

It will
be 39 years
to tomorrow, and
the same day of
my dear Willie died.

a Madame Couranowski, Casa 4.
Piazza S. Felice, Foreign, Staten
Wednesday, Nov. 10th 1880

5743

My dear Elsie,
I went first thing this morning to Madame
Giannini and found your letter with Mrs Colman.
You must have worked hard to have got so far
forward already - and packing china is such an
arduous business too. I hope it will all turn out
safe and whole. You will be glad when the
month is over for when the dismantling has
begun. The time until the final farewell is only a
lengthening out of the parting from the home
that will be then like so much else a part of the
past. I am glad that some at least of the house-
hold goods will be left behind to keep watch through
the days and weeks that the house will be un-
tenanted. I think you might put Papa's portrait and
the frame with the old crayon group into Mamma's
room when it is emptied, to stay there until I come
into the house. It would not seem then like leaving
it quite deserted when the day comes round with
perhaps neither of us there to go into it ourselves.
I think it would be well if you wish it to cut out
Grandpapa's portrait which was the only one worth
anything as a portrait but I should not like the
rest burnt. I would put it all back exactly as it is
now and then put it in Mamma's room. Some time
I have always thought, I would look at it again. It
is curious we should both have been thinking about
that old portrait at the same time. The other day wan-
dering down the narrow streets here I saw in an "an-
tichia" shop and old portrait hanging up - life size
oil painting in an old-fashioned frame - so like to Grand-
papa that I was almost going in to see if I could buy
it. It brought back the face in the crayon picture to
me almost as if it had been copied from it. Another
curious thing came when I was going down that
immense winding gallery that leads over the Ponte

eccles from the Pitti Palace to the Uffizi Gallery - It takes ten minutes to walk from end to end and hundreds of old portraits are hung in the gloom - One all at once caught my eye as so like Pape's profile and the expression too. When I looked closely I saw the name Thebauld, 1st Duke of Lorraine - There were five or six more, descendants & nephews, and all with the same family likeness quite distinct - The dates were 1300 onwards - That name Thebauld would be pronounced almost like Tabor if any one bearing it had settled down and left descendants in this country - Some day when leisure and opportunity serve I will try to hunt up the history of this Thebauld Duke of Lorraine and find if I can what his character was and what he did. I think your idea of the Fern window screens is a very happy one. I did not know you were having more photos taken. I should think the rocking would be level now as a picture - I wonder when Mrs Peck will know what she is going to do about the house. And I wonder what Mrs Lilly says as to coming in when I come to it. If she does come I should like to know beforehand what I should have to give her, and whether she would bring her own bedding, &c. and whether she could stay the whole of every day. I should be glad if you would ask her on each of these points. I am very much obliged to you for all this extra trouble about my things. There is enough to do as it is without anything additional. I wonder when and how I shall light those two fires that you have made the preparations for - I am glad Mr Stephenson understands what it all means to you. It is a great loss in any life to have had so little knowledge of what Home - a home with the element of permanence in it, not a more or less comfortable caravansary - is, as from childhood has been the case with him. But what he has

missed himself, he has been able through you to give to his children, memories and associations that will be a possession to them as long as they live - Even to them no other home will ever be what the Shelburn home has been, and what it would have remained, and increasingly become, if you had all staid in it together until they made others of their own. Still it had to be, if he was to find work in this country instead of going back to India for it - and if you are paying a heavy price now for his good it is sure to come back one way or another.

I hope Mr Purser will take the fixtures which you have put up. They are all such as add to the comfort and value of the house and things taken down and taken away are worth so much less than their value. One good thing about your leaving is that you have us feeling as being created and "gawed" out of what goes with it as I was when the poor old Richmond Road camp was broken up. I hardly remember what all the blinds besides the heavy ones are but if you leave them I will take care of them when I leave, unless they are taken to by some one else. I think if Mrs Lilly comes things may be very comfortable in their little way once more - like blowing the ashes of a fire that had seemed to have gone out, and makes quite a warm red glow again. I sent you a card yesterday with my new address. It was quite a sudden move but I felt as if I should like to be for awhile in this house and look out day by day from "Casa Quind" windows. The old Caudley

was here in Mrs Brownings time and is full of enthusiasm still about her. She asked me yesterday what the "little boy" was doing and was much interested in what I could tell her about him. The King and Queen of Italy came yesterday to stay at the Pitti Palace in Florence. It is close by and the procession of carriages passed under my windows so that I saw the King and Queen pass. They were bowing right and left most graciously. The Queen is a pleasant looking woman graceful and dignified. The King I did not see so well as he was bowing to his side of the street. There was a great crowd but not much enthusiasm apparently. There were bills put out in the morning by the City officials to the effect that there was not to be a public reception when the King & Queen arrived but hoping that the citizens would do their part in giving a welcome. So by way of doing something I hung out a red flag from my window as I saw decorations of the same kind though not very numerous hung from other windows down the street. However ten minutes after Mr. Baranowski came rushing up to say it must be taken down directly or have some white put on it. The policeman had come with "such a face" to order it. For red alone it seemed