ruskin letter to The Times, 30 May 1851). Rossetti's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (1849) was the first work to be exhibited carrying the Brotherhood's initials. In addition to his drawing and paintings, Rossetti was a prolific writer, publishing many of his own poems and sonnets and producing a number of translations of Italian medieval poetry, including that of Dante Alighieri.

The recipient of the letters, William Houghton Clabburn (c.1820-1889), was a Norwich businessman and manufacturer of silk shawls. A close friend and patron of the artist Frederick Sandys, Clabburn came into contact with Rossetti through Sandys's loose association with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. As these letters evidence, Clabburn corresponded with Rossetti in order to commission an oil replica of Rossetti's *Mary Magdalen at the door of Simon the Pharisee* (1858). The correspondence suggests that Clabburn and Rossetti's relationship was primarily one of patron and artist, however the letters show a friendliness between the pair, with Rossetti referencing mutual friends and acquaintances (including Sandys and Valentine Cameron Prinsep), extending to Clabburn invitations to meet and expressing gratitude for Clabburn's gifts.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection comprises 11 letters from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William H. Clabburn written from 1863 to 1865. The last of these is addressed to Clabburn's wife, Hannah Louisa. The letters are accompanied by 8 envelopes addressed to Clabburn by Rossetti. Rossetti's letters primarily relate to Clabburn's commission of an oil replica of Rossetti's *Mary Magdalen at the door of Simon the Pharisee*. The correspondence records in detail Rossetti's artistic process pertaining to this work. In his letter on 6 July 1865, Rossetti provides an extensive interpretation of the work.

The *Mary Magdalen* replica is described in Surtees's catalogue raisonné, in entry no. 109, R2 (page 65). Surtees notes: "Besides R. I, one, or possibly two, further oil replicas appear to have been begun in the early 1860s. The picture seems to have been commissioned by John Heugh in 1862-3, but was cancelled. It is uncertain whether the head and shoulders of the Magdalene had been painted on the canvas (M. p. 98). Clabburn, a Norwich manufacturer, who recommissioned the picture in 1863, denied that the painting had been begun. By July 1865 the replica was despatched to him but he doubted if it was the work of Rossetti's hand. In 1872 it was bought off him by Fairfax Murray. ..."

The letters demonstrate both Rossetti and Clabburn's influential connections in the contemporary art world. Rossetti refers to his and Clabburn's mutual acquaintance Frederick Sandys (of whom Clabburn was a close friend) and other prominent artists of the time including Valentine Cameron Prinsep, James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Alphonse Legros. Indeed, the correspondence indicates that, on occasion, Rossetti acted on other artists' behalf. A letter dated 4 December 1864 reveals that Rossetti arranged for the sale of a Legros's *La mort de Saint François* to Clabburn, with Rossetti remarking "You [Clabburn] must know I [Rossetti] have generally been his [Legros's] business secretary". In other instances, Rossetti proffers his opinion on cultural events and institutions, declaring lectures at the "Academy" (presumably the Royal Academy) to be "much of a muchness" and remarking upon exhibitions of the time (3 May 1865).

The letters disclose the more quotidian aspects of Rossetti's work, detailing price justifications and forms of payment. In one letter, Rossetti describes at length, and in precise measurements, how the scaling up of a piece will affect its price: "If again I were to adopt measurements on a sufficiently increased scale to reach again a convenient proportion for the squaring off, the picture would reach a larger size than I could paint for 200 guineas" (15 June 1863). In another, he provides Clabburn with precise instructions for sending Rossetti payments for *Mary Magdalen* (1 May 1865). Rossetti and Clabburn's correspondence provides further insight into Rossetti's belief in his works' worth, revealing Rossetti's confidence regarding the future value of his paintings. In a letter dated 15 June 1863, Rossetti states that he cannot accept Clabburn's commission for anything less than 200 guineas, on account of Rossetti's opinion that "the importance of the large work ... will greatly increase the value of any duplicate or work from the same design."

