

1840

Education in Tasmania

ExtractsX Lady Franklin to Mrs SimptonsonVan Dieman's Land  
28<sup>th</sup> April 1840

My Dear Mary.

..... I have in another sheet told you of my plan for establishing a lady's school of the highest order in this country. It is greatly needed there is no provision ~~made~~ whatever for the education of girls; a few miserable schools at Hobarton and one in the interior (noted for its balls and concerts and match making) not deserving scarcely the name. I am no admirer of a school education for girls, and if ~~30~~<sup>fifty</sup> governesses, very sensible and good women, could be found as easily as one or two,

I should prefer importing them, in order to distribute them ~~through~~<sup>through</sup> the country in private families, to any other mode of encouraging female education. But not only are such people not to be found, but if they came, they could not be happy, and would not remain. No person such as I mean ~~would~~<sup>could</sup> act the part of a subordinate instrument in the rural or other families of this colony, nor would they be able to produce the same effect as if they had houses of their own with girls shut up with them, apart from domestic influences.

Such a school as I contemplate, being under "the highest patronage" would gain a great reputation. It would be a great honour to have been educated in it, and the manners and conduct it produced would be the exemplars of all observers.

I think the girls should pay £80 or £100 a year. House rent and garden &c might be perhaps as much as £200 within a short distance of Hobarton. Servants should be brought from England, - the whole establishment, men and women. - They can come out (I suppose free) by our new bounty emigration system, of which Mr Montagu can give every particular, bound by indentures which would hold good for three years. Such a person as ~~Mr. A. M. M. M.~~ would be an admirable head of or coadjutor in such an establishment. Mrs Bracebridge is the best person I know to apply to on the subject. It would interest her and I am sure engage her exertions. ~~It~~<sup>It</sup> not supported directly by Government or by Colonial ~~&~~ Funds, ~~and~~<sup>it</sup> would meet with the highest support <sup>and</sup> the

Jane Gulliver

conductors of it would take their rank amongst the best in the colony. It should have a name which without ostentation or vulgarity, would distinguish it from common schools. It must train up women worthy to be the wives and sisters of the pupils of the College; it would renovate the whole face of things.

P If it <sup>is ever</sup> ~~can be~~ done at all, it must be done soon, for our term of years here is drawing towards its latter end, and I think it would be important that we should see it in operation and fully established some time before we leave. I should like you to communicate this scheme to Mrs Bracebridge, or to any one else who is likely to be useful, ~~in fact to any who have ability, zeal, and good will for the work~~ Mrs Tuckfield, Miss Duckworth, Mrs Arnold (to whom I think I shall



I can, and if I mistake not, they will be longed for by many before they arrive. It would be as well that their intentions to come out should be announced as much a-head of their arrival as possible.<sup>P</sup> The colony is even more in want of education for girls than for boys; for boys can go home, <sup>(i.e. to England)</sup> and the girls cannot and do not. It should be told the clergyman and his wife, or whoever it may be (for I do not think it absolutely essential that the husband should be a Revd or that there should be a husband at all) that the means of improving income are sure and many. - <sup>9em</sup> ~~10~~ per cent