

5597  
Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> / 82.

My dear Husband,

First of all, lest I forget  
it, I want to tell you of a matter which  
has been on my mind lately. I think  
the children have come to an age when  
even your regular correspondence  
with them will have a very valuable  
effect both on the formation of their  
characters and the cementing of their  
love for you. I know you have not  
time for many letters, but I would  
willingly give up a sheet of mine  
(I mean half a sheet of the big paper) from  
time to time, in order to ensure  
their having a note from you in  
turn. They consider it a great pri-  
vilege to write regularly to you, and  
I think they are beginning to feel a  
little injured that they do not hear  
from you in return. So if you would  
give them a half sheet and deduct  
it from mine, the tax upon your  
time would not be much greater.  
They might on this way receive much  
advice, instruction from you  
and you know so much more

children set upon letters sent to them  
selves. Newspapers not count as half  
of such importance. They are all regu-  
larly settled to work now. I have the  
satisfaction of knowing for the first  
time since they have been with me,  
that their education is going on on  
a satisfactory basis, and that they  
are having the personal instruction  
which they so much need. William  
is very industrious, and his love of  
approbation makes him ready to learn,  
but with Noel and Mabel the case  
is different, and they have not yet  
acquired that personal care  
which is necessary. Miss Dickinson  
gives half an hour to Noel every day  
with his Latin. His Miss Andrew  
ought to have done, and I told her  
so, but with no result. Of course, as  
the lessons were carried on in Mrs  
Joseph's house, I could not do much,  
and this made me the more anxious  
to have Miss Dickinson all to myself.  
At the same time, it was a very  
pleasant thing, socially, to have the  
companionship of the Joseph children

and the friendship is quite uninter-  
rupted. Mrs Joseph very courteously  
left her card for Miss Dickinson the other  
day, and we are going there this after-  
noon. Mrs Joseph has the Shakespeare  
meeting next week. I have to read the  
part of the Widow in the Learning of the  
Shrew. A few days ago there came a post  
card from Celestine, saying that Mrs  
Robson was in Malvern and would  
much like to see the children, but  
shrank from calling last November  
should not be able to receive visitors  
unexpectedly. I was rather astonished  
for Mr James Ingden had spent a  
whole day with us only a month before  
and had seen her bright and well and  
cheerful. However I wrote  
the same day to Mrs Robson, telling  
her that I had heard that nothing of  
her being in Malvern and saying  
that there was no necessity at all for  
her to hesitate on Mr Ingden's account  
about calling. I received an answer  
from Blackheath, saying that my note  
had reached her just as she was getting  
out for home, but that her sister was

still in Malvern with Etzel Robinson  
and would come to see the children.  
(Please note how carefully any mention  
of a call upon me was avoided) Well  
the day before yesterday Miss Jane  
Longden and Etzel did call and  
staid about half an hour, and I had  
tea brought in. I asked if they could  
not come and spend an afternoon  
with us, but Miss Longden said they  
were leaving in a couple of days.  
We then took them round the garden  
into the den &c and then Miss Longden  
said to me "May the children come  
and see us, Mrs. Stephenson, before  
we leave?" Of course I said readily  
enough that they might, and said  
I would take them this evening,  
which I am going to do. But the  
marked avoidance of any recognition  
of any belonging to the family, less  
impressed me much, and I can  
only account for it by concluding  
that a prejudice against me has been  
raised by Frank and Clether. For  
myself, I can have done nothing  
to them, as since we all used to

5597  
I have such pleasant recollections in  
Nottingham, during your Mother's  
lifetime. I have never had any com-  
munication with them. I remember  
I did feel pained that, excepting a cold  
note from Emily, none of them ever  
raised my marriage to you, but still  
I should have been delighted had they  
only told me of their having been here,  
to have seen as much of them as I  
could. They have been here now three  
times, and but for Cletten's post card,  
saying that Mrs. Robson wished to see  
the children, I should never have known  
of it. Miss Appleby too, has never replied  
to the letter which I wrote after hearing  
of her father's death. I never, as long  
as I have your love and trust, these  
side respects do not trouble me. But  
I have an instinct that Cletten is at  
the root of it. He wishes to be more to the  
children than I am. When here, or  
when they are with her, she assumes an  
authority greater than mine, and  
that, with all my regard for her, I  
cannot allow. It is I who am spending  
my life and health and time for them.

I give them all that I have to give, of  
motherly love and tenderness, and my  
place shall not be yielded, whilst I  
live, to another. Here I own that an  
influence favourable to myself,  
were exerted over them in Nottingham  
I would gladly send them there. But  
this is not so. Now I have said my  
say and I will leave done. But do  
not think that I have come into  
collision with Abigail about this. For  
I never have.

Thursday. We went yesterday to see  
Miss Douglass. They were pleasant  
and agreeable, but expressed no  
regret at our leaving even so little  
of each other. Evening came in  
the heat gave me a headache, and  
I had to go and lie down, as Miss  
Dickson and I had to call upon  
Mrs Joseph in the afternoon.  
Noel had the little boys to play with  
him after dinner. About three  
they brought him in with such a  
bruised mouth. They had been

having a game at cricket and the  
last had struck him. We had to feed  
him at tea and supper, his lip was  
so swollen, but he is better this  
morning, and there is no real  
injury. He was very brave about it.  
Of course it upset our call upon  
Miss Joseph, and I had to go to  
bed, for it had made me feel quite  
faint. However it is all over  
now. We are to go to the Lamb  
Hill tomorrow if his face is  
decent enough.  
Much love from us all. You  
see we have our cups and dross.  
Ever your loving Sp.