

weather  
 which we  
 are having now  
 makes the very idea  
 of tropical temperature  
 always so desirable  
 by I may say to  
 Richmond Road,  
 alvern Link,  
 Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1885  
 5741  
 5. 5. 85

Dear Mr. Stephenson,  
 I have to thank you very  
 much for your kind Christmas  
 greeting, and the lovely card which  
 with the others that came with it  
 arrived exactly at the right time,  
 and was received on Christmas  
 Day morning. I wish you could  
 have seen the whole party, and the  
 delight of the children when first  
 thing after breakfast Sina came down  
 with the cards, and then when the  
 "present hunt" began. We had hidden  
 the presents all over the room the night  
 before, and the search and discoveries  
 were one long series of delights. What-  
 ever life may hold for them in the  
 future, I think the Christmas Days  
 of their childhood will be an unfa-  
 ding possession of happy remembrance.  
 Though I have not written to you,  
 I have not forgotten your last  
 commission, when you came to

say goodbye to me last year, about  
Lilian. I do not think, if you were  
here now, that you would have any  
anxieties about her now in the di-  
rection you had then. The year that  
has gone by has made a great dif-  
ference in her, in the way of giving the  
direction of all those undetermined  
forces of awakening womanhood  
which seemed uncertain then which  
course to take. I think for one thing  
the working up for this Cambridge  
Examination has been an excellent  
thing for her - in this way - by giving  
her an object of strong interest outside  
herself. It has been a long steady pull  
yet not a strain; and the desire  
of "passing" successfully, and pleasing  
you and her mother and friends by  
doing so, has been a healthy as well  
as an engrossing interest, and in-  
centive. Yet there has been just enough  
uncertainty to keep her doubtful of  
herself, and dependent on the sym-  
pathy and help and encouragement  
that have been freely given her, and  
that she has often no doubt felt  
her need of. The Examination well  
itself was a strain upon her, and  
if there had been no outcome of

it all beyond the intellectual advan-  
tage I should have said the pros  
and cons were about balanced. As it  
is, I think the incidental influence  
on the formation and direction of  
her character at a critical stage has  
been of the utmost value. I do not  
think she will lose the "set" that  
she has now taken on, but will de-  
velop into a very fine and thorough-  
ful and unselfish womanhood.  
Or all too, changes fast, or rather dwells  
and always onward towards good.  
The only thing with him is lest the  
keen spirit should outpace the strength  
of the strength in which it is cast.  
The sad thing is that both children  
hard as they have worked while  
school time made its demands upon  
them, seem to have thrown lessons  
off their minds entirely, and to be  
taking in the full benefit of play  
now that holidays have begun.  
Mabel always takes things easily.  
The strong interests and anxieties  
and struggles of life are in the future  
yet for her - happily perhaps. There  
is plenty of character in her, and a  
great fund of feeling underneath  
her placid fascinating sweet de-

means. I wish you could  
have seen the grand performance  
of the trial scene in The Merchant  
by Benice the other day. It really was  
extremely pretty, and all the actors did  
themselves credit, especially Portia,  
who gave her part with an expres-  
sion and feeling that a good many  
other people might try you in vain.  
Shylock, too, was very good. But  
you will hear the whole history  
from the others, no doubt. And the  
Cinderella part! How much you  
miss by not being at home!

Mamma still keeps in her usual  
placid condition. I do not think now  
that she will gain further ground,  
but we have much to be thankful  
for, contrasting our comparative  
freedom from anxiety with her  
extreme weakness three weeks ago.  
It seems just the quiet, perfectly  
natural going out of the camp of  
life. Nothing could familiarise  
one more beautifully with the Last  
Friend than the way in which he  
has again come among us, as he  
did fourteen years ago at Sherwood.  
I am glad all goes well with  
you in India. The sharp winter,  
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was the Republican symbol! However,  
I was not to be done out of my demon-  
stration as I cut out of white calico  
a St. George's Cross and stitched it  
on to the scarlet flag and put it out  
again to the general satisfaction, as a  
tribute from England to United States.

I think I shall go to Rome  
next week on Tuesday or Wednesday  
or possibly it may be Thursday if  
I do not hear from you before.  
I have two or three addresses of  
pensions there but I will not  
decide on one beforehand. I am  
afraid I shall not get one there

at the same price that I have  
elsewhere but for a little while  
and for Rome I must be con-  
tent to pay four or five shillings  
a week more. I shall be glad when  
my sight seeing is over and I can  
sit down and remember.

Give my love to all. I have  
quite a budget of stamps for the  
children. Yours affly,

Fawcett Library  
27 Wilfred Street  
London S.W.1.

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Mary Catharine Labor,

I have just seen the King again, in the  
distance, from my window, in his carriage.  
Mrs Colman writes very nicely. I would  
send her letter but it would be too heavy  
I am afraid.