

## LETTERS from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Lathom to Martin Secker

The following are transcriptions of the correspondence between Ned Lathom and Martin Secker – they remain listed as received and have not been placed in chronological order due to the lack of recording a year in their dates. Eventually they will be ordered, as best they can, by the events mentioned in them and the addresses from which they were written.

Nordrach-on-Dee  
Banchory, N.B.  
(1927) October 15<sup>th</sup>

Dear Martin Secker,

The book arrived just as I was leaving to come here where I am going to do a cure for 4 or 5 months. And I am writing at once to tell you how delighted I am with the way you have done them – Thank you so very much. I do hope that they will not disappoint you. I am going to write some more plays – while I am here & Also I hope a book of nonsense essays called “The Cat Out of the Bag.” – I am asking Mr. Blackburn to arrange for you to have two seats on the 30<sup>th</sup> for my play “Fear” which the Play Actors are doing on that Monday night – I do hope you can go & that it won't bore you.

Yours ever,  
Lathom

Nordrach-on-Dee  
Banchory, N.B.  
(1927) October 15<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

I shall be so grateful if the following people could be sent copies of “The Curtain Goes Up” at my expense on the day of publication –

1. The Hon. Mr. McLaren 38, South Street, W.1.
2. L.A.H Stareus (?) Esq. 72, Seymour Street W.1.
3. Helen Countess of Radnor Armitage Hill, P Cot.
4. Miss Marie Tempest 9, Gloucester Gate, Regent's Park, N.W.
5. Mrs. Patrick Campbell 64 Pint (?) Street S.W.
6. Mr. Hobson (?) 110, Cranbrook Road, Chiswick, W.4.
7. Mr. Brighton 21, Acacia Road, St. John's Wood
8. Miss Madeleine Cohen 10, Cambridge Gate, Regents Park, N.W.
9. Kenneth Kent Esq. 40, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.
10. Aubrey Blackburn Esq. C/O London Play Co., 51, Piccadilly.
11. Christopher Martin Esq. Hunsdon Mill House, Stanstead, Abbots Ware
12. Lady Wilma Lawson 78, Carlisle Mansions, S.W.1.
13. The Lady Barbara Seymour Top Hall, Lyndon, Oakham  
& 3 to Countess of Lathom, 25, Elvaston Place, S.W.1.

I do not know if you are sending any to the Drama Critics. If not – I should be grateful if copies (?) could be sent as follows –

- To James Agate Esq. Doughty Chambers, 55, Doughty Street, W.C.1.
- To Hannan Swaffer C/O Daily Express
- To E.A. Baughen (? Daily Chronicle)
- To Sir John Ervine C/O The Observer
- To Desmond McCarthy C/O New Statesman
- To Alan Parsons C/O/ Daily Sketch

All of whom might give me a notice

Also to Dea.... (?) Jean No .... C/O A Knoff & Co, New York (*publishers*)

I am afraid it's an awfully long list and I hope you will forgive me. The other copies I should like so much to have here.

Yours again

Lathom

Nordrach-on-Dee  
Banchory, N.B.  
(1927) October 22<sup>nd</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker

Thank you so much for your kind letter. I do hope that "The Curtain Goes Up" will come up to your expectations & that it will sell fairly well – though I'm afraid that plays are not very sailable (sic). My play "Fear" has now been postponed – owing to the leading lady having hysterics – until Nov. 27. I do so hope you will be able to see it. I am hoping that if this volume does not do too badly that you may care to do 3 more of mine to be called "Bones to Pick" The three being "Ostriches" an early play of mine Censored here but done to death in America & a new one called "Twenty Houses in a Row" – But there is time for that later.

I'm hard at work now on a silly little series (?)

Thank you so very much for sending me "The Ugly Duchess" it is very kind of you & I am looking forward enormously to it. In fact I can hardly keep my hands off it.

