

Dinton - Dalwood Letters

Salisbury, 24th November 1837.

My dear George,

Ella told me a little time ago they had heard of you at Dinton, all well and thriving. We have taken up our abode here for a fortnight or so, to be near Mr. Coates, as I have been sadly frightened twice since 1st September by John's having the gout in his stomach. The first attack he soon recovered pretty well from, but would go out hunting too long distances and bad weather, which produced a second attack more severe than the first, so the doctors forbade his hunting till after Christmas at soonest. Indeed his hands are so weak, he could not manage a horse if he tried.

We were at Dinton last week for three hours, and I was very glad to see Papa looking as well as ever. He is able to ride hunting when not too far from home, and enjoys it as well as ever. Mama has been but poorly. This is always a bad month with us, and we have had a good deal of damp weather, which affects her health sadly. She is never well very long together now; still she rallies in a most surprising manner. You must make no allusion to this in your letters, as she does not like to be thought ill. I am glad to say Frank contrives to persuade her to accede to all our wishes in being carried upstairs, as the exertion of walking up was very trying to her.

Alexander and Emma and their four children are likewise at Dinton, all quite well. He came to attend the coursing meeting, for which amusement I believe he could give up everything else.

Ella, Henrietta, Frank and John are very well. Charlie is come home on his long leave; he had a very sharp attack of fever at the Portobello Barracks, Dublin, so that we were alarmed for his life. And John set off to nurse him from Dinton on a Monday afternoon, and was with him Wednesday morning, and found him better, since which time he has improved every day, and now looks as well as ever. He weighed 14 stones when he was taken ill and 11 stone when he recovered.

I hope Margaret and all your nice children (for we hear good reports of them) are well.

My boy is still the darkest-haired of all the cousins. Mama calls him her dark grandson, though when from Dinton everyone calls him very fair.

Lord John Russell has greatly annoyed the O'Connell's by a speech in the House of Commons, in which he said he will have nothing to do with any material changes in the reform bill, except with a view to remedy the defects. He would take no part in the reconstruction of the present system of suffrage and representation. If the people of England wished for such reconstruction, they must have another Minister for the station he filled. Many people went up to the opening of Parliament to see the poor little Queen, who has been rather frightened by a madman lately, and at Drury Lane Theatre had scarcely presence of mind to stand the noise of the people make on her entering the box.

I intend having another attempt to raise you some apple trees next spring and by the time you come to see us I hope to show you a nice little collection of Espalier Apples and Pears. I prune them myself with tolerable success.

Believe me, my dear George,

your ever affectionate sister,

CHARLOTTE STARKEY