

WILLIAMS FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE

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Southwell, Jan 20th 1835

My Dearest Jane,

I have hardly courage & strength of mind to write to you but as it is only childish to defer it I shall make an effort this morning. My present affliction is the early prospect of a separation from my beloved husband who is now on his deathbed. He is not now in a state of suffering & I am told he may yet linger some days, but there appears no hope of his recovery. He is now apparently unconscious of everything but up to the last day or two his mind has been on so heavenly & submissive a frame that it would seem selfish to wish to detain him though we who love our husbands love their company so well that we do not wish to part with them.

The great trial is over: the day after I wrote the above my beloved partner was called to the inheritance of the saints above & his dear spirit left its mortal remains without a sigh. But it is time for me to tell you how this happened.

Last summer he had some heavy domestic afflictions which I shall decline entering upon but poor Edward's nerves I am persuaded received their death blow at that time. He did not seem ill and we hoped that in time he would recover from the shock he had received and Edward Garrard being in residence he did everything in his power to sooth him. At last

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however he sank under it. He was intending to go to the Birmingham festival by way of a little change and was to pay a visit to Mr Garnett at Lichfield on his way: every thing was ready but during the night previous to his departure a very bad cough came on with other unpleasant symptoms which of course prevented his going. This was the beginning of October & the weather becoming very cold he could only occasionally go out. For some time he seemed to improve & then the least exertion or excitement would make him worse than before: this happened many times every attack being more violent than the preceding one so that at last his dear frame was exhausted. His complaint was considered nervous and ended in a nervous fever. He complained of tightness across his chest, with frequently a cough at night extreme, restlessness so that he scarcely even slept, difficulty of breathing particularly upon the least exertion & a continual depression of spirits to a very painful degree. Till the end of the year his appetite was good, but when his last attack began that entirely failed & of course his strength rapidly diminished so that at last he was reduced to the greatest state of weakness & to nothing but skin & bone. But as the outer man decayed the inner man became more and more fitted

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for its great change. He felt persuaded from the first that he should not recover & was much more anxious to be made meek for the inheritance of the saints than as he expected it to be shipwrecked into life again. He was continually praying particularly that his faith & patience might not fail and repeating the Psalms, all of which I believe he knew by heart as well as other parts of the Bible and "Fear not for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name, Thou art mine", was often on his lips. The greatest profession could not have shown a more pious submission or a more entire

depend[ance] on a Saviour than his. He was a person of very superior talent and real originality and as an upright character I think you could not find his equal in this place and of this I think the good people are aware for they seem all anxious to pay every respect to his memory. His poor mother feels his loss very acutely for he was the child to whom she looked for help in time of need, but though others may perhaps be sorry I do not think any of them knew how to appreciate him when he could be among them. His abilities were certainly above the common order & his knowledge was surprising for he was seldom without a book & his memory was so good that he knew

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how to make use of the information he obtained. After he became delirious he talked a great deal of you, William, Henry, Marianne & the mission, said he was going out as a missionary & gave notice of a missionary meeting. Though he was at the time not himself it showed the best of his mind even

in delirium. He was a dear affectionate fellow & the best of his Father's family and I esteem it a great privilege to have had his society and it is a comfort to me that I have *{been}* able to administer to his necessities & smoothed his pillow to the last and I shall now hope to be enabled so to follow him that I may be united again with him & our dear mother in

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a better world. I have not said anything yet of your sorrows in parting from our dear relatives a Paihia. If that sentence is not reversed I hope you will be supported under the trial for I am sure it will not be a light one. Dear John came down to see Edward a few days before he died & he took up to Town the frocks which had been made for Marianne. To him also were given a packet for Mr Stack from Miss Pigot who also brought a pretty little cat which her mother had designed for New Zealand and I find she has marked it for one of your children but I hope you will make it a chimney ornament for Mrs Pigot always had it on her work table. Miss Pigot has also sent other cotton articles. She is a good creature & has great interest in you all. I have just to hand a note from your sister, Maria, who is now at Epperstone. She is still in delicate health. I thought your mother looking very well when I saw her on her way to Newark. If I have not time to add more I shall bid you good bye and remain your very affec^{ate} sister

C. Heathcote

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Do not think me ungrateful in not having mentioned your valuable presents waiting, my poor head & heart have had so many other thoughts that *{I}* did forget them while writing the above but we have felt very much obliged to you for them. The plate I gave to Mrs John Beecher. Miss Woodward is become a collector & I encouraged her by sharing all our curiosities. Mr Buckingham the organ builder seemed quite interested in seeing them.