Yours sincerely,

Lathom

Primrose Hill 2139

84, Regent's Park Road, N.W.1  
October 24<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

I cannot go to Bed without telling you of the thrill OUR NEW Volume gave me when I got in this evening. I am so grateful to you. I hope to sell by means of these excellent little pamphlets – 100's of copies! And I also hope I shall do you credit one day. A NEW Play is just finished & I hope will see the Light of Day soon.

Will you let me know your first free day - & then will you come & lunch with me at the Savoy Grill Room? My private number is Primrose Hill 3286

Again my thanks to you

Yours sincerely,

Lathom

Nordrach-on-Dee,  
Banchory, N.B.  
(1927) Jan 20<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

Thank you so very much for your charming letter. I think it is very sporting of you to do another volume of mine & I am very grateful to you and sincerely hope that if "Fear" is done in September & "Twenty Houses" sometime also that it will help the sales - As of course the old 3 plays were dead "Ostriches" is I am afraid dead - killed by i. The Censor & ii. America. Do you like the title "Bones to Pick"? It appeals to me! I have just completed a new play called "A World Of Our Own" and am on third Act of another called "No Flowers By Request." Both of which I hope will come out & I have mapped out a fairly ambitious programme for myself for the coming year. I have also completed the Book of an operetta – Which personally I like very much.

But I am in a minority over it. As it is the lightest Fairy Story – called “Happily Ever After.” I heartily agree over the sketches I was attempting something new for me. I hope to be back about Feb. 12: & perhaps you could come & have Lunch with me one day.

My best wishes. Lathom

78, Carlisle Mansions S.W.  
(1928) June 12<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

It was indeed kind of you to let us have so many copies of the Play. They are invaluable I adore them done like that!

Can you come on either July 1<sup>st</sup> Evening or July 2<sup>nd</sup> Matinee? Do let me know. Will you?

Again so many thanks.

Yours Very Sincerely

Lathom

78, Carlisle Mansions S.W.  
(1928) June 17<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

The proofs came just at the right moment & are invaluable. I am altering them as the play gets changed.

I am so glad that you can come on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. I am keeping two seats for you.

There is a good chance of the play being done for a run if it ... *has what* ... the Censor allows.

Yours ....

Lathom

78, Carlisle Mansions,  
Victoria,  
S.W.1.  
Tel: VICTORIA 3464

Dears Secker

Here are the two seats for Monday. I hope it won't bore you.

Yours Lathom

(1928) July 6<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

How kind of you I was bitterly disappointed with the way the play was done. It was made so dull! The fault of the actor in particular. Who did not know his lines.

However! How kind to ask us down. We should have loved it. But alas! My wife has to undergo an operation next week & it will I'm afraid take some time for her to get well.

I will get ahead with the proofs. As soon as I can get a moment's quiet.

Yours faithfully.

Lathom

84, Regent's Park Road, N.W.1  
Primrose Hill 2139  
October 25<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker.

An exciting looking book has arrived by the second post. I am very grateful to you & am Looking forward to Reading it very much.

Yours Ever  
Lathom

Primrose Hill 2139

84, Regent's Park Road, N.W.1  
October 26<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,  
Could you make it Lunch next Thursday or Friday? As Unfortunately I have had to promise to go out both Tuesday & Wednesday. I do hope you can. I am looking forward to the Book.

Yours Ever.  
Lathom

84, Regent's Park Road, N.W.1  
Primrose Hill 2139  
November 3<sup>rd</sup>

Dear Secker,  
I am so very sorry that you are laid up. I do hope that you will soon be better. But Take care of yourself. These feverish colds are the Devil! If you are well enough I do hope next Thursday or Friday at the Savoy Grill at 1.30 pm will suit you. We missed you so much yesterday.

Yours Ever.  
Lathom

I'm sending out 100's of pamphlets this afternoon.

Nordrach-on-Dee, Banchory, N.B.  
(1927) Nov: 11<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,  
It was most awfully nice of you to write to me. The Times is never kind to me. In fact James Agate tells me that he wrote to them about it once. Which of course will make them worse. Noël's very nice about 'Ostriches' but of course it belongs to my old type – I am writing quite Differently Now. The last three "Fear" "Twenty House in a Row" & "A World of Our Own" Will all show that. It is very kind of you to say that you will do three more. I only hope they will justify it.

