

Family letters to Jane, his first wife

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
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the lady, on whom my brother performed the operation. - They were
 very much admired, & so popular that I really could not just now tell
 you, how many were favoured with a sight of them. - I was very
 much pleased with what I saw of Miss Keatings. - She seems a very
 amiable pious girl. - Mr & Mrs C have kindly sent you another
 volume of Mr James Addages - enclosed with, which is a letter for you.
 We will send it the earliest opportunity. - They both take the deepest
 interest in every thing relating to blindness. - Your dear sister Mary & I are
 now regular correspondents. I do feel to love her very much. - I hope dearest
 friend you will forgive me having dwelt so long upon hers in this letter. - with all
 the other numerous errors. - I must trouble you to say all that is loving & kind to
 dear Stephen - I do sincerely wish him many happy returns of his birthday
 which is fast approaching. - Hoping you will too give one of your sweetest
 to my little piece of hair I had the pleasure to receive from your sweetest attached sister
 Ursula

My dear beloved sister

Wexford, February 27th 1843

In one of the letters lately received from
 dearest Benjamin, he expressed a wish, that when having more
 leisure, I would at least sometimes write by ship; - & certainly I
 might have done this, but it is with us so out of fashion, that
 it hardly seems to one, to send a letter in that way, - And as to
 overland, dearest Papa & Eliza are the general scribes, Malvina
 & Ursula the occasional ones. I think you will not, that may be at-
 tributed to their humility, that they cannot think of often intruding
 their thoughts, by offering them for your inspection? - Now having
 as I consider settled this point most satisfactorily, I hasten to
 thank you most warmly, very very dear sister, for your sweet
 interesting letter. - It is very delightful at any time to hear from
 one I so much love, but your epistles are I can assure you always
 unexpected - I know that your family engagements will be still more
 numerous, & you have so many friends that have a prior claim,
 I certainly shall not think you have forgotten me, if I do not
 hear from you, for a long long time. I just warn this that you may
 know, I do not look as a thing of course, for a reply to any
 of my communications. - What a kind interesting manner you
 have my dearest sister, of giving advice, your good counsel
 is indeed more palatable, than commendation would be from
 many. - I do much wish that the affectionate admonitions, you

I have been to see you - and you do not to miss a single line

have given me may be ever remembered - how it would ^{lead} to my
happiness through life. - They are dear just what I feel to need,
having here so few temptations from the world, in comparison at
least to many ^{places} I have visited, - & all of us seeming to move on in the
even tenour of our way. - I doubt not that in some points from habit &c.
we find it more natural & easy, to do right than wrong, - Without
however taking all these considerations into account, I am per-
haps apt at times to think my heart in a better state than it is,
thus forgetting how different it would be, if the tests I had
to undergo were more severe. - As it is, how often have I to re-
proach my selfishness, all the little daily crosses & vexations do constantly
show me, how far my inward corruptions are yet from being
subdued, & frequently leads me to exclaim, "Oh wretched man that I am,
who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" If then these are
my feelings, where there is every thing to encourage growth in grace,
what would they be, if I had to come much into contact with the
world, & had to take an active part in many of the busy
scenes of life? - Will I must pray more earnestly, that the Lord
will prepare me for all that lies before me - & that he
may do this, by showing me more of my own heart - enabling me
to dive into its inmost recesses - that every impure motive, unchristian
thought, desire, & passion may be brought to light - and that the
love of Christ, & a desire for his glory, may be the only two great prin-
ciples operating there. - In addition to that intimate self acquaintance - I would
supplicate for a clearer revelation of God's own character, to my par-
tially enlightened understanding, so that according to my varied feelings,
I may be peculiarly impressed with one or another of his perfections. -
I am I trust increasingly desirous that religion may be exerting its influence on my whole
character, - I think I am beginning to awake more & more to a sense of my obligations,
& I do hope that the name of the Lord may be magnified in me - that others
may be led to admire his surpassing grace, in seeing the transformation effected in
one, who was once a leafy branch - but having been grafted into the living vine,
from whence plentiful nutriment can be derived, giving the pleasing evidence

