

Berlin Jan. 17th 99

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My dear Willy

Our letters crossed on their way, I think, and I am again in your debt, also for the parcel you kindly sent and whose contents were been gratefully acknowledged. I had half hoped, when you announced it, that it was coming through a personal conveyance of which we might have availed ourselves to send back a trifle, but wanting that we are at a loss in point of magazines and German books will hardly do, I fancy. At least I am under the impression that you never opened the book I brought over for you and that I had carefully chosen in hopes it might suit your turn for original science. Generally speaking I wish this inability to appreciate

German books in most English people; they do not seem to enter easily into our views and ways of life. However I ought not to make critical remarks in return for kind gifts, but rather tell you how much they are appreciated. I enjoy all the parts of Rudyard Kipling's book that I can understand, excepting by instance the Bridge-Builders, the Tomb of his Ancestors, William the Conqueror, my Sunday at Home and the Bushward Boy, also an Essay in the fourth Dimension. The others I have tried, but they pass my understanding, owing to the profligate use of German termini and the very technical quality of the subject-matter itself. Still, I enjoy

the others so much, that I do feel worthy of your kind gift. The Sunday at Home sent me into such fits of laughter while reading it by myself, that the whole family rushed in to have their share, of which they were however foolish for they could not quite see the joke. Both my sisters send you their best thanks for thinking of them so kindly, and so does my mother. She wanted to write and thank you herself, but she is exceedingly busy just now, so that she bids me express thanks in her name. The bedroom-service complete was broken on the way, but she uses the tray basin as a ashtray for her cigarettes, and I made over the ladies' pens to her, not entirely out of pure generosity, since they are medium points, and I cannot use any but fine points, besides having

brought over a share in summer.
I am so glad you are settled at Redden
school now and hope you will be quite
comfortable and triumphant by and by.
I suppose however, that it was not quite
convenient yet to ask the express Frederick
over this time.

You told me of your uncle Russell's delicate
state of health in the summer, and I am
sincerely sorry for your aunt's sake now.
I dare say she will miss him immensely
not only personally, but as the object in
life for which she had been used to devote
all her care. I wonder how she will arrange
her life now. Please assure her of my sympathy.
In spite of this sad count you seem to
have had a cheerful Xmas time, as indeed
you ought to, with so large and prosperous
a family as yours now is, composed of

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so many youthful members too! There may be disappointments and losses in store still, but, the glory of the sun of things will flash along the chords, and go. I feel on the other hand, what a melancholy thing it is, to have no promise of youth attached to one's nearest family ties; there is no look out into a ~~bright~~ ^{growing} future to compensate for the inevitable prospect of old age and decay. Still we felt so happy and thankful to have our dear mother still among us, and in good health and spirits too, that we too spent a cheerful Xmas time.

Ellen had come about Xmas and will stay till the end of February, I hope. My mother remains well, she thinks

of going to Munich again in the
spring, for about 6 weeks of Rump
business and enjoyment. I have
had rather a worrying time lately
with a kind of smouldering rebellion
against two rather incompetent
teachers, but it was not possible
to dismiss unless they felt bound to
withdraw of their own will. So I had
to encourage a sort of mutiny - rather
a dangerous proceeding - in order to
bring matters to an issue. I have succeeded
so far, that both these buffers will leave
of their own accord at Easter, but it
was an anxious time and I disliked the
part I had to play. Altogether the manage,

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ment of the Victoria. Lyceum gets
more and more complicated and difficult
now that I am in a way answerable
to the government with regard to the
teachers' courses on the one hand, and
have to combine the latter with university
work in order to content the students
on the other hand. I suppose some day
our institutions will have to hand over
its work to one or the other party for
good and all, but at present matters
are still in a provisional, immature
state but I have to find a way
through as best I may.

My mother and sisters send you their
best love, and wish to be remembered
to your mother. So do I, also to your

sister Dolly and Billy, but I
suppose you will not meet them
again in a hurry, at least I fancy
your Xmas vacation is a much longer
one than ours. I began work again
on the 5th of January and go on till
the beginning of April. In any case
I wish you a prosperous and pleasant
term, and remain always

Yours affably

Alison Colver