Letter from November 17, 1890

Lavinia Coombs
India, Jan. 17th. 1875.

Dear Billie,

Your letter was received Dec. 26th. and then I waited for the coming of a box and the promised box which was only a few days off for she arrived in Calcutta on the 28th. of October. I think that was the date. It was Monday anyhow and they reached Madras the next Friday morning. "They" meant Auntie, Bachelor girl, Harry Bachelor and one little girl Lara and Mr. Brown along with Mary. They had gone to meet her. I hope Mr. Brown would hate to see Calcutta, for his going there would be so different from what he had expected, but Dr. Bachelor didn't want to leave the Bible School just then for there was in the midst of the final examinations for the year and Auntie was deter-
mind to go, and a man seemed restless & necessary. Mr. Brown was at Newport when the news of Miss English's not coming reached him and it fell to me to let him know about it. He came into London for no a few days and found a letter waiting for him which had just come from Miss English saying that she was hurried from coming! - her parents hurried her. Thrice she was hindered the fourth did not show. Of course if she had wanted to come, no simple hindrance could have kept her, and Mr. Brown's eyes were opened to her unfitness and weakness. I confess I was not backward in expressing my opinion. I knew I didn't fit it before to him, and I don't know as it would have been well then, but he was able to see for himself after this second exhibition of himself. He ac-

knowledge there had been doubts &
times about her coming, and I believe he will be all the better for his freedom from uncertainty about her. He had been under Dr. care ever since last May with nerves unstrung and sleeplessness. But he had been better for several weeks and seems to be all right now. I believe it is a great providential deliverance for him that she didn't come and he will yet be able to thank the Lord for it if he doesn't already.

Enough of Mr. Brown. The Portland box came all right and I was greatly pleased with its contents, especially with the night-dress drawer, stockings and cards. I found three pairs of stockings - two black and one striped - and all just a fit. I haven't tried on the nightdress but I suspect it is a little long. It is as fine I shall be wearing it for a wrapper next fall season. The needles, thread, pins, bad

nails, and odds I shall work in as
presents at Christmas time.

More buttons I don't see yet, what
use I shall put them to, but
"every thing comes in play
once in seven years" and I don't
think will be as long as that
before I shall find a place for
them. The cotton cloth goes into the
Industrial school to be made
up into garments and then sold
The gauze vests have already begun
their mission. I have one on now.
The thicker ones may be used later.
On. The dark calico will hardly do for
garments, for the washwomen
beat their clothes so unmercifully
that their color cannot stay in.
dark calicos especially lost all
their beauty after the first wash-
ing or two. Perhaps I can use it for
the lining of a quilt which the chil-
dren are having together.
Mrs. Plimmers large Quarterly
pictures will be a great help in
our country during this cold season
for we can use them as the foundation of many talks. The picture will attract the people and so gain us more listeners perhaps. I don't as yet see any use to which I can put those lesson cards. There are such crowds of them too that it seems a great pity to have them lie idle. All the reading on them is of course unintelligible to those Bengali children and they are hardly bright enough to be attractive to them as pictures. But the quantities of advertising cards that came were a boon indeed! They are so bright that the children count it a treat to get one of them and I use a great many of them as rewards for good attendance both in the day schools and in the Sunday schools here at the Chapel. An advertisement for Pear's Soap or for the Home Sewing Machine seems rather strange for a S. School card.
but the all one to them. I once in the Bible in English would be not better. The parties worn under clothes I shall give to some of our poorer people. The mild weather of the cold season seems to make them shiver and shake and draw into themselves as much as of our really cold weather affects us at home. But they have very little clothes and those of thin material. I can see a change though in the few years I've been here in the amount of clothes the women are allowed to wear in the cold season. Our teachers wore short sleeved jackets under their "šáres" (their outside cloth) and in the winter they would only have these same. There seemed to be an idea that the women should not put on extra clothing—that would be trying too much to be like the men. But nowadays however our teachers have long sleeved jackets made of thicker cloth than their summer ones and sometimes even a flannel one. The women in the villages do are getting to wear waists and some of the more liberal and advanced even put on a skirt or have a garment something like a chemise-waist and skirt all in one. Formerly the waist and skirt were the insignia of Christian women. Now the Brahmo Somaj women wear them and in Hindus there is no reason to think they are much behind seen.