of being in a flourishing condition, as here & there a cluster may be seen, though
perhaps half-hid by the foliage. - but such a time does indeed appear distant;
thought though do you not think my beloved sister, that this may be the purpose
of God towards me. He has seen that as yet I have brought forth to little fruit,
I wonder it almost & doubtless at times, whether I do not rather belong to the barren
fig tree, than the choice "true vine". He is therefore now pressing & purging me, that
I may bring forth more. You tell me dear, you do pray for me, Oh then may, one of your petitions
be, that this our present affliction may be eminently sanctified; & that as the refiner
knows when his silver is sufficiently tried, by seeing how it is reflected, so we all, especially
I who so need the purifying process, may be led to reflect the image of Christ more brightly,
& thus though separated on earth, we may be meeting for that blessed region,
where we shall all I trust be once again, & for ever united. Oh there will no
shadow come over the glorified spirit then, no darkening of the mental vision,
no cessation of the spiritual joy. - And surely such thoughts should calm the
troubled spirit, when storms arise & oceans roll, and all it hears but heaven's
But dear should I say that all is drear - does not such language express a secret
mourner, that because one flower is taken away, & we can no longer gaze on
its varied tints - which were so harmoniously blended together, that
therefore we can no longer taste pleasure in all the remaining blossoms,
on the "garden of life". Oh how must retract such an expression - for
really would not be unmindful of all those mercies that are still
continued - the smallest of which you know dear, is more than I deserve.
It is very delightful that we have my beloved & I go with us again,
and though she is not quite liberated from the "bonds of affliction" -
yet she hopes she has the prospect of complete emancipation ere long.
She said had indeed led her by a way, that she knew not - but feeling
assured that it was the right way, she has ceased not to rely upon His love
& pity & mercy. - Oh dear & I writing to you, she will give you the latest
intelligence respecting our beloved Hephzibah. - We shall feel very anxious
for the next two or three letters from China - telling us dearest Jane,
how you are - & whether you are comfortably settled at Hong
Kong - I trust by that time your health will be perfectly recruited,
& the dear babe ^{the girl} growing famously. - You must tell us whether dearest
Stephen is quite delighted with his new companion, or whether
he seems rather jealous of a rival. - That they be both

the June 4th
be very, dear children - I hardly seem to doubt - because their parents
are so, & I do earnestly hope that they may be good, that they may both
ever be their parents joy - & that, you & my, beloved brother may see in them
your fondest hopes, & fervent prayers - abundantly realized. To tell dearest
Catherine that we are much obliged for his sketch of the hospital - what with
that, & a previous most clear & graphic description of yours, respecting its
situation, & surrounding scenery, our imagination will be materially aided - I
trust with the increased facilities now afforded - for the dissemination of
religious truth - among the deluded Chinese there may be an increase of
the Spirit's influence - crowning all the efforts that have been made by
good devoted servants, with abundant success - and do trust that in your new
sphere of labour you will have new blessings, & new joys, arising from seeing
the little "army of the living God" increased by some new adherents - who
will I hope prove to be valiant soldiers of the cross - amongst the foremost
of these I trust you & dearest brother, would ^{be} place A. P. & A. H. -
I think that it may be unto thee according as thou wilt. - But I must
now speak of my visit to Birmingham, which was as pleasant as ^{my} friends
friends, & pleasing recollections could wish it. - If I had felt inclined to
forget that it was the place, where my dear brother had so long resided, I should have
been quite prevented doing so, from the numerous inquiries that were made after him by
his friends. - I was reconnected when staying under his good hospitable roof - that
I had sleeping in the very bed where he used up his mind to go to China. - With
respect to Mr. James, all I can say is that my highest expectations were more than re-
alized. I extremely ^{enjoyed} the Sacramental service - & you were more zealous than one. -
I spent two or three days at Miss P. & N. - they certainly are a most interesting family
I was very much pleased too with what I saw of the young ladies - dear & valuable
as I should really think as a school, there can
generally be its equal found. The Misses have such a peculiar aptitude in conveying
instruction - & pay such particular attention to their spiritual, & moral, as well
as mental training. - I really felt almost to wish that I were a little younger, that I might
be to school again. - I spent altogether at Birmingham about 10 days. - I was very
much amused the town hall - & was extremely interested with seeing the
school - persons of class making - you must tell dear C. that I took tea at Mr.
B. & D. & was invited for that sake - & Mr. B. said he had great respect &
affection for him - He wished me to present his kind remembrances
to you - I wrote - he said he had read the medical report with much
interest. - He has a very nice wife - & a sweet little boy about a year old
I must just say that I took tea with the little shoes worn by

It will I am sure deeply grieve you & my beloved brother, to hear that our beloved Sophyiah is still no better, & instead of being removed home, as we fondly hoped when she first went to Otto's house might be the case, she is going to dwell in the midst of strangers. But though no sweet-souls of Zion will greet her ear in that strange land, yet still her God will be with her there, & in His hands we gladly pray we may be enabled to leave her. - Our heavenly Father has graciously appeared for us in a pecuniary point of view, & oh he may appear for us again, in a way far now it feet - but, at any rate His character, His past-providences, & continual promises all call upon us to hesitate not to rely on His such amazing love & faithfulness. - I wish never to forget that this is a state of discipline, & probation, that our whole repose upon earth will prove to be but the infancy of our existence, & consequently when we enter upon that higher state of being, we shall feel most grateful for that training, which has most prepared us for such pure & exalted enjoyments. - Dearest Papa as I have no doubt Mamma has already mentioned, continues much the same - but he do trust that in the summer with change of air she will regain this long lost treasure.

