

## Letters from members of the Morrison and Hobson families

### Publication/Creation

1859-1866

### Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hm65tbac>

### License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

111

Ping-foo. Saturday morning  
My dear wife / 9 o'clock

We reached this city late last evening; and early this morning we anchored opposite Williams's Cove. We found, as we feared, that he had been stricken with (what I should pronounce) a dangerous state of feebility. The party five in number, had great difficulty in meeting with a suitable boat, & at an exorbitant charge had to take a small one to Lung Kong, hoping there to get a better. Perhaps by this time they have reached Shanghai, and you would have the letter of them from Mr. W. - On Thursday we had a rain with strong day, & did not get farther than a few miles; on Friday we had fine weather. Most of the way a good wind, we were very comfortable. Happy together; his delight in prayer & conversation with the others, & much respect for them & the biography of Dr. Wardlaw & Mr. Westbrooke, the evening of which I have much enjoyed. We have just finished looking through the map of China (he for taking charge of it) and breakfast & evening prayer, and are now going down to the city, and look over our future plans. The splendid weather just now, I trust it will continue, especially for the R. M. harvest; very

Much corn is still on the ground.

The case of Mrs. W's is a very  
pamper one - he seems completely  
laid aside from work, and has  
symptoms which look very serious.

Mrs. W. seems to have had as severe  
borderline catarrh of the sigmoid.

When we shall return I do not  
yet know: it may be in a week or  
10 days. Mr. W. says some sick  
people are expected to see me.

I hope my dearest - you are keeping  
well and also the dear children.

May the Spirit of God be with you, and  
peace & joy in the Holy Ghost.

I commend you all to this care  
and keeping. - Yours most affectionately

Wm. H. Hobbs -

P.S. How what I have seen of the  
place & country around I am pained  
in its poverty. Love & kisses to each of my  
dear children. Peace be with this



21

集

霍

雅



萬

外

內

西



Miss Mary  
C. Smith

2  
3 Buckingham Place  
Oct 16<sup>th</sup>

My dear Mary - Hannah &  
I have just decided that  
nothing could "set you all  
up" so well, as a change  
to Brighton just now. We  
have few leaves to fall. And  
the fine sea breezes, and clear,  
cheerful atmosphere, would soon  
brace up the invalids. And  
also continue to drive away  
ague - so don't think of  
settling down any where, till  
you have given Brighton a  
trial - Robert leaves us on  
Wednesday.



next - ~~and~~ besides his room  
for you & Dr H - we have  
George's, which will do for  
the Boys - so you see, there is  
no excuse for your not com-  
ing now - The best time for  
invalids - A day's notice will  
be sufficient, to get all ready  
for you - We are anxiously  
looking for letters by the  
mail, which I suppose will  
have arrived by tomorrow -

I can only add our united  
love to you all - and in  
hopes of seeing you soon that  
I remain your affec<sup>t</sup>  
Mother M -

Maunaloa

Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>

1859



Mamma  
June 18<sup>th</sup>

8 Buckingham St<sup>3</sup>  
June 16<sup>th</sup>

My Dear Mary. I have been  
daily hoping to get a line  
from you, saying, you are  
all convalescent. However  
I trust that that really is  
the case. Especially, as a slight  
seasonable change has taken  
place in the weather. Which  
has been, to us all, very  
trying. Yet upon the whole,  
I believe Brighton has not  
proved even as unhealthy, as  
many other places. And often  
have we wished you were  
within a



A considerable distance for  
such invalids as we are. For  
at present, you might as  
well be in China, as in  
England, for any personal  
advantage we can derive from  
each others society. That you  
have such kind relatives at  
hand, as the Hobsons <sup>is a great comfort.</sup>  
case of any emergency, so that  
when we don't hear as often  
as we could wish - we know  
you are not isolated. And have  
all that affectionate attention  
can offer - Still we should like  
as I have said. more of your  
society, and to see the children.



