

Dinton - Dalwood Letters

'Dinton', 13th January 1831.

My Dear George,

We received a large packet of letters from you, dates 29th June, 1830, on the 15th of December, and I believe they came by the Australia, which arrived off Dover on 13th of December, and for some time after, I most anxiously expected another letter, of a later date by her, but as the good ship has been here a month I have given up the hope now.

Your letters have been full of good news. Papa was very much pleased to hear that you have received the trashing Mill, etc., safely, and no doubt the wagons you mentioned you had sent to fetch the rest of your goods brought the other packages that were sent by the ship Elizabeth. I wrote a hurried scrawl to Margaret in November with a box, thinking it was to go by the Egmont, but that vessel had sailed before the chest reached London, so Mr. Buchanan wrote to Mama to tell her your various packages should be sent by the Funchal ship, which vessel did not sail till about the 3rd of January I believe.

When our latest letters were written to you the whole country was in an uproar, as well as two or three of the adjoining ones. William and his yeomen certainly stopped the rioters from going into Somersetshire; no riots have taken place there as yet, and I trust the whole kingdom will soon be quiet again.

The Special Assizes took place at Salisbury last week, before three judges, and a great many prisoners were sentenced to transportation. Two are to be hung, I hear, one of them for having very nearly killed Mr. Oliver Codrington with a sledge hammer in one of the rows in North Wiltshire; the prisoner was not content with knocking him off his horse, but struck him when on the ground, and it was some hours before Mr. Oliver C. could be brought to life, and he remained insensible for two or three days. He is now pretty well recovered, and is extremely annoyed to find that the judges of the Capitol have sentenced the man to death, as he would not allow the surgeon who attended him to be examined in Court, fearing that such would be the case, and I hear he has desired the counsel to find a flaw, if possible, by which he may escape. The other case is for extorting money.

I think these convicts will be most valuable servants to you and other settlers in New South Wales, I fancy they will not be inclined to quarrel with the machines they will find there. The Government has very wisely determined not to send the poor men to the hauls, previous to leaving England, to be made more wicked, but a vessel is now lying off Portsmouth to take them to Botany Bay as soon as possible. No doubt you remember a notorious poacher and evil-disposed person of the name of Jack Ford, alias Henhood, belonging to the parish of Upper Teffont, who always wired all the hares and pheasants in Thickhorn and the adjoining copses. He joined a party near Wilton, assisted in breaking machines, and doing other violence there. At Barford he headed a mob, and broke Mr. Nicholson's mill, and then went on to Ono shipman's house, and declared he would have gold or blood, so Ono gave him a sovereign. These last two offences have transported him for life, much to the joy of William Barnes and Jim Viney. Papa has done his utmost to get one of the men's sentences mitigated, but has not succeeded. He is a native of Chicksgrove or Tisbury, and is a blacksmith. He was absolutely collared and taken out of his father's house by violence; but, of course, when his spirit was up he was active enough, and being a blacksmith he knew well how to break the ploughs and rollers. Now don't laugh at me very much for what follows, because I know that there is hardly a chance of your ever seeing poor Edmund White, but if you do, don't forget that Papa has interested himself in his behalf. He has seven years to spend at Botany Bay.

We assembled as usual on Christmas Day, Louisa and Mr. Knatchbull being the only absentees. Alexander brought his wife and one of her sisters here, and stayed a fortnight with us. Tishey and family only stayed three days with us, much to the sorrow of her boys, who are very fond of coming to see Grandpapa at Dinton. We thought you with dear Margaret would be in your coach and six, journeying to see Capt. Allman, or some of your neighbours. Really you have more neighbours than we have. When your list arrived we reckoned up ours, and found that you have the advantage considerably.

William's face has now recovered its beauty pretty well, but the cold, frosty weather we has lately made his cheek look very much discoloured, but I hope in a little time there will be no traces left of his having been in the wars. He went to Bramshaw a few days since, accompanied by John, as a thaw has commenced, and they intended to have a little hunting.

Frank was very unwell a month since, but is now quite well, and I am happy to say that Mama has been particularly well for the last month, and I think we shall keep her so; if you could see Papa, I do not think you could discover any change in him. He takes as much exercise as ever, and toils after the woodcock, accompanied by John's dog Bonney, with the same spirit as he did years ago, before you went. I must not forget to send you a message from Sarah Barnes, our old nursemaid. We told her of your intended speculation of fattening pigs, and curing bacon, and she begged we let you know that she was famous for fattening pigs on a little food (comparatively), and also for curing it, and indeed the nice streaked piece

(One page missing)

I have lately acquired another accomplishment, that of making bread, and I hope to have a few practical lessons in curing bacon and brewing ere long. The Aurora Borealis appeared ten days since; very magnificent it appeared too, the whole of the northern half of the sky being beautifully shaded in rose colour. It lasted a long time, that is to say, more than three hours. I never saw one before, nor had Papa since 1802. Our greenhouse thrives, and Ella desires me to tell you that one of the orange staffs that we had from London is now bearing fruit, and is a handsome tree. How beautiful and sweet will your lemon hedge be. I hope it is near your house.

Margaret shall have some music by the Australia. I do not know when she is to sail again, nor have we any tidings of Robert Scott for some time, I suppose he has returned to Glendon.

I have the thermometer register for the year on the other sheet. How cold and miserable is our climate compared with yours. I have to go to Bryanston next month to pay Lady Emma Portman a visit while Barclay is attending Parliamentary duties. Bye the bye he is going to keep a pack of foxhounds; begins next April, at least he buys his hounds then, and the Queen accepts of his pack of Rabbit Beagles.

Pray tell Margaret we did not forget her Birthday, and all drank to her health and happiness. Pray do not think we are living in terror of our lives; everything is quite quiet in these parts. Long may it continue so.

With kindest love to you and Margaret.

Believe me, your ever affectionate sister,

Charlotte Wyndham