I do find her to be a lister indeed, & feel her to be constantly increasing in nature. - Thus it is that God lets one thing against the other, for while deprived of one I am enabled to cling more to the other. - And indeed I must confess that I have greater happiness of mind now, even than before this dark shadow passed over our circle - because I have tasted more & more that the Lord is gracious, & that while in the world we may have tribulation yet in Him we may have peace; a peace so truly valued by all who have experienced it, that cannot but increase our love to Him who is the cause of it. - & thus we know that if this love to our holy Redeemer be sincere, it will produce greater hungering & thirsting after righteousness, & greater mourning for sin. - I do do hope & pray that such holy be true & more the happy effects of all afflictive dispensations. - then I shall be constrained to say though God has chastened, He is love. -

How quickly my beloved sister time does seem to fly, if one can only be fully engaged. - I am sure my chief complaint is that it is too too much in haste. - I seem to be always toiling, & the days seem always to be striving as to which can pass the fastest. - I suppose it is that when you once begin to gather fruit from the tree of knowledge, it seems to rise higher & higher, & you catch sight of many a tempting looking, heavy laden bough, but time is too short to enable you to reach them - & so you are obliged to be contented

with those which are most rarely secured, & which being more connected with
the root, are of a more useful though less captivating a character. Now is it
not to my beloved sister, that when you read a book on the subject, it is fair to
give to you another, with which you would much like to be acquainted? I have
found it so much so, that really my greatest difficulty is in choosing out of so many, just
those the study of which will not only discipline the mind, but furnish me with that
knowledge which is most valuable & important. I have a very strong desire to be
the ruling scale, that to have a cultivated mind is peculiarly desirable. Improved Sabbath
School teaching is especially called for, so that really if we do wish to be useful in
the cause of Christ, it seems a Christian duty to acquire whatever talents may have been
committed to us; so that if we have but two, should look for the Holy Spirit to assist in making
them other two. I am expecting every day to hear from my dear & loved friend
Mary, in reply to my last communication, in which I told her the plan of study
that had been recommended to me, & how delighted I should be if we could pursue
something of the same plan, & suggested the propriety of devoting the greater portion
of our time to works of a solid character, turning to poetry &c. for recreation.

For really I do find the imagination is the faculty that requires last development,
it being generally sufficiently ready to develop itself. But it is very different with the
reasoning powers which are often dormant & inactive. And now
my dearest sister, I wonder what news I have to communicate that will in-
terest you. I do not know what you see of the Patriot, but you probably may
not have heard that Dr. Campbell minister of the "Paher-nacle" has become
the Editor of a new Magazine entitled "The Christian Witness". While intended to
diffuse general reformation, its special object is to establish it in Congre-
gational principles. This is the first number it has appeared, & in a few
days after its publication 25,000 copies were sold, & 5,000 more printed to be
ready if called for. The Editor quite hopes that ere long it will reach a cir-
culation of 50,000: the proceeds are to go to the relief of aged ministers.

We have all been much pleased with the first No. - It is about the size of the
Evangelical, & yet only 3^d! I do feel so glad dear that I live in
these stirring times, when the church is awaking from her slumber, & beginning
to form vast projects for the enlightening of the world. The Educational Movement
is just now occupying much attention. The Independent body alone is called upon

Rec^d April 1844

to raise 100,000 £ in 5 years for the purpose of conducting week day schools in an efficient manner - & really all other great objects are through their leaders loudly calling for the silver & the gold. In order that they may be carried on successfully, that really all wiser wishings to end their day in peace had need take their rest from this restless world - leaving their wealth to those who possess more generous hearts than they. Last week we had a week treat in King visited by one of the dear Scotch Seceders. You & my beloved brother are doubtless well acquainted with the fact that one of the Presbyterian clergy left last May the old Kirk finding it to be uncollected by the state - The names of the defuncts were Mr. Dodds & Mr. Clark - both possessing great singleness of eye to Gods glory & sincere Christian love. & why you notwithstanding all the sacrifices they have been called upon to make for conscience sake - for pure high principle - Mr. Dodds in separation from the church gave up his living of 400 £ a year - & what was perhaps still more trying was obliged to leave his beautiful manse - which had been but a short time graced by the presence of a beloved wife - & to change to the parish church in the mountain glen - They have to rest with great resignation from the loss of the Lord - but the Lord has wonderfully supported them in the midst of all their trials & I trust he will still continue to do so