The collection evidences the increasing prominence of technologies such as photography and the continued use of lithography in creating, duplicating and disseminating artistic works. For instance, in one letter Rossetti states that Legros has agreed to paint a companion picture to one of his works from a lithograph while in another Rossetti describes his process of creating replicas of pieces by working from photographs of the original (4 December 1864 and 15 June 1863).

In some of the letters, sections of the page have been removed. Generally these are sections containing Rossetti's letterhead crest and monogram, or his salutation.

Broadly, the collection reveals a warm and friendly relationship between artist and patron, with Rossetti frequently enquiring kindly after Clabburn's wife and making reference to mutual friends. In one letter, Rossetti gives his profuse thanks to Clabburn for his gift to Rossetti of two live peacocks which he describes as "gorgeous beyond expression – real treasures!" (undated letter, likely written before 23 April 1864).

The letters are not included in William E. Fredeman's *The correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*.

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## General

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. *The correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. Edited by William E. Fredeman. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, NY : D.S. Brewer, 2002-2009.

Surtees, Virginia. *The paintings and drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) : a catalogue raisonné*. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1971.

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## Arrangement

The letters are arranged chronologically.

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## Collection Contents

- b. 1, f. 1      Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn      1863 June 12  
*2 folded sheets (7 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm*  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882
- "My Dear Mr. Clabburn,
- I think I ought hardly to preclude myself from making, if I wish, a small copy of the *Magdalene* picture after the large one is finished. The commission for the large picture was taken some years ago, and at a price greatly below what I should now ask, and I ought therefore to reserve as far as possible the power of making further earnings in connection with it. Nevertheless it is very possible, that I might never have the patience to do the thing [?] a 3rd time, after yours and the large one; & in any case, as I before said, yours would differ very greatly from the other, and I would moreover undertake to make the other smaller than yours if made at all.
- Indeed, to secure you against disappointment with the picture, I would even further promise, hereby, that if, on a third picture being painted, you thought it likely to prejudice the value of yours, or found it lessened your interest in yours, that I would take yours back and give you in exchange any other [illegible] picture of the same value, whenever I might be doing one to your liking. This would be no inconvenience to me, as my picture from the *Magdalene* design would always, I am sure, be easier for me to dispose of to advantage than almost any one I could do.
- Let me again remind you that yours would be considerably varying from the other small copy; and I have little doubt would be in some respects superior as one is always told in all such cases that the one done first has an advantage as to vividness in conveying the original idea. And if a third were ever made, it would certainly not be for several years to come, as I am sure the large picture will not be completed in one year nor yet in two from this time.
- I hear Sandys called here yesterday, while I was gone to Hampton Races with Val Prinsep. I suppose it must have been a farewell visit (as indeed I thought he was gone at the beginning of the week) and that therefore he may be with you again as soon as this letter. Will you tell him I was very sorry to miss him.
- I hope Mrs. Clabburn is now somewhat better than when I heard so poor an account of her health from you. I hope, whenever I soon [?] have the pleasure of seeing her again at Norwich, it will be under more favourable circumstances. Pray remember me kindly to her and Believe me
- My dear Mr. Clabburn,
- Yours very truly
- DG Rossetti"
- Addressed from 16 Cheyne Walk.
- Preferred Titles:  
*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*
- Genres / Formats:  
Correspondence
- Names:  
Clabburn, Hannah Louisa, 1825-approximately 1880  
Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Prinsep, Val C. (Val Cameron), 1838-1904  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence  
Sandys, Frederick, 1829-1904

b. 1, f. 2

Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn  
*1 folded sheet (4 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm*  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

1863? June 15

"My Dear Mr. Clabburn,

Thanks for your letter. On taking exact measurements, I find that the photograph is 12 inches by 10 1/2. The plan therefore will be to enlarge it to double its size, making 24 by 21. Two feet square would not therefore be a possible size or exact proportion and any fractional adaption of the measurements would cause more than double trouble in squaring it off. Still, it is not improbable that I might be adding somewhat all round to the composition, in which case it might be rather over 2 feet in height and nearly or quite 2 feet in width, but I could not be certain to an inch, nor would this, as I dare say you will think with me, materially affect the matter. If again I were to adopt measurements on a sufficiently increased scale to reach again a convenient proportion for the squaring off, the picture would reach a larger size than I could paint for 200 guineas.

