1845 Epistolary

A.L.

Embley. Nov 28th 1845

I have just heard from Aunt Julia that you were to be found at Milan, dear Aunt Patty, and sit down directly to hope that you have not forgotten me. I have been leading a very busy life since you left us. Grandmama had a threatened paralytic stroke took me to Tapton in the summer till her perfect recovery - at Dy! then my little lad (Shore) spent the two months of his holidays with us, till October, and ~~during~~ till that time poor Gale had been rapidly sinking, but then tapping seemed to give her a new lease of life. She insisted accordingly upon coming here, and ten days afterwards she died, as she had lived, sitting upright in her chair. Her last words being, "don't call the cook - Hannah, go to your work." She took to

death so gently that, though I held her hand, I could not tell the moment, when her gallant spirit sped its way on its noiseless journey, except that the hand lay so still in mine, which never before in failed to answer to, with such a warm hug. She fought the fight out, till overpowered by the material world, like a good man & true. & I believe her soul is now gone to animate the body of a moral Napoleon or a Mère Angelique. Nobody will ever know all she has been to us - she was so happy & happiness is so interesting. Deformed & a dwarf as she was, her great soul made her like a Titan & a Prometheus, & she did bring down fire from heaven, which warmed & lighted our house. Except for ourselves though, how can we have a regret that her Father has sent for her? I never saw a more beautiful expression in death. I have saved a

bit of her hair for Ludwine, of whom she was very fond. Pray tell Ludwine with my love, that I have had the pen in my hand a thousand times to write to her, but thought it sounds very absurd for me to say I have no time; I really have written to nobody these three months. Scarcely even to Helen Richardson, whose increasing illness has alarmed her friends very much, but who is better now, I am glad to say. The last time I saw Mrs. Reeve was in your room. Ludwine wrote to me, which I was very much obliged to her for, from Dover, but did not tell me where to write to, then. I hope I shall behave better in future. Poor Mrs. Gaskell! you will be much shocked to hear of her sudden death from apoplexy. but Aunt Julia, who arrived at Home House the very day after it, will tell you all the particulars. We have had the Stewart Mackenzies staying with us at Lea Hurst. Louisa, a month

interesting & very pretty dark Oriental looking creature, with that sensitive trembling quivering under lip, which bodes such nervousness — we struck up a great friendship with her. Madame Pierre was exceedingly affectionate & full of enquiries about you all; delighted to meet Uncle Sam. He looks handsome & queenly as ever. Keith & his wife & baby just come back to England —

I think we are all in status quo — a charmed circle. We give Kate column in the Times to work — & we seem destined to give no other column occupation either. Not even as among Rail road Committees: Our rail-road in Derbyshire is almost settled — & goes, I am afraid, through Bow Wood — but as long as we have no station in our back parlour, I think we have no right to complain. It goes behind Aunt Evans's, & will be, alas, a nuisance to the dear old lady. I will not pretend to tell you politics. The

A. 1.

American, Corn-Law, New Zealand questions will all be settled next Spring, & every body is in a stir about them. We should have put on half mourning for the potato loaves, if we had not been engaged with graver questions. Beatrice, (the little Sam Miller) gets no better. Blanch, who has had a slight illness, Eliza & she are the party at Brighton with Miss Rankin. The eight Carters are at the eight points of the compass. Going round with the sun, Harry is at Cambridge (doing very well) Jack in London, Eliza at Brighton, Fan has just left us, Alf at Aberford, Hugh at Bristol, Hilary at Liverpool, with Aunt Fu, or rather now at Thomas House. The Richardsons have quite, I am afraid, given up their Rome plans, which is the odder, as William R. has no prospect of being ordered abroad yet,

and would have gone with them. They are very gay. went up to town for the Amateur Performance of Messrs. Dickens, Jerrold & Co. for the benefit of the Sanatorium — Aunt Dee is the only one, whom I cannot give a good account of. Children in the measles. self very delicate. Miss Beevor going to be married to Ted Carter. And, except for the three boys, who seem to make up to their Mother for all troubles, (they are such living waters of happiness) — she is rather out of spirits at having to leave their beloved Thames Bank for a house in Bedford Sq, where however they will be near the boys at the London University. Can I tell you of any marriages — At Margaret Ashwright's wedding with her cousin Vice Chancellor Wigram's eldest son, we were present. Charlotte Eyre is to be married to a Capt. Strange.

but

these will not interest you. We are this moment come back from Dr. Lowler's where we have been spending the week, they as young & delightful as usual. We dined at the Palmerstons the other day to meet Olozaga, who denies the whole story of his shaking the Queen of Spain into lying papers for which he was obliged to fly. but as Ld Palmerston says, two years ago I remember Narvaez in exile at Gibraltar, & Espartero Regent of Spain, next year Espartero in the Regents Park, & Narvaez Minister of Spain, & in a year or two Olozaga will be back home & in place again. You will be sorry to hear of Frederic Stanifortt's death, the John Thornton's son-in-law. Mrs. John will adopt all those children directly. That is, Eliza's two she has adopted already. Lady Holland's death will interest you. And her bequest of £800 a year to Ld John Russell, most unjustly leaving

out her already injured son Col. Fox, injured I mean, by her having produced him before his younger brother Lord Holland. We had a most kind letter from Miss Fanny Allen the other day, asking after you, & bearing wonderfully the loss at once of brother & sister, Baugh Allen & Mrs. Surtees. I am afraid this is rather a forlorn letter, but I seem to have nothing entertaining to tell you. We have paid no visits for some time till this one. Parsons is going to marry poor Gale's niece & we have hardly a household therefore at present. And except Aunt Joanna, Jem & Alf for ten days - and Aunt Maria, who is coming to-morrow, we have been quiet at home for 6 weeks. How I wish you could go to Pisa & see my friend Caterina Fornacci - wife of the Professor Fornacci there - how delighted she would be to see you. She is a poetess & all that goes with that. We