

A
E
R731
R732

London May 4th 1842

My Dear Uncle,

You will perceive from the first glance at my letter, that death has been amongst us. It grieves me exceedingly to have to tell you, that both my mother and Allic are dead. I feel assured that these melancholy tidings will fill you with sorrow, and, on that account, no one can be more unfit to open it than myself. My Mother's death probably does not surprise you; but my brother's must be as unexpected to you, as to us, it is distressing and unaccountable. I will relate to you all the circumstances as briefly as possible.

Until the 3^d of last February

He spent the last few months of his life in the study of the French & Spanish languages. His father, however, that his comparatively idle life might, to a certain extent, have rendered his mind morbid, and, being naturally of a melancholy disposition, liable to hypochondria. Lately, having abandoned all hope of obtaining employment in London, he resolved to return to Edinburgh, and study medicine. For this purpose, he wrote a letter to Mr Watson, his guardian, and unfolded to him his design. Receiving no answer, and remembering that other letters which he had sent to him, had not elicited a direct reply, he seemed to imagine that no person would be worthy of notice, and brooding, perhaps, upon this, and growing impatient of delay, he had, in a fit of monomania, destroyed himself. Mr Watson did answer his letter, almost immediately after his death, and expressed himself in the kindest terms.

Two days after Allic's disappearance, my mother grew suddenly ill; the malady which had afflicted her for so many years appeared to come to a crisis, and she gradually sank, and, at the end of a week, expired. Her death, although it is painful to be separated forever from those with whom we have lived



the tranquillity of our family affairs was unbroken by any misfortune. On that day, my brother went out with the intention, he said, of viewing the procession of the Queen to open Parliament, and he appointed 4 o'clock in the afternoon for his return. He never returned.

Two days were spent in a vain search through London, enquiring at the various hospitals and police stations, in the supposition that he had met with an accident in the crowd. An ~~ad-~~ advertisement appeared in the Times newspaper,

stating, that a young gentleman had stabbed himself at an hotel at Gravesend, on the 3^d.

Many points of coincidence, in appearance - dress - time, raised the gloomiest suspicions in my mind, to satisfy which, my brother-in-law and I proceeded immediately to Gravesend, and there, in the unfortunate self-killer, we recognised Allic.

From the evidence adduced at the inquest, it appeared, that, shortly after leaving

home, he had pledged a blue cloak for 12s.; that in the evening, about 7 o'clock, he entered the Mike Hotel, at Gravesend, where he desired to be shown to a bed room, and some tea and cold meat to be brought to him; that this request was complied with; that he cut two slices off the meat, and placed his tea beside the fire, but neither ate nor drank anything; that none of the waiters observed any wildness in his manner; that on the contrary he was calm and collected in his demeanour; and that, within an hour after his arrival, he stabbed himself to the heart with the carving knife.

We are aware of no secret cause that could have induced him to commit such a rash act. He was apparently happy, undisturbed by domestic discontent, and, although from peculiar circumstances he had not yet entered any situation, he had no reason to look forward to the future with apprehension.

from infancy, cannot be regretted much;
for her bodily & mental infirmity, if it did
not render existence wretched, at least precluded
all enjoyment. She could never have recovered,
and might ~~perhaps~~ have languished for
years, in a state of increasing misery and
helplessness. However much grief is felt at
the loss, it is better as it is.

I have dwelt long enough upon this
theme, let me now express a hope that you
& your family are in the enjoyment of health
& happiness. Our late bereavement makes
both Mary & myself wish, with greater
 fervor, for your final return to England;
the uncertainty of life in regions so remote
& wild, fills us with apprehensions for
your safety. What compliances, then, can
you render to our wish? how far can
you satisfy our fears?

You would confer a favor of no
common value upon me, if you would
commit one of your sons to my care, send
him to England, and let me watch over
his welfare. No pains should be spared

in bestowing upon him the most useful
education; and his chances of ultimate
success are more favorable in this country
than in the deserts of the West. If you
consider this proposal worthy of acceptance,
let him come by the earliest opportunity, &
let me know to what profession or branch
of industry you would like him to be
reared.

As you will learn from Mary's
letter, I have been presented with a niece,
who is not only her parents, but I ought to
be proud of. She is, as a child, a beauty.
May she grow up lovely in every respect.

I have nothing of interest to tell you.
Being in the midst of excitement, I take no
cognizance of the political events of the day, and,
therefore, cannot give you any details of either
national advancement or retrogression. You will
not receive the budget for some months after the
receipt of this; but, probably, you have not yet
exhausted the first

I will endeavor to send you a very long
epistle next time, and, with a commission of
love to be given to my aunt & cousins,

Remain, my dear Uncle,

Your very affectionate nephew
Walter Phipps