There are three, or four youngsters <sup>here</sup>,  
now making a Chin. it is  
"Bucking-up day". and we have  
had an influx of Recruits, and  
Officers. but Hancock likes children,  
and so it's "all right". I believe  
you know our last news from  
the East. Crofton was to join  
the Expedition. with the Commander  
in Chief. And George was pretty  
well. & very busy. in fact, he  
was "The Law" - a horse-dealer, &  
"Contractor for coal," to supply the  
Indian Navy. tho' he was not sup-  
plied with funds for that same  
purpose! - I hope your Boy  
was well. Dr Hobson did not  
mention him in his note. I have



I wish our best love to your all - I've your letter to Mother & Mr. been frequently invited to Wm. Heddon, by Mrs Reeves. But, now, a cross rail-road journey is so formidable. I have not gone there nor, are we likely to leave home this summer - Still, I feel the want of a change. I don't think a long continuance of Brighton air suits me. or Barmeth. it is too stimulating to excitable temperaments! -

Mrs Rich Smith saw poor Mrs Caruthers a little while ago, & thought her looking depressed, & ill - no wonder! Joe Beaumont talked of going to China - and then "killed". Should send for his family! I hear nothing of Mrs Milne at all - Excuse this as I don't like to defer writing till next week.



Brighton, Friday 10.

My dear Sister,

You will be glad  
to hear that this Mail  
has brought us letters  
from George after his  
arrival at Shanghai.  
he got there on the 8<sup>th</sup> of  
July in "Health & good  
Spirits". He says we  
shall receive fuller  
accounts by Southampton.  
Crofton wrote from Amoy.

on the 10<sup>th</sup> but had  
not then heard of the  
catastrophe at Sakoo.  
I have no doubt your  
opinion of the whole  
affair is the same as  
ours. We have been  
at home just a fortnight  
& enjoyed our stay in  
the country extremely.  
Robert came here with  
us, but has now gone  
to London to paint -



he cannot rest without  
doing something. We  
have bought the new  
carriage to Houghton & I  
drive it every day - I  
wish you could come  
and stay with us - when  
will you - The first week  
after our return I was  
ill, having taken cold  
at one of the out-of-door  
Sunday preachings - but  
I am well again - Ann  
came down last week &



Stopped here from Friday till  
Monday. Mamma is  
much as usual. The  
weather here unsettled  
and windy the last  
few days. We hope  
that you & his Excellency  
the Doctor and the  
children are all well.  
With love to all I  
am Dear Mary ever  
your affectionate sister

Hannah P. Morris.

Hannah - July 19  
1854



5/1  
This appears to be a letter from Crofton  
Morrison, son of Dr Robert Morrison by his  
2<sup>nd</sup> wife to <sup>his sister</sup> Mary Rebecca Hobson the mother  
of Dr. John Morrison Hobson regarding the  
death of their brother the Hon John Robert  
Morrison



Hong Kong

November 2<sup>nd</sup> / 43.

How altered are the feelings with which I begin this letter My dearest Sister, from those which occupied my mind when writing one which I have been compelled to throw aside. The circumstances of a few days have changed the pleasant employment into a mournful task. Little did I think when entering upon the communication of welcome tidings that ever I had closed I should have to tell of the loss of a Dear Brother. Then with what delight did I look forward to the anticipated meeting of a long separated Family; now all is a sad blank.

It was on Friday night (August 18<sup>th</sup>) that our Dear John first complained of indisposition. He was under an engagement to dine at the Government House



and could not decline it. The next day his head-ache had gone off and he appeared pretty well. He had to dine out again at Lord Saltoun's. On Sunday he walked after Church time through a hot sun to Mr. Brown's nearly three miles. Immediately on ~~account~~ arriving there he laid down; and in a short time, had an attack of ~~fever~~ ague. On Monday, however, he appeared to have recovered, and went on with his usual official occupations, but on Tuesday he was again <sup>unwell</sup> ~~unwell~~ and a fever came on which refused to give way to the usual remedies, and continued increasing till Thursday morning when he was very ill. In the afternoon his skin became moist, and favorable symptoms appeared, and as the fever abated the Doctors recommended his immediate removal to Macao, whither he was taken in a steamer. On account of my still labouring under the effects of my late illness, I was



not allowed to attend him; but Mr Brown kindly accompanied him, besides a Surgeon of the Government Establishment. The next day, I heard that Dear John had reached Dr Andersons in Macao, comfortably, and was doing well. After that I had no accounts till Monday, when I was led to believe he was still making favorable progress. On Tuesday night I saw the steamer enter the Harbour, and my expectations were raised. I hoped to hear of his further recovery — How great was the shock when I was told, our Brother was no more!