I think you know the Brahmo Somaj people are those who have left idolatry but do not accept Christianity. There are quite a number of them in Munnar and I don't know that Jomo and his husband had done and was greatly surprised to hear it. She has been the weakest one all the time and one who would have thought she would surely have been the first to go. They were greatly attached to each other and it must be a great sorrow to her.
The Century's year is up and now I shall have them bound in two volumes and have that much addition to my library. This year a fire Pierce from Abbington Mass. is sending me the "Chautauquan." It is different from the Century but in due course I shall like it. The first number has come so as soon as one was done another commenced. I do not know this Mrs. Pierce but she is evidently a friend to the missionaries. She has made Miss. Mary Bachelor and myself life members of the Woman's Missionary Society. I was glad to hear of your visit to West Bowdon and to know that it seemed something like it used to. I don't it to be come so changed as not to seem homesy when there it was in love so. You ask if there doesn't come a longing as the time draws near. Not yet but rather
a restless dissatisfied feeling that I haven’t done what I had hoped to and a half resolve never to go home till I can feel more sure that God has used me in the salvation of souls. I do believe I have been a help to a great many and I believe I have helped to keep some wayward feet from straying farther and have brought them back to the way of peace. I think I told you of a woman who was married as a girl to her father’s pasture boy and that they never lived very happily and that he beat her and she wouldn’t stand it and at last left him and an unmarried man who we found out afterward had been carrying on a correspondence with her to get her and wanted her to live with him as his wife while her husband was living. I don’t know how far this little drama
had proceeded when I wrote you but
it has had several more chapters
since. The husband was a worthless
fellow and abuses himself and con-
tinued to die and die. We had to
get the wife to live by herself in one of
Mr. Stiles' outbuildings and she
worked for Mrs. Stiles. She seemed
repentant and wanted to be taken
back into the church. They "eat at"
herself and decided she must
take as her punishment fifteen
(still think it was) inches of the whip.
She agreed to it and I stood by her
while she received them. The un-
marrried man too was judged and
he was to have twenty strokes but
by various wiggling he got it
turned into a fine. After this
was all gone through she fell at
my feet one day and confessed that
she was in a family way, and that
not from the time she left her
husband and went off with the other
man but from weeks received from
him while living at Mr. Stiles' I was
shocked and deeply hurt, angry and
questioned all in one. Mrs. Stiles dis-
charged her and she went to her
sisters. Of course the thing to do and
was for this man to marry her
and after a great deal of arran-
ging and rearranging it was
accomplished. His brother is our
best man. A most powerful
preacher and a growing Christian
Twain a great grief to him to have
his brother marry this woman but
she consented at last.
The man got work as a messenger
at the Judge's Court and the baby
was born, but it never lived - a
great mercy. She suffered a great
deal and had many experiences
and I believe is now a good
Christian woman. They live now
in our compound and she comes
every day to look after our rooms
sweep and dust and make our beds.
You know June built and I am
wishing leisure by ourselves and we
let her do this work because it gives her a chance to earn a little something and free us from care that would interrupt our other work a great deal. We enjoy our little home very much and hardly see how we lived so long in cramped quarters.

We hear by the last mail that Mr. Hollars is to be returned to India this fall. We've been praying for somebody to be sent and were not to be thankful, but we could be more so if his predecessor had been somewhat more pleasant. Mr. Stacey and Mr. Sanford will come here in their round-the-world trip. I suppose and perhaps Dr. Phillips will be here too about the time of our yearly meeting so we will have a big time. I hope Mr. Stacey will stop long enough to get a tuck of our fruit-wealth, but I'm afraid he will be too busy. Mr. Luce and Mr. Stiles came in from an outside trip yesterday having had a good time. They had baptized eleven during from Heathenism and four of the Christian Community at Babagadia. That makes fifty-one in our list this year. I hope to do a good lot of outside