I would engage to make the 3rd picture (if made at all) decidedly smaller than yours, but could not at this moment be positive as to size. Still, as the proportional measurement would have again to be of the degree adapted for squaring off, you may be sure, as I say, that the difference would be decided.

I should be very happy to let you hear the refusal of the 3rd picture proposed. Its price would certainly not be less than 200 guineas, almost certainly more, as I anticipate that the importance of the large work, which done will greatly increase the value of any duplicate or work from the same design.

I am, dear Mr. Clabburn, Yours very truly, DG Rossetti"

Addressed from 15 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

Preferred Titles:

*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

Genres / Formats:

Correspondence

Names:

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence



b. 1, f. 3

Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn  
*1 folded sheet (1 page) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm*  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

1863 June 20

"My dear Sir

The *Magdalene* picture for you is already in hand. Thanks for your letter just received, - I trust the picture when I show it to you will meet all your wishes. I shall be glad to receive the £70 by return, as you kindly purpose.

With kind remembrances,

I am my dear Sir, Yours very truly

DG Rossetti"

Addressed from 16 Cheyne Walk.

Preferred Titles:

*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

Genres / Formats:

Correspondence

Names:

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence

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b. 1, f. 4	<p>Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn <i>1 folded sheet (1 page) : autograph letter signed ; 19 x 23 cm, folded to 19 x 12 cm</i> Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882</p> <p>"My dear Mr. Clabburn,</p> <p>Many thanks for the £70 received on account of the picture of <i>Mary Magdalene</i> commenced for you. I will get you a photograph, but may not be able to do it immediately.</p> <p>With kind remembrances to yourself &amp; Mrs Clabburn.</p> <p>I am yours very truly,</p> <p>DG Rossetti</p> <p>[in margin:] When you are in town again I may probably have the picture forward."</p> <p>Addressed from 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. The letter is undated. The conjectured date is based upon the presence of an envelope in the present collection postmarked 23 June 1863 (see folder 12). The payment of £70 would have been the first of three payments in that amount. The other two payments are recorded in the letters for 1865 March 7 and 1865 May 3.</p> <p>Preferred Titles: <i>Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee</i></p> <p>Genres / Formats: Correspondence</p> <p>Names: Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence</p>	1863 June 23?
b. 1, f. 5	<p>Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn <i>1 folded sheet (3 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 19 x 23 cm, folded to 19 x 12 cm</i> "My dear Mr. Clabburn,</p> <p>The peacocks have arrived safely and are gorgeous beyond expression -- real treasures! I have housed them for the moment in a large disused servants' hall in the basement, but am going to have other provision made for them immediately. Many and many thanks for them --</p> <p>[Text lacking, due to removal of letterhead]</p> <p>The cock seems very tame and tractable - the hen less so as yet. Your experience of her is a warning I will bear in mind and will attend to your directions.</p> <p>It will be a pleasure to thank you in person, when I hope you turn up here shortly.</p> <p>Pray return very heartily Mrs. Clabburn's kind remembrances &amp; believe me yours very sincerely,</p> <p>DG Rossetti</p> <p>[In margin]: At this moment the peacock has just been brought up into my studio and is consoling himself before the fire after rather close quarters in the hamper."</p> <p>Letterhead excised. Rossetti refers to his peacocks in a letter to William Michael Rossetti on 1864 April 23 (see Fredeman, 64.54). Assuming that the peacocks are</p>	before 1864 April 23?

those given to Rossetti by Clabburn, the present letter must have been written before that date.

