

De Tabley was attached to the suite of Lord Stratford De Redcliffe on a mission to Turkey: there his interest in numismatics was stimulated by the increasing excavation of ancient sites in Asia Minor, and the opportunity to barter for coins.

Returning to Britain in 1860, for the next fifteen years he divided his time between literary pursuits in London, politics, and country activities such as service in the local, Cheshire, yeomanry. His intellectual life can be charted by a series of publications—poems, novels, and closet drama—none of which gained him more than passing notice. A clear indication of temperament is his use of pseudonyms, and it was not until 1870 that he had the courage to acknowledge a volume of verse, followed by a second, in 1873, his last for twenty years. His friends witnessed a progressive melancholy which overtook him during the seventies, when he gained the reputation of a recluse, with but 'two intimate friends. The first he has not seen for five years, the second for six.' In 1887, however, he inherited the impoverished family estate, a challenge which brought him once more into the world of men, while in 1891, with the publication of a selection of his verse in A. H. Miles's *Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*, his literary ambition was revived. This is the point at which the Turnbull collection begins. John Lane and his older partner Elkin Matthews had already made a name through publishing volumes of verse by the younger poets of the nineties, and no doubt received favourable advice on an older one from Edmund Gosse, whose friendship with De Tabley dated from 1875. From that point on, the publication of two volumes of verse and a possible third formed a major interest in De Tabley's private thoughts.

It is here that we become aware that the Turnbull collection is a broken series. In spite of the spate of self-doubt, pleasure and spleen poured out to John Lane, sometimes daily, even twice daily, there are gaps, and to fill these we need access to at least two other collections, one in the Walpole material in the Bodleian Library, the other in the Berg collection in the New York Public Library, while additional information can be gleaned from archives at Tabley House, administered by the Chester archivists. The Bodleian Library has kindly provided xeroxes of the Walpole collection on a reciprocal basis; the Berg collection is only available in xerox for research purposes and I am grateful for the use of them for the purpose of this article.

The first series of Turnbull letters is made up of a sequence of 17 letters (31 July-28 September 1892) which require the addition of 3 (15 August, 6, 10 September 1892) from the Bodleian; there is then the Bodleian sequence with 8 letters (4 October-3 November) to which must be added 2 (17 October, 2 November) from the Turnbull; the Turnbull series is then apparently complete, with 26 letters until 20