Nov<sup>r</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Yes My dear Sister he had entered into his rest. He had joined our Father, at the Throne of God! He had gone "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest," to the place where it is said "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death



neither sorrow, nor crying, neither  
any more pain. Shall I say then  
that all is to me a blank?  
No, not our brother now happy.  
Here he was in the midst of  
troubles, and was constantly  
harrassed, and vexed. He is  
now beyond the reach of all these  
and can we wish him back  
again among them? Let us  
keep the remembrance <sup>of him</sup> in our  
hearts, always striving to follow  
his example. May we learn to  
live like him, and may we be  
like him, ready. — Thus can we  
hope like him to die, leaning on  
the merits of our Redeemer. Our  
mortal course is but short,  
and when it is ended, may  
~~we~~ all meet round the throne  
of the Lamb, where our reunion  
will be infinitely happier than  
that of which we are now dis-  
appointed. Give my kind love  
to my Dear Brothers and Sisters and  
now that we ~~are~~ <sup>dear</sup> have lost  
one, may we all that remain,  
bind ourselves closer in love.



To Mary Rebecca Hobson / Morrison

From Morten Creftan Morrison



6/1

Monday 10 Dec.

My dearest Sister

Your & the Doctors  
notes of Saturday have  
just <sup>now</sup> reached me. As  
you think that Bob  
Junior will prefer a  
watch, please let that  
be the thing. I fancy  
that £ 8. 8 is the lowest  
price for a good one

(£14 or 15 would be  
preferable) so I enclose  
£2 to make up the  
sum.

As to scientific tastes  
(another phrase for curiosity)  
I believe that every human  
being has them <sup>either</sup> developed  
or latent; & when latent  
it needs only opportunity  
to develop them. The inactive



want to know, & the  
active to do, & the  
magnificent natural  
world will gratify  
both kinds of people  
affording endless instruction  
to the studious, & material  
for the industry of the  
energetic to work upon.  
A microscope supplies  
an additional sense;

to use it requires no  
previous knowledge; &  
it introduces us immediately  
to a new world. Try  
the experiment with a  
half-guinea French micro-  
scope, or a "simple mi-  
croscope" which I think  
costs 12. 6. ; & with a  
dozen ~~order~~ <sup>discs of</sup> ~~through~~  
few specimens of diatom-  
acea, the flint skeletons



of a very abundant tribe  
of plants, the said flint  
skeletons of which are  
invisible to the naked  
eye, are indestructible ~~by~~  
~~the~~ fire, & I believe by  
any other known agent; &  
compose a pretty large  
part of the ground we  
tread upon.



Other very common, but  
strange & beautiful objects  
are the <sup>spicules or</sup> skeletons of marine  
<sup>Gorgoniae &c.</sup> zoophytes, ~~the~~ which con-  
tribute largely to the structure  
of a good many islands  
& mountains.

The first stone, or  
bit of earth one may  
pick up, broken in two  
with a hammer, or



with a few grains  
scratched off with a  
pin, will probably  
show very beautiful  
crystallization.

Birmingham is in  
a first-rate region for  
such amusements. This  
I believe on the "Triassic"  
formation; & has in its



neighborhood the "Devonian,"  
the "Carboniferous," & the  
"oolitic" formations — a  
great variety.

The book I mentioned,  
"objects for the microscope" is  
a small one, & any bookseller  
can supply it. Another book  
much recommended (which I  
shall order for myself) is "How  
to work with the microscope" by  
L. S. Beale M.B., published by Harrison.



I recommend as very  
amusing & instructive for  
an interesting Traveller  
Murray's "Physical Geography  
"of the Sea."

It is a great misfortune  
& a dangerous thing for  
any one, <sup>especially a young man</sup> to go to a country  
like China without knowing  
something of Nature.



You know that there are  
no society or mental  
resources, & the mind  
starves. Man lives not  
by bread alone. Too much  
reading, or dwelling in  
the past, or the future, is  
not good for mind or  
body. Our Kind Maker opens  
the book of Nature, always  
present before our eyes, if



we will see it, to teach  
us the best & most  
easily learnt lessons, &  
to give us pleasure &  
entertainment of the  
purest kind.

I to my great sorrow  
am woefully innocent of  
all scientific knowledge.  
I never saw a microscope  
till last year! With a



French toy microscope (like  
that above mentioned) I  
found in the middle of  
a bit of stone which I  
picked up on the beach  
at Chefoo, the fragment  
of a shell, enclosed, &  
which please return me at some  
time.

at Pekin without a  
microscope, as they were  
very visible to the eye



& I know not why previous  
Tourists had not noticed  
them before, I found  
the plain full of remains  
of sponges & other zoophy-  
tic structures; & at the  
root of one sponge (with  
the microscope) a fossil  
dragonfly, invisible to  
the naked eye, &



which had been crushed  
by the sponge against  
a pebble, disclosing the  
insect's internal structure.

