

Dinton - Dalwood Letters

'Dinton', 7th July 1831.

My dear George,

For fear all vessels should shortly be put under quarantine that come from Australia to England, and the letters so soaked in vinegar that they are totally illegible, I have undertaken to write that you may hear of our welfare up to July, but the whole country is threatened with what it is in the fashion to call 'Cholera Morbus', alias the Plague. It is committing great devastation in Russia, and Hamburg is said to be the last place to be attacked. All ships coming from infected ports are ordered to perform quarantine; and well they may, for their crews are in general in a very unhealthy state. We all fancy it is ordained by Providence to clear away the surplus population that they talk so much; but though people are so anxious to get rid of the surplus population, they are much frightened by the approach of this disease.

The House of Commons is again assembled, and the Reform Bill is now undergoing its second reading. there have been two nights' debate on it. It was to be resumed last night, but the opposition to it is merely nominal. William's last night (sent) to us Sir J. Mackintosh's speech, supposed to be clever, at any rate well considered and indisputable. Tuesday night' speech was Mr. Macaulay's. I could forgive the opposition to this Bill did it proceed from conscience, but it is, as usual, opposition to man and anxiety for self. I do not think England will ever calmly debate for the good of the country; there exists too great a partiality for party, and their reasons entirely gives way even to the worst of passions. We have at present the finest weather for some years. It does the country much good. There were hardly any sound sheep in the country from the wetness of the summers. This fine dry time will soon put that all to rights.

William and his bride are with us. You, of course, must have seen her. It is very pleasant for us his having married a person we all like so much. I am the person who is to suffer most from his having got a companion for life. He told me he should discard me as useless, but now he says he shall retain me, as he wants two Nells to find fault with. Alexander and Emma, with their boy, are to come here next week. I have never seen the little master. They intend to have him vaccinated while here, that Mama may see he has the disorder satisfactorily, they having never seen it.

The junior members of the family are all at home and well. John is to go up for his 'Little-Go' in October. Henrietta is very well, but almost as short as ever. Charles has passed John, I should think, by two inches, and is altogether a most promising, high-spirited young gentleman, likely to fight well his way in the world. Frank stays at home doing nothing.

We were three weeks in London. I never saw so few people of our acquaintance in the great city before, and altogether it was stupid enough.

Some little time ago we were invited to a sheep shearing at Knoyle, Mr. Seymour's, to which we went - a large party, of course, in the usual style. The poor little man amused me much, for, though very lame, they made him dance and I promised him a six weeks' fit of the gout as a penalty for his pleasure. I have just recollected that you do not know when William was married. That great event took place at Bramshaw on June 14, your three elder sisters acting as bridesmaids, assisted by the bride's sister and a cousin, Miss. Lovell, all in white. Papa, Mama, and our brothers, and Ellen's father and brothers, with Sir William and Lady Heathcote and Mr. Starkey. It was by far the merriest wedding I ever was at. Mr. Starkey did his best to make us all lively by telling his drollest stories. The only thing that annoyed him much was that the fatted buck was still walking about Spye Park that he intended to have graced the festal board in honour of his friend, but there was not time to have it killed when he heard the wedding day fixed.

Your trees, or rather the shrubs planted by you, on the western side of the house, are growing enormously. Several other trees planted by you do well, and are quite held sacred by Papa for your sake. He is quite well, and enjoys himself very much; his newest hobby is some deer, given him, or rather William, by a Mr. King of Chilmark, from Alvadestone. He has them in a piece of ground hedged in from the garden and back by the common.

The second reading of the Reform Bill was carried on Wednesday morning at 5 am by a majority of 136, after three nights debate. Papa and William, who went up to London, will bring down plenty of politics, I doubt not. Nothing else is thought of at present. Poor Mr. Codrington says that next winter will be the last hunting season, if the Reform Bill passes, for it will cause a revolution, and, if it does not, perhaps they will not be allowed to enjoy it, as the nobility will take possession of everything. The clergy in general are very irate; they all cry out, 'We shall all go next, all this is aimed at the Tithes.' I am perfectly satisfied that something will be done about the Tithes, and that pretty soon, for the people will not pay them much longer, as every day's experience shows, and the clergy are in such a fuss about it that they have put people in mind of the abuses that exist.

Your affectionate sister,

ELLA WYNDHAM

Mama has sat for her picture, it is hardly finished, but certainly very much like her. Such was her vanity that it was with difficulty we persuaded her to sit now she has grown old.