

(12) Dec 19<sup>th</sup>/80. 5582

My Dear Husband

First of all, I must  
send you this composition by Noel.  
One day last week Miss White was ill  
and they could not go to school, so I  
set them each to write an essay on the  
part of Grecian History which we had been  
reading the night before. Noel's ideas are  
an advance of his spelling. You must  
keep it as a curiosity. And I send you  
the page of Pamela which has the notice  
of Bessie. You will be glad to hear that  
the first edition is sold, so it goes on well.  
Mr Macmillan has sent me many  
nice little notices of A. Mamma. It  
is very slow. Dr Hayes is attending  
Mr. Lee has kept her bed now for three  
weeks. She has neither ache nor pain,  
and is perfectly comfortable, only  
so weak. Dr Hayes hopes she will be  
better by and by, and she certainly is  
gaining a little strength. She takes food  
every two hours. Since she has been ill,  
I have had to give up my sitting, as  
most of my time is taken up in at-  
tending upon her. It is a great dis-  
appointment to the children that

do all not be able to come downstairs  
for Christmas. I have asked Miss White  
to come and dine with us here, she  
has no one belonging to her here, and  
I expect Mary Catherine and McDermott  
will come too. The children are all  
very bright and happy. They have been  
busy for a long time over their Christ-  
mas presents. They spend all their  
week's money in buying wool to knit  
mittens for poor people, and now they  
are going without sugar to earn a penny  
a week for the same purpose. They  
are really very unselfish children.  
The new garden wall is nearly done  
now. I like the garden better for it,  
and I shall save both in rent and  
gardener's wages. We are going to  
have most of it laid down for grass,  
so that the children will have more  
room for play. More the cabbages  
are to be all grass. We are going  
to plant ivy along the wall. I  
had a long letter from Mrs Dodd by  
last mail. Give my love to her, and  
thank her for it. She cannot cease

to pique for poor little Dorothy. Do they  
still live in Mr Hill's house. I am very  
glad Lady Cooper is so kind. I have  
joined a Shakespeare Society which has  
been formed here chiefly by Mary Catherine  
and Mrs Devas. Mr Jeffrey Smith  
and his curate, together with the dead  
master of the College, belong to it. There  
are about thirty members, who meet  
monthly at each other's houses. The  
first meeting is to be on the last Mon-  
day in January, the play "As you like  
It." You remember Mrs Devas, we  
went to a garden party at her place.  
I let Dr Wagner see Noel this morning,  
for I want to have some general  
rules about him. He says there is  
no reason why he should not get  
up strong, though he is by no means  
robust now. He advises cod liver  
oil for him and says I had better  
be in no hurry about sending  
him to school. He is a quiet little  
lad and takes in influences at  
every pore. I hope you took care to  
watch for anything that is pretty.

I do not want to give over spoiling  
the Egyptians yet. I think sometimes  
if Mamma's health should not be  
again what it has been, but that will  
affect my coming out to India.  
I could scarcely leave her an in-  
valid, and still less could I leave  
the children out her. I quite  
hope however that she will be restored  
to comparative health, though  
at her age the building up is a slow  
process. She says she is as happy and  
comfortable in every way, as she  
can possibly be. Remember me  
to Mrs. Dally, she must send me  
word again about the watch and  
then when I am in London again  
I will see about it. I don't think  
you would feel the cold so very much  
here, you would sit splendidly well,  
with the children and so keep the  
house quite warm. But I never  
look forward to your settling in  
Melburn, the church atmosphere  
would not suit you. I have had  
too such pleasant dreams about it,  
that a pity they were only dreams.

Sunday. I had a letter yesterday  
 from Mr Beresford, asking me  
 to return him that padlock  
 which he says you borrowed. As  
 I don't know anything about it, I  
 have bought another I hope equally  
 good and sent it to him. He tells  
 me (quite incidentally) he is married  
 and hopes to see you on his way through  
 Calcutta. If you have the padlock, pray  
 give it to him then and he will give you  
 the one I sent. He is a funny man.  
 I have such a splendid sermon to send  
 you by the Bishop of Peterborough, but there  
 is not room for it this week. Mine  
 is much better. I shall wait as late  
 as I can to send this, in the hope of getting  
 your letter. All the children well and  
 happy and full of love for Dad. As I am.