Can you go on 27<sup>th</sup> to "Fear" Dennis Neilson Terry is doing it for the Play Actors. I hope it is an int (?) Play. Although the end has been changed to suit the Audience!  
I have asked Blackburn to keep 2 seats for you & Mr Howe (?)

Yours (?)  
Lathom

Nordrach-on-Dee, Banchory, N.B.  
Nov: 26<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

I am sorry you will not be there. But I quite understand – I am so sorry your wife’s ill. I do hope she is better. I’m in a fever from Panic – But what is the good? It never helps.

Nordrach-on-Dee, Banchory, N.B.  
Dec: 1st

Dear Mr. Secker,  
I have to thank you for your very darling (?) little books with pink covers that I like having very much. It is very kind of you to send them to me. I am so grateful. “Fear” was Rapturously received I am glad to say & I think has a good chance of going on later & in America too. Mr. Tims (? *Lord Chamberlain?*) as usual will not allow it.  
Yours Sincerely (?)  
Lathom

Langham 3535

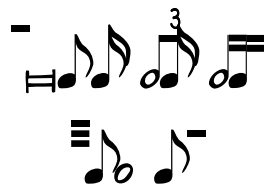
7, Portland Place,  
W.1.  
Dec 13th

Dear Mr. Secker,  
I should be so grateful, if you could send me 2 copies of 1<sup>st</sup> Plays & 2 copies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plays if you still have them - & if you will let me know how much they are I will send the money By Return. I have been in bed since I last wrote to you. But I am moving into my own new home at 24, Queen’s Road, St. Johns Wood, N.W.8 on Monday & I do hope you will come & see me there. I think Nigel Playfair – if he can get the money – is going to do a little musical play I wrote with Vivian Ellis & Also I think the Arts Theatre are going to do a play of mine. So things are looking up.  
All my best wishes.  
Yours Ever  
Lathom

24, Queen’s Road, St. Johns Wood, N.W.8  
PRIMROSE HILL 0286

Dear Mr. Secker,  
As a matter of fact two volumes of each were sent – But I shall be delighted to take the extra one. I am very flattered that you want a volume of each & I am only too delighted to write in them. Here they are with my best thanks.  
I am at last installed & its all very comfy & (?) & ideal to write in. Do come over one day – after the holidays. I shall be delighted to see you.  
Yours Ever  
Lathom

My Best Wishes to you (*Handwritten*)



Lathom (*Handwritten*)

from

24, Queen's Road, St. Johns Wood, N.W.8  
PRIMROSE HILL 0286

Dear Mr. Secker,

If, as I suspect, it was you that sent me that dear little book – I am extremely grateful to you. I read it at a sitting. In later days I was one of Mrs. Warre Cornish's most devoted admirers – still the great book has to be written about her. Her wit was her own – in that it was all done to amuse herself & not her – generally rather bewildered listener.

Again all my best wishes.

Lathom

Nordrach-on-Dee, Banchory, N.B.  
Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

Again thank you for letter. I think I agree with you that a simpler title would be better. I hope to be down in London quite shortly now & then we will have lunch together. I finished my new play "No Flowers By Request" last night.

Yours Sincerely

Lathom

7, Portland Place,  
W.1.  
Feb 10<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. Secker,

Alas! I have been laid up with Fever for the last two months (& no work done!) Now am leaving for the Villa Mauresque - Cap Ferret to stay with Somerset Maughan on Thursday & my wife goes to Paris the same day. It is kind of you & when I come back in about 6 or 8 weeks. May I come then? I would love to. This is a nursing home – 84. & (?) will forward letters.

Yours very sincerely,

Lathom

*Written above the letterhead is:* Will you please thank Mrs Secker so very much for her kind invitation & say how much I would like to meet her.

