

Dinton - Dalwood Letters

'Dinton' (finished London) Burlington Hotel, 29th June 1832.

My dear George,

I have undertaken the task, I must say pleasing, of writing to you this month, but still we oft have sad complaints to make of you, or of the winds, for not a letter have we had from you since one dated 26th September, and received in February; you will be pleased to hear that William's first born arrived on the 7th of June. It is a daughter, and, with its mother doing as well as possible, and has been baptised Ellen, after its mother. In a few days I expect we will make an expedition to Bramshaw to see it; of course, it is promised to be pretty, and I should not be at all surprised if it was so, as it has some little right to good looks. All the 'Nobility' in England are rejoicing in the passing of the Reform Bill. I hope this rejoicing will pass off without any great demonstrations, for it is very evident that they rejoice without knowing what they rejoice for. Poor deluded people - they have been told by the artful that bread will drop into their mouths without any trouble on their part when this Bill is passed; alas! They little know that it will make very little perceptible difference to them, but to those who have the power of using their reason it is certainly an event to be greatly rejoiced at, for it was becoming just as great a humbug as Catholic emancipation and an excuse for anything. I am perfectly satisfied that the Bill might have been, with very little consideration, very much better, but party spirit is the pitfall through which England will fall, let the world say what it will For my own part I am fully satisfied the Commonality will return gentlemen if they offer themselves, instead of jack-nobody from amongst themselves. Ireland is in a dreadful state, and yet everybody seems at a loss as what to do for her. Paris, or rather France, has been the scene of dreadful confusion lately. However, Paris is quietened by the presence of an army and the King himself, for tall the accounts give them credit with having acted with great judiciousness, but the cause of the rising cannot be precisely ascertained, though they have taken up immense numbers of disorderlies. Do not imagine from all this that we are in a state of fear for the quietness of England; I do not think at present they have a wish for confusion, at least not in this neighbourhood, and if you do not court notoriety you are always passed over in popular hubbubs. Our neighbour, Mr. Mayne, is trying to become a popular character and goes to political known meetings, and takes quite a lead as an orator, and lately addressed a large meeting from Frome at Bath, and by his own account to them of the poor inhabitants of Teffont Evias you would have thought it a Terrestrial Paradise for labourers. Papa cried out after all this, 'How comes it I have such numerous complaints made before me of Mr. Mayne's hard-heartedness?' But he is obliged to go forth from home to trumpet his good acts. He intends to start for the representation of Chippenham. I sincerely hope he will not succeed; there is but one excuse to be made for him, which is certain only that he is not in his right senses.

Mr. Codrington and Tishy are as well as can be, and their four boys are as fine fellows as can be seen anywhere, but most terribly mischievous, as they are not kept in order. Louisa and Mr. Knatchbull and family have been staying here for the past six weeks; they are to live another year in Oxfordshire and then as at present settled to come to Sutton, where they are building a new house. Mary Anne was the chief architect and William Barnes is builder. It is a remarkably pretty, pleasant house, of course small, but containing all requisites. The young Knatchbolls are a complete contrast to the Codringtons - long and thin in the extreme, but they are very healthy, though not so strong-looking.

On Louisa's return home she intended to have stayed there quietly all the summer, but old Mr. Knatchbull wrote her so very pressing an invitation to come and see him that she thought herself obliged to do so, and is therefore now in London. The old man continues hearty as ever, though past 80.

Alexander and Emma spent the winter with Sir John Trevelyan in Somersetshire. They have a very fine boy, she says the image of Papa, but about as much like him as Papa is like Sir John Trevelyan, for he is most ludicrously like his own mother. It is very odd, but not one of Papa's grandchildren are the least like him as yet, unless yours, whom I should much like to see.

John is at Oxford, Charles at School, but grown too big for a small school. He promises to be the largest of the family; he is the best-tempered fellow I ever saw - in short, still Charlie.

Mama was never better, and moreover grows quite fat. Papa recovered from his last autumn accident, though he says his sprained ankle is not as strong as it used to be. He walks all day without going lame, which is pretty well.

Henry Portman is married. Reports say the lady is very pretty, but alas! not a fortune. We used to laugh and say he talked so much of money that he would marry a lady without a sou. But I fear from what we hear that she is not very healthy, which will be a much worse thing than want of money, for what will a person who depends entirely on others for their amusement do with a sick wife.

In London. - We came up here last week for a short time. I cannot say much for our gaieties, for stupid dinner parties is all we have had, and a German Opera. Oh! the delight! I wish you both had been at the party. The Opera was Der Freischutz, performed by a company of at least 40 singers, entirely composed of Germans. Even the overture was encored. But imagine the Jaegers chorus without the slightest accompaniment, not a fiddle even, and all the voices most beautifully modulated, that was well worth hearing without any other part of it.

The other morning we paid visits to all the various Mr. Portmans. Unluckily Henry's wife was not at home; she is gone into Warwickshire. Wyndham's wife gains the affections of the whole family; indeed, she is a very nice young woman, and they have a beautiful boy rather more than a year old. Mrs. Henry is said to be very pleasing. Lady Emma is also in town with her eldest boy, who grows rather a fine fellow, the image of Berkley. Berkley does not intend again to offer himself as candidate for the County of Dorset; indeed they have used him altogether very ill, but as London is now to return members in districts, the inhabitants of Marlebone are determined to have him to show the world they are fully aware of the importance of the trust reposed in them, and so have selected the largest landed proprietor of the parish, and one known to be a gentleman. I think Berkley is rather pleased with it, but would willingly have given up altogether.

I hope our old member, John Bennett, is secure for Southern Wilts, but Sydney Herbert has been made a catspaw by Party, and brought forward with the intention of turning him out, but we think it has failed. He is a perfect, only just of age, though by no means a fool. Sir John Astley has been driven to offer himself for the Northern Division of the County, which is not what he intended to have done.

Mama is still sitting for her portrait, with the patience of Job.

An old sailor thought proper to have a shy at his Majesty last week at Ascot, and hit him on the head, but did no mischief luckily, only frightened the Queen and attendants, of course. It only made the people cheer the King more, and William, who was present, said he never before heard so much cheering as when they appeared the next day. Also, a set of fellows thought proper to attack the Duke of Wellington as he was riding into the city on Waterloo Day, and he was obliged to take refuge in one the Inns of court till they got a lot of police, then he went home en triumphe, attended by about 200 young lawyers, who knocked about the nobility properly. John Hornby says it was a perfect pickpocket row, but yesterday the King presented colours to the guards, and the Duke was in attendance as colonel and was immensely cheered.

With all our love to you and Margaret,

From your affectionate mother,

ELLA WYNDHAM