

Ella.

9 Vanburgh Place  
Leith 24<sup>th</sup> January 1871.

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My dearest Aunt

Many thanks for your very kind letter, which I duly received along with Anna's inclosure, for which please give her my warm thanks. I had been rather fast in boasting of my strength, for I was confined to bed with rather a sharp attack of Bronchitis, when your letter arrived, so it was quite a treat to me. It was just about the same time I had it last year, so I hope it is not to be an annual visitor, as it is anything but a pleasant one. I was so sorry dear Aunt to hear of your illness, & trust you are, long ere this re-

stored to perfect health. Now I  
must thank you very much for  
the book you have so kindly sent  
It seems very interesting indeed.  
I was just packing up your draw-  
ing, when it arrived, & I can  
assure you I felt very much  
ashamed of your kindness. I  
know I must have seemed, very  
careless indeed to you, but I must  
confess I found the frontispiece  
rather easier to describe, than to  
work out; at least, to be anything  
like satisfactory, but please dear  
Auntie try & not be very much  
disappointed with it, although  
I must say I am far from being  
pleased with it myself. I am  
afraid also I have made the  
group too large: I do not think

it will look well when the margin is ~~cut~~ cut to the proper size. He sent it to George first thinking that if he received it safely & posted it in London, that it might reach you without further inspection. He have gone twice to Edinburgh to have our photographs taken, but they have turned out very badly & we are to go again, so, as soon as they are ready, you shall have them. The annual soiree, in connexion with our "young men's mutual improvement association" took place about a month ago. It was very interesting this year. I took in hand to play the accompaniments of the



songs, so had to practise rather busily for a while, as I played them all without music, to avoid the bother of turning the pages. We have never before tried anything but songs for a number of voices, but this year, Maria & David Kemp, sang the duet, "When the wind bloweth in from the sea", which seemed to be appreciated, as it was heartily, encored, so we had to do half of it over again. He had a most interesting lecture a few nights ago, in connexion with the same society, from a native of Iceland, a Mr. Hjaltalin, his subject was, "Iceland, the manners & customs of the Icelanders".

He had a very large & attentive audience, & everyone seemed to be highly pleased. He spent an evening at our house along with his wife, & one or two others. He is very intelligent and well informed & so agreeable to speak to. Some time when you are writing Auntie dear, will you be so kind & get me Uncle's signature. My friend Miss Anderson has a large collection of autographs, & is very anxious to have Dr. Dawson's. Her brother & sister have gone to Italy for the winter I miss them very much. I forget whether I told you about getting back my purse, you remember I lost it at Burntisland. Well

about six weeks afterwards when I had almost forgotten about it, a gentleman called at Vanburgh Place with it. I had a small account of Donald the Chinese merchant's in it, & he had gone there & got my address. I was so pleased to get it again, as it was a present from William. Any time when you are writing, you might please write my name on a piece of paper, which I would paste into your book. I think it is so nice to have the name, & who it is from, written by the giver. William gave me a beautiful easel at Christmas, so I shall have no excuse for not keeping up my painting now, although I have done nothing



as yet. I suppose you are enjoying  
beautiful clear frosty weather just  
now, so different from ours. The  
mist to-day is so thick I can  
scarcely see the garden wall  
opposite. I thought your invitation  
to come over in a French balloon  
very tempting I can assure you.  
I have a great desire to go up in  
a balloon, & then the additional  
pleasure of seeing you all, made  
it almost irresistible. With much  
love in which William joins, to  
yourself, Uncle, & all our cousins

Believe me dearest Auntie  
your affectionate niece

Ellen.