You too who form the nucleus band in China, just that you must not look for co-operation in men of rank & influence & such it is delightful to think that God can do without them & I do trust that he will strengthen you amidst all discouragements - knowing that you shall reap if you faint not - How refreshing you would doubtless sometimes find it to to your spirits, if you could for a short season return to your own dear native land & surrounded with Christian friends & dear connections, could again go to the house of the Lord in company.

But I must not speak of it - it makes me so long to see you my sister & my brother - & yet this we well know cannot be. I was so much obliged to you for telling me how my darling nephew spent his time I can now picture him & his dear "Ma" in their innocent amusements - until for a short short moment - I myself almost feel myself young again. - Dear Hannah has been suffering lately from the influenza, but is now feeling better. - It seems so strange to think we have no more to do with school - I hope it will still continue to take much delight in her studies - & make much progress though now at home. Trusting my beloved sister that we shall soon hear of your perfect health. I now close this with best love to my dearest brother, nephew & your self - to see when we to be your loving & affectionate

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Weyford March 29th 1844

My very dear sister

For your last welcome and dear note or rather letter I feel very grateful, it how pleasant it was to hear from you again, you are so kind in entering into details, you anticipate the questions which we should ask you if you were by our side, and thus gratify us as if we were. - Dear Thomas's letter of December informed us that you were feeling and looking better, but are you quite well, I fear you are sometimes inclined to conceal your indisposition from my dear Mother, I hope however I am wrong in this conjecture, and that you always tell her exactly how you are, otherwise you cannot have the full benefit of her advice and tender sympathies. May your future health be such as not to call forth this proof of his affection, may it rather excite unmingled feelings of gratitude and joy. - Having suffered so much from the hot season last year, you must rather dread its return, I trust it will not again prove so injurious to you, you are glad how thankful I shall be if you should in future experience no painful effects from it.

I have now been a captive in the castle of Indokine just 2 years, and how much longer my imprisonment will last I cannot say, often have I prayed with deep emotion "let the sighing of the prisoner come to you O Lord" and I am now cherishing the pleasing expectation that I shall soon be released from the chains which fetter me, and again be free! - Mr Sheppard said to me in his last letter "having 6 months of fine weather before you, you must now endeavour to regain the whole of your former strength, and I expect you will find little difficulty in doing so" - I am full of hope, but having had such repeated disappointments I dare not anticipate it with confidence, I must try to repress a spirit of impatience which I am sometimes in danger of manifesting, instead of immediately desiring any earthly good, seek to resign my will to the divine will - "and make his pleasure mine" - While it is a duty to comment, and say unto the Lord, "How long that our

comes me in his hand, it is also our duty to adopt all the means
which it is in our power to use; the present of health will therefore
be my chief business for the present; when I am able to travel which I
hope will be in the course of 2 or 3 months I shall go to London to consult
Dr Watson & Dr Sheppard, - if at the close of the summer I should find myself
irresolvent; then, then, I hope I shall again enjoy the privilege of being
actively engaged in the service of God; I am under perhaps obligations
to him to his glory for which I have reason to say when I think of the
managements of his kindness which I have received from him during
this long season of personal and relative affliction, the Lord hath
dealt bountifully with me - if my dearest Jane, how happy I shall be
if the time should come when I can go from cottage to cottage as in
the days that are past, and speak to Jesus - I do hope he becomes more
precious to me continually at least it ought to be the case, - And I think
the supreme wish of my heart to make known his love to others - "Redeeming
love has been up them" & may I venture to add, "And shall be till I die."

This month has been very cold and stormy, but this week the weather
has suddenly changed, yesterday every thing around us seemed to say
the spring is come! - On Wednesday I took my first ride, to again
have a prospect of our little village which I had not seen for so many
months, to inhale the invigorating air, to gaze upon the cloudless
sky - it was indeed joy to me, I felt like a bird out of a cage and
my thoughts involuntarily turned to Him who is the author of
all these ^{simple} enjoyments; - you can fully understand me when speaking
on this topic, because you yourself have been an invalid.