Unluckily showing it  
to a Chinaman by  
candle light, it touched a  
sharp corner of the  
microscope, & the poor



tragically disappeared  
for ever!

Thank the D<sup>r</sup> for  
his pressing invitation.  
No need to spur a  
willing horse! Hope  
soon to come. Post  
is closing. Cannot send  
the shell which is



at No 8, until another  
post. I am very  
impatient to see you  
all. pardon this long  
prose.

Yours affectionately  
brother

McMorrison



4 Buckingham place  
10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1866

My dear Doctor,

Notwithstanding my  
haste I find that my  
last note to my sister  
has missed the post.

Herewith is the little shell.

I have not yet had an  
opportunity of showing it  
to a geologist, nor in fact  
any of ~~the~~<sup>my</sup> specimens

33 years  
ago. mem

I believe that we left



so that I know not yet  
whether they are curios  
or worthless. By "curios"  
I do not mean rich or  
rare <sup>things</sup> but simply ~~things~~  
exemplifying facts useful  
to be known. I have  
brought only 2 or 3 min-  
eralogical fragments. The  
rest were left behind &  
will not be here for months.



The shell is the minute white speck in the middle of the stone.  
The stone itself is slightly defaced by the film of gum over it.  
M.M.

Illness has been, &  
is, the cause of my  
delay in going to see  
you all. This makes  
me very lazy, so that  
I do nothing of work  
really important, ~~to me~~.  
& I have yet hardly  
made any progress  
towards settling. Since  
1859 I have been



with torpid liver & dyspepsia  
worse than before, &

it was aggravated by  
a perpetual state of war  
to the knife with L. & J.

Bruce & my friend Wack.  
Altho' coming off substantially  
triumphant, you may suppose  
that I could not come out  
of such deadly & protracted  
hostilities without deep  
scars, especially when the



2

French Authorities at  
Peking were on the  
side of the enemy!

— I have a pretty good  
mare, & I take a gallop  
on the downs, when  
weather permits, which  
is the best physic I have  
yet found. So lazy am  
I, & so bad are the



Brighton tradesmen that  
I have not even decent  
clothes to go visiting.  
Every day last week I  
intended going up to  
town to see my mother  
but have not gone yet.  
On 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. I had made  
up my mind to come  
to Birmingham, but



was too unwell.

The days are now too  
short to go & return  
in one <sup>day</sup> ~~hour~~, & it is a pity  
to travel in the dark,  
& lose the sight of  
the country. My den  
needs a quantity of im-  
provement to make



it habitable, & I have  
not yet begun. I shall  
expect your young men  
to come often to stay  
with me when I am  
settled. I doubt not  
they will find some amuse-  
ment. I hope it will be  
some time before Robert goes  
out to China.

Your affectionate brother  
W C Morrison



Blackheath

30 Nov.

Dearest Sister

In writing the other  
day I forgot to give you  
a message from Mamma  
begging you to excuse her  
<sup>not</sup> immediately answering  
<sup>n</sup> <sup>your</sup> ~~last~~ letter to her, as she  
now is only gradually

settling down, & is consequently a little more poorly than usual. As soon as she feels a little more at home she will write to you; unless we see you before then. In great haste I am  
Your affectionate brother  
Wm Morrison



Amoy 5 April<sup>9</sup>

My dearest Sister,

I am going to take  
a holiday in a few weeks  
I will come & pay you  
a short visit. I hoped  
to have invited Benjamin  
here, but Parker is just  
ordered back to Amoy  
& so I shall leave,  
& return to the South,  
but intend to have 3  
months leave of absence

first.

I was delighted to hear that you <sup>all</sup> liked the change to Shanghai. I felt certain it must be good, for Canton was not the proper place for any family to live in so long.

P. comes at the end of this month, Sir J. having doubtless ordered



him here to give the  
consulate to Dr Winchester  
— a wicked job! He  
wants me to remain here,  
(as V.C.) but such an  
arrangement would be  
absurd. I shall  
offer my services as  
a Secy to Govt. with  
equal pay & standing  
to a Consul, & if it  
is refused from home

I  
will most probably  
quit the service. Patience  
has a limit, but that  
mine has reached!

All in good train here,  
but I have been hard  
worked, so forgive my  
neglect of correspondence.

Give my love to the  
Doctor to Jane, Benjamin  
& the young People.

Ever your affect<sup>e</sup> brother

Wm Morrison  
Hon John Morrison, son of  
Dr Robert Morrison whose sister  
Mary Rebecca who became wife of Dr J. M. Hobson