Subjects:

Peacocks

Preferred Titles:

*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

Genres / Formats:

Correspondence

Names:

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence

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b. 1, f. 6	<p>Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn  <i>1 folded sheet (3 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 19 x 23 cm, folded to 19 x 12 cm</i>            Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882</p>	<p>1864 December 4</p>
	<p>"My dear Clabburn</p> <p>I saw Legros who tells me he would paint the companion picture from the lithograph with pleasure, &amp; would sell the 2 landscapes for 50 guineas, framed.</p> <p>You will receive the drawing of the <i>Death of St. Francis</i> in a day or two, &amp; I will get his receipt for you in return for the cheque - 25 guineas. You must know I have generally been his business secretary, but he will have another now I dare say, as he has got married.</p> <p>I am very sorry to have seen so little of Mrs. Clabburn &amp; yourself this time, but hope that she will really give me other chances as she said. I will have [?] an eye to ramshackle properties of all kinds on her behalf.</p> <p>Ever yours</p> <p>DG Rossetti"</p> <p>Printed letterhead: 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.</p>	
	<p>Preferred Titles:</p> <p><i>Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911. Mort de Saint François</i>  <i>Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee</i></p> <p>Genres / Formats:</p> <p>Correspondence</p> <p>Names:</p> <p>Clabburn, Hannah Louisa, 1825-approximately 1880            Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence            Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911            Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence</p>	

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b. 1, f. 7	<p>Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn <i>1 folded sheet (1 page) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm</i> Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882</p> <p>"My [letterhead and salutation removed] I have sent your cheque to Legros telling him to sign a receipt. I enclose his &amp; forward it to you -- also telling him what you say. Excuse haste &amp; believe me,</p> <p>Very truly yours</p> <p>DG Rossetti"</p> <p>Letterhead excised. The letter is undated. The content of the letter suggests that it followed the letter of 1864 December 4 (folder 6) -- in which Rossetti proposes to arrange for the purchase of Legros's <i>La mort de Saint François</i>. The letter may correspond to the envelope in the present collection postmarked 1864 December 9.</p> <p>Preferred Titles: <i>Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911. Mort de Saint François</i> <i>Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee</i></p> <p>Genres / Formats: Correspondence</p> <p>Names: Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence</p>	1864 December 9?
b. 1, f. 8	<p>Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn <i>1 sheet (1 page) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 12 cm</i> Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882</p> <p>"My dear Clabburn</p> <p>Received cheque for £70 - being the second payment of a third on account of the <i>Mary Magdalene</i>.</p> <p>Thanks.</p> <p>Yours ever truly</p> <p>DG Rossetti"</p> <p>Printed letterhead: 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.</p> <p>Preferred Titles: <i>Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee</i></p> <p>Genres / Formats: Correspondence</p> <p>Names: Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence</p>	1865 March 7
b. 1, f. 9	<p>Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn <i>1 folded sheet (4 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm</i></p>	1865 May 1

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

"My dear Clabburn,

I am taking your *Magdalene* in hand again, and shall have finished it without fail in six weeks or two months at latest, probably earlier. Meanwhile it would be greatly to my convenience if you would kindly let me have the remainder of its price now on its last resumption instead of on delivery. I have hesitated to ask this favour of you, lest the long delay which has occurred with the picture should cause you to think its completion in the specified time a declining matter. But you may rely on its getting done within the time discussed [?].

If you will oblige me in this, may I ask you to send me the money on receipt of the present letter, in the form of 2 Bank of England notes for £50 and £20 respectively, by post registered, which from I know by frequent experience that they will reach me quite safely. I always request, when it occurs to me, that money may be sent thus, as cheques, particularly country cheques, give me much trouble through my having no banker.

With kind remembrances to Mrs. Clabburn (who will with yourself truly be visible here some time in the picture season.) I am, my dear Clabburn,

Yours very truly, DG Rossetti"

Printed letterhead: 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

Preferred Titles:

*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

Genres / Formats:

Correspondence

Names:

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence

b. 1, f. 10

Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to William Houghton Clabburn

1865 May 3

*1 folded sheet (3 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm*

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

"My dear Clabburn,

Thanks for the £70 completing payment in full for the *Magdalene* picture, which will be done by the time named if not sooner. I shall be very glad to see you when in town, & hope you may be accompanied by Mrs. Clabburn.