#### **LETTERS from Xenia Lathom to Martin Secker**

Primrose Hill 2139

84, Regent's Park Road, NW1  
January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1928 (*sic*)

Dear Mr. Secker,

I do thank you so warmly for the delightful Edith Olivier book – I enjoyed reading it so much - & the Rex Whistler frontispiece is charming. Do you know the work of a

friend of mine Colin Seeley? He is very talented & has originality – I know that he would like to get work in book illustrations May I send him to call on you one day? Again with my many thanks.

Yours (?) sincerely,

Xenia Lathom

*This book could have been 'The Love Child' a 1927 publication by Edith Olivier published by Martin Secker. Most of her other works were published by Batsford.*

Primrose Hill 2139

84, Regent's Park Road, NW1  
January 5<sup>th</sup> 1929 (*sic*)

Dear Mr. Secker,

This is to introduce Mr. Colin Seeley about whom I wrote to you the other day. It is very kind of you to say that you will see him & I feel confident that his work will interest you.

Yours (?) sincerely,

Xenia Lathom

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THE COUNTESS OF LATHOM

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8.7.'30

Dear Mr. Secker,

Herewith the 'Monet' typescript. I apologise for its battered condition – but I want you to read it as soon as possible – so I send you my own final copy.

If you will telephone at home – one day next week – I should like to come see you (*sic*) - & explain my views as to the publication of the book.

With kind regards –

Yours sincerely

Xenia Lathom

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84, Regent's Park Road, NW1

Primrose Hill 2139

Neue Heilanstalt  
Für Lungenkranke  
Chef-Arzt  
Dr. G. Schroeder

May 1st

Telegramm-Adresse:  
Dr. Schoder, Schomberg, Neuenberg

Dear Secker,

Only just a line to tell you where I am. I was brought here dreadfully ill 6 weeks ago & I am slowly recovering. But it's a loathsome place & I mean to escape as soon as I can get up and travel. And then I shall try & find a quiet cottage in a healthy place in England & stay there & write endless plays!

I hope to be back at the beginning of June but I shall not be at Regents Park Road. As absolutely between ourselves my home life is rather bust up. But Aubrey will always know where I am & if you are still kind enough to ask me to come to Brid(port?) & meet Mrs. Secker I should like to motor down one day.

Don't bother to answer this as it is only to let you know that by the grace of God I am still alive.

Yours ever  
Lathom

Please remember me to Mrs. Howe

Neue Heilanstalt  
Für Lungenkranke  
Chef-Arzt  
Dr. G. Schroeder

May 7th

Telegramm-Adresse:  
Dr. Schoder, Schomberg, Neuenberg

Dear Secker,

How most awfully nice of you to send me some books. I shall look forward to reading them enormously. I am resting completely & although itching to be writing - I am letting it alone for a bit - anyhow 'til I get home. I shall certainly go to see Happsburgh but I am afraid if it is seaside it will not be allowed by the doctors. Did you read a book called 'Joan Kennedy' by Henry Channon? A friend of mine. A first novel & remarkably well done. & like a fool I did not suggest him coming to you - as one - I did not know if it would be any good & two - I did not know if you would welcome my interference. But now I am sorry - & I think he will do something really good.

I shall look forward to seeing you very soon.

Yours ever  
Lathom

Neue Heilanstalt  
Für Lungenkranke  
Chef-Arzt  
Dr. G. Schroeder

May 11th

Telegramm-Adresse:  
Dr. Schoder, Schomberg, Neuenberg



Dear Secker,

I am so grateful to you for the books. I agree with you that the first play is a bit disappointing. He seems to be aiming at something that is extremely undramatic - For instance the first scene could be said in a few sentences. But luckily we all have our own methods. The War book is splendid - terribly (?) but then it was like that. I haven't had time to look at the other yet. great news for me. I am to be let home by June 1st. The Arts theatre are going to revive "Wet Paint" with Iris Hoey in it & so with any luck we will get it through the Censor this time & perhaps sell a few more copies of the play too!

It's freezing again here. But apparently according to Dr. Schroder, May 11th, 12th & 13th always are in Germany!

Yours ever

Lathom