

January 2nd 1856

My Dear Ann,

I have just thrown aside an unfinished letter dated on the 23rd Dec. which might have prepared you for the event of our dear long suffering Isabella's death - I was called away from finishing it - and now, I have to thank you for the kind & affectionate sympathy expressed in the letter just received. Our sister's recent illness - Father's arrival, and all the domestic scenes in which you so lately took an interest were detailed, but they have been succeeded by others so much more exciting that I could not take up the narrative, and merely mention it to show that I have not been unmindful of you & the dear children's attention to me. I have the comfort to tell you that our dear sister came down stairs yesterday & I was well enough to pay her a visit - indeed I left her surrounded by I suppose children, when I went to see poor afflicted Miriam, with whom I of course should spend

of every day - early in the morning of the
24th M^{ch}. we were both summoned to visit
Isabella, we left her the preceding evening, (tho
confined to her bed for two days - apparently
comfortable, a change took place during the
night - and we found her passing away - quite
sensible, but drowsy, as though she had been
under the influence of anodyne - and with
only intervals of pain - her last day on earth
closed in - between one & two in the morning God
released her! to poor Miriam this is a most
distressing bereavement - the sisters seemed to live
for each other - Henry's absence, was a grief to
both the last thought of the departed - the thought
hold on life to the survivor - Miriam has con-
tinued at her brothers until today, she proposes
to return to her lodgings where she will retain
the affectionate girl who waited on her sister.
we could not let her go alone & unattended to
live among strangers -

Sarah Mordmain obtained the apartment
at Miss Doyles, only two doors from her Mother's,
she of course is not at all separated from her
the children are to be placed at school - and
they will wait the Majors arrival here -
our sister is much happier in her daughter's
society, and I am released from a load of
anxiety on her account, when obliged to

be absent. I am very sorry for Howard

& Jo's loss, but hope it will not prove
so heavy, as was first expected. Jo Hays writes
to his mother of their exceeding kindness
to him, and his gratitude for all he has received.
I hope he will be able to make himself useful
to them. If he is wise he will take a moral
lesson, from this mishap to his employers, which
will keep him back from the station they
designed to give him - "The race is not
always to the swift" nor the battle to the strong"

I have had letters from all our aunts whose
families are doing well. Josephine still
mourns, & refuses to be comforted - at least
she mourns like one who has never had
sorrow before, and cannot outlive it, but she
knows where to seek comfort, and prays
that she may be strengthened.

Give my dear love to my ever affectionate
& beloved brother, and to your precious
children, their bright loveliness is ever
before me, may God bless them. I feel
to praise to answer their letters at present.
I had a nice letter from my dear little
Mary last week, she says she is very happy.
I am glad all the children are so in their
new home, and that Mabel has become
a favorite with them.

Edw's visit was no unexpected
pleasure, and must have been delightful
to his father - I hope Hyman has not
relinquished his to Phil^a.

Horace still talks of going to Montreal
but will not get away from Richmond
for another week. He never likes to leave
his work unfinished.

Our sister, Sarah, & her daughters send
very affectionate love to you and
our dear Ben in which all our brothers
unite. It seems to feel the cold weather
more than usual - it was long coming
this winter - it rained on Christmas day
& has snowed since - but is not so
cold now - May the blessings of the
New Year be continued to you all
and good health the crowning good
be abundantly bestowed.

God Bless you my dear
Ann - My darling Brother & sweet children
believe me ever your
Affectionate P^{er}
Best love to dear
Benjamin & Hyman.
Kiss them for me dear Susan & Anna -