The Academy lectures [?] are generally "much of a muchness" I fear. I suppose, as things go, the Athenaeum is likely to be as tolerable as any. I have not yet seen the Exhibition myself. Sandys's picture is in one of the best places, and Whistler & Legros are well placed. Indeed the hanging this year is I believe better than usual.

With kind regards I am yours sincerely DG Rossetti"

Printed letterhead: 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

Preferred Titles:

*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

Genres / Formats:

Correspondence

Names:

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence  
Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence  
Sandys, Frederick, 1829-1904  
Whistler, James McNeill, 1834-1903

Corporate Body:

Royal Academy of Arts (Great Britain)

b. 1, f. 11

Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter to Hannah Louisa Clabburn  
*2 folded sheets (6 pages) : autograph letter signed ; 18 x 23 cm, folded to 18 x 12 cm*  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

1865 July 6

"My dear Mrs. Clabburn

Today I am sending in the "Mary Magdalene" by passenger train, so I hope it will not be long on the road. I may as well describe it a little, to help out my idea, though indeed I believe you would find it plain enough.

The scene represents 2 houses opposite each other, one of which is that of Simon the Pharisee where Christ and Simon, with other guests, are seated at table. At the opposite house a great banquet is held, and feasters are trooping to it, draped in cloaks of gold and crowned with flowers. The musicians play at the doors, and each couple kiss as they enter. Mary Magdalene has been in this procession but has suddenly turned aside at the sight of Christ, and is pressing forward up the steps of Simon's house, now casting the roses from her hair. At her side is the alabaster box of ointment. Her lover and a woman have followed her out of the procession and are trying laughingly to turn her back. The woman bars the door with her arm. Those nearest Magdalene in the group of feasters have stopped short in wonder and are looking after her, while a beggar girl offers them flowers from her basket. A girl near the front of the procession has caught sight of Mary & waves her garland to turn her back. Beyond this the narrow street abuts on the highroad and river. The young girl seated on the steps is a little beggar who has had food given her from within the house, and is wondering to see Mary go in there, knowing her as a famous woman in the city. Simon looks disdainfully at her & the servant who is setting a dish on the table smiles, knowing her too. Christ looks towards her from within, waiting till she shall reach him. A fawn crops the vine on the wall below the window where Christ is seen, and some fowls gather to share the beggar girl's dinner, giving a kind of equivalent to Christ's words, "Yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

I shall be glad of a word to say that the picture has reached you safely. I hope all your family are now well, and with kindest remembrances,

I remain,

My dear Mrs. Clabburn,

Yours very sincerely, DG Rossetti"

Printed letterhead: 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.

Preferred Titles:

*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

Genres / Formats:

Correspondence

Names:

Clabburn, Hannah Louisa, 1825-approximately 1880 -- Correspondence

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence

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b. 1, f. 12

Dante Gabriel Rossetti letter envelopes addressed to William Houghton Clabburn 1863 July  
*8 envelopes ; each 7 x 13 cm* 16-1865 July 7  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882

The eight envelopes are postmarked with the following dates: 12 June 1863, 16 June 1863, 20 June 1863, 23 June 1863, 9 December 1864, 7 March 1865, 3 May 1865, and 7 July 1865.

Genres / Formats:

Envelopes (Stationery)

Names:

Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Art -- Collectors and collecting  
Art -- Reproduction  
Painters -- Great Britain  
Painting, British -- 19th century  
Peacocks

### Preferred Titles

*Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911. Mort de Saint François*  
*Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882. Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee*

### Genres / Formats

Correspondence

### Names

Clabburn, Hannah Louisa, 1825-approximately 1880  
Clabburn, William Houghton, 1819 or 1820-1889 -- Correspondence  
Legros, Alphonse, 1837-1911  
Prinsep, Val C. (Val Cameron), 1838-1904  
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828-1882 -- Correspondence  
Sandys, Frederick, 1829-1904  
Whistler, James McNeill, 1834-1903

### Corporate Body

Royal Academy of Arts (Great Britain)