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Letter from February 21, 1887 - transcript

Lavinia Coombs

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Midnapore
Feb. 21, 1887

My Dear Nellie

I'm afraid you have thought me ungrateful as have waited so long before acknowledging your welcome gifts but I don't mean to be.

There are others yet to whom I have not sent acknowledgments but the list is nearly completed. I have been sending letters—one or more each mal- ever since the arrival of the missionaries just for the purpose of letting people know that their gifts were received and as many of them were not regular correspondents my stacks of unanswered letters has been continually increasing 'till now I have thirty-four on hand. I'm sure I don't know when I'll catch up. One thing is certain I must learn to write shorter letters to different ones. So if for a time I confine myself to two sheets or less you will know the reason. Your cookies were just as good as before and I think a little better if that were possible, and we had them at Yearly Meeting time when the whole mission was gathered together so you see they served us all. The marmalade was just as nice as when you put it up and I enjoyed it very much. I didn't share that with the whole mission but only with Mrs. George's family. "Ester Rind(sic) yet Speaking" I devoured at once. I don't get those things from Portland as quick as I did the things from West Bowdoin as they were packed in the box marked for Mrs. Burkholder and so went out to Blimpipore and back again before they came to my banos. I was just starting out to one of the outside villages (to give the school there a taste of Christmas) twenty miles away and so took that book along to read by the way while the bullocks plodded on. Pansy has beautiful theories but I doubt if some of them are practical though she claims for them that they have been actually tried. Her stories are fascinating at any rate, after looking at that view you sent of the ice storm it was no wonder it was considered unsafe to walk under the trees. Did the destruction show much after the trees were leaved out in the summer?

Thank Rebecca please for the nice apron she sent. I've worn it one week and it has come home from the wash as bright as new. I'm getting to consider an apron rather a necessity and wear one constantly

Ella Butts has given me the money you so thoughtfully sent and I mean to make it a nest-egg for quite an extended trip to the north of India some time. I do want to see the Taj Mahal. Now for all these things you do have my sincere thanks and I wish I could do something for you.

It has been very busy times since the first batch of missionaries arrived here a week before Christmas. The opening of so many boxes, sorting their contents and then getting ready for Christmas. Then after Christmas I went out to that village for a few days. Then preparations for Yearly Meeting. The other batch of missionaries got along. All of us were together at Yearly Meeting—six grown up people and 10 children! Got the threads of work gathered up a bit and then Nellie Phillips and I went on an outside trip to visit villages in the northern part of our mission, Garbeta, Chan-Frakona, Khirpai and Ghatal. Were gone two weeks, Had bullocks as you can imagine we didn't travel very swiftly. Went about a hundred miles in all from here and for Nellie to get here and back from Santipore gave her 80 miles more. We did enjoy it and it was a pleasure to talk to the women whom we found such eager, interested, and in most cases intelligent listeners. I do enjoy the outside work. We are all back from these cold season trips now and must settle down to steady work in the station for the hot and rainy seasons. Last week there were great goings on all over India because of the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. That will reach you the 20th of June—the real anniversary—but at that time 't' would be too hot to celebrate here

with any comfort so they have anticipated the day by four months. Of course you have heard of Dexter's shock but I'm hoping he is able to be about by this time. What a terrible thing a shock is. So sudden, unannounced and even if it were known that it were coming there's no way known to avoid it.

It must be hard for Emily with her weak nerves at best. A letter from my brother in Portland tells me they have weakened.

Shall hope to hear from you again before long. Only think! Winter will be nearly gone by the time you get this. How they fly! Love to you and Rebecca from your old friend

Vina

Will you please forward the enclosed to Mrs. Hannah S. Allen 46 Pierce Street Lewiston. You can read it of course.