We were much interested in your account of dear little George Stephen,
we did not forget him on the 7th of March his birthday I wish you and
my dear Brother would just have been in the midst of us at our family
worship, and heard my Father pour out the fervent wishes of his
heart for his dear Grandson; I need not say we all sincerely
and warmly responded to every petition presented; if they should
all be realized, your precious boy will be blessed indeed.

You will be surprised to hear that Mr. Branch has been taking
a trip on the Continent, partly at his own expense & partly at the
expense of the N. Boham Society, his chief object being to be
present at a flower show in Great Britain, one of the largest & on Quoy which
is held once in every five years. - During his absence from home Mr. R
writes "I visited several of the principal towns in Belgium such as
Brussels, Liege, Antwerp and passed through others. I also stopped
in night and part of a day at Bruges, & from Ostend on my way home
I travelled by diligence to Calais, & from thence took the Mail
packet to Dover. - I also visited while at Brussels the field of
Waterloo, & brought some wild plants from the orchard and lawn
of the farm house which was several times lost and taken during
the deadly struggle. The trees in the orchard are still standing
& bear many marks of the deadly bullets, as well as the brick
walls which are still unrepaired. - Dear Ann was very far
from well during Mr. Branch's absence, having spasms - severe
headache and much languor; she called on Mr. Sheppard who
said by taking her home she would soon be better; - we have
heard a very good account of her this morning, and the dear
children are pretty well - we hope to see them at the Chapel
house this year. - Mrs. Marshall in a note to-day, Mrs.
said "I wish to write to dear Mrs. B. but such sad changes
have taken place since I last wrote, that I feel I cannot at
present address her, will you mention this with my best
affectionate wishes for their welfare" - You will infer from this
that my dear Aunt Sarah will feel her loss greatly, - though
she earnestly desires to acquiesce in the will of God, and say
it is well - John & Jane are in pretty good health, my Aunt
is very anxious that they may walk in the steps of their
sainted Father. - My Aunt Marshall we hear is at
my Uncle's Dray, having left Mrs. Russell who is still in a
heavily laden state of mind - how painful. It is not strange that
my Aunt so seldom writes to us, we have not heard since
August - nor had she written to John & Jane since last July -
we rather expect to see her this spring but we do not know.

My dear Parents and Mother sent our dear friends at
Northampton W & P^{rs} must they had the pleasure of seeing
the articles that W & P^{rs} must & the friends have contributed
for the Chinese Medical Supplies they are to be packed
to day & sent to you. The Sunday School & other
friends meet Decently to be at W & P^{rs} must when
they work for foreign objects I suppose very intelligence
is read, - the box is estimated by W & P^{rs} to be worth 20 £
according to the rate of market articles sold in India,
it contains frocks white & coloured, hats & gentlemen's
socks caps &c. - when you have received the box and
know the proceeds W & P^{rs} must would feel very greatly
obliged if you could write to her acquainting her
with it and also give her some account of the China
Ladies now put in the mission having worked for it
perhaps some of the Ladies would like to know
who purchased some of the articles if you would
not think it too much trouble just to mention it -
I might interest them - - Dear Hephysbet is much
the same after new residence gives us much satisfaction
may it however not be her choice for a very long period
- I forgot to say in my last that George Collier
is still in Exile - he is much obliged to dear Benjamin
for his last interesting letter dated December - I hope
he will excuse our answering it this time - I had
a note lately from Mrs. Pickett enclosing a note from
W. Cooper which I just send in this - Our last letter
contained a document from the Medical Botanic Society
making him a member of the College Society -
- he has thanked W & P^{rs} Marshall is the Librarian at the
- he has thanked W & P^{rs} Marshall is the Librarian at the

We have heard this Morn-
ing from Mr and Mrs
Atthey we wished them
to have met Dr Parker
but they inform us it
is not practicable
they are expecting Mrs
Thomas Atthey who I am
happy to find is recovered
we hope Miss Atthey
may visit us this
Summer

I wrote the Earl the
29th Jan & am I will
an early reply to his
own letter - I write
now to you.
I have not ~~received~~ received
my money & have
to call on the bank
I am yours ever lovingly
R. Robinson

I believe you do not
write before you show any
admiration into the church
He gave a mark in writing
around the church and
the more you express
themselves highly pleased
with their situation. I
want a few more of you &
have 5 or 6 others in
the church below as a
~~part~~ part of the
ing. The church also has
in it in the situation one
unknown - this kind
than do you forward