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8-16-1888

## **Letter from August 16, 1888 - transcript**

Lavinia Coombs

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Midnapore  
August 16 1888

My dear Nellie

Your letter dated April 22<sup>nd</sup> and telling of unmelted snow drifts (!) was received the last of May, and now by the time you get this 'twill be almost time for snow again. I suppose the summer season is at its height just now-or possibly it has begun to wane. I want to hear about Ocean Park and its meetings and the people who went and who talked and what was said & c. & c. I get the Lewiston Saturday Journal and that tells so much of the summer resorts and what is being done there and how people migrate. How this summer flitting has spread 'till almost everybody charges about somehow! if it isn't more to eat supper in the orchard now and then. I wonder where the fashion will run to and what the reaction will be. We used to hear of Saratoga and Long Branch and Newport but they had the monopoly of "summer boarders." Now, or nearly so, they are everywhere, big and little, rich and poor, yes bound and free; for I suspect some are verily slaves to fashion and appetite as even the sons of Africa were to their taskmasters.

I was very glad to hear of Daisy's coming out publically for Christ and it must rejoice your heart to have the members of your class gathered in. I will try to write to Daisy in this. Its rather strange that she should go over to Portland to Meeting with her grandfather when her father and mother go to Church close by their house at Cape Elizabeth. She is going to be a loyal Free Baptist.

Yes nearly every letter tells of someone's health. Of course you have heard of brother Dexter's death. I have felt from the time of his first attack that other shocks would come and probably be fatal, but I didn't think it would come so soon. I know his wife must feel his loss very much for she leaned upon him especially since her own health has been failing. I am anxious to hear from her and know what Charlie will do. He had entered college at Bates when his father was first taken but I'm afraid he will have to give that up now. How few of those we called neighbors are left now. The new generation is taking their places fast! How much it is like a play. We say our part and then step off, only we can't come back to say it over again or to improve on what is done. And how people live! As if they were a new kind of being that was to be exempt from death and could go on and on with no thought, or need of it, of the afterwards. And when death comes they act as though it was great surprise and are wholly unprepared. Thank God for the noble exceptions to this, and the earnest lives that we do see, but compared with the mass of humanity how few there are! I don't remember to have heard of Angie Davis' death 'till this your last letter. I had seen Emily Edgecomb, though I was not acquainted with her. Was she not Henry Colton's wife? I had a letter from Nephew James a short time ago telling me of the safe arrival of their little girl and that it is to be called after its two grandmothers Rhoda and Annie. He considers his Emma a treasure and well he may. He said Henry Colton came to be the Dr. in the case and everything was going on well. I believe they are to stay on the farm this summer and then Mrs. Colton will go back to Waltham with them in the Fall.

What a terrible, terrible thing was that tragedy of which you spoke!! When such things are possible in a Christian land and among respectable people surely we need not think it passing strange if these poor mortals fall even after they have professed to pass from death into life. Everything here degrading in its tendencies, with inherited weaknesses supported by past generations of wickedness, what wonder that some of them fall. And they do; and it grieves us; and we mourn, but still we must strive on.

What has become of the man Chase? Did he die?

I sent one of my photos to you and I trust it reached you in safety. I have heard from nearly all of the twelve I send to different persons.

We are in the midst of our rainy season now and are having [an] abundance of rain, but we hear that farther south in the Balasore district the rain is so scarce that much of the rice crop will be a failure and a famine is predicted, but it can never be so bad as the one they tell of some 7 years ago in this district for there are so much better ways of getting rice from one section of the country to another in Railways, canals, good roads built so supplies can be got from those parts where the crops are good, for the crops never fail every where.

We have just had such a good quarterly meeting. The native preachers do good, and it is very encouraging to hear them advance independent, intelligent ideas and to see a growing desire to work for their own fellows. They are trying to establish a House Mission which shall be able to supply a preacher from their own funds and send him where they please to the numerous villages around. We have good news from Balagadia where there is a little Church. Three persons have broken caste and others are ready to become Christians. There is one man in Midnapore who is decided to become a Christian and others will come with him I think. He is from a higher caste than many of our other converts. It is a perplexing and anxious question: How are we to reach the higher castes-the educated people. They hold themselves aloof and wrap themselves in their self-complacency and will not acknowledge that they need anything better than they have. Very many reject the worship of idols and say that they don't worship those images but simply use them to hold their minds while they think of God. They rather resent it if they are called heathens. Mr. Coldren has a very promising field if the energy of all good doesn't sow so many tares as to choke out the hopeful grain. Mr. Coldren is full of faith and hope-but Satan is busy also. Miss Butts and I are planning to attend a kind of Camp Meeting at Luckow at our next vacation which will come in October. We had some unprecedented weather in June but we lived through it and are all well now.

I hope to get an answer to this sooner than I answered yours.

With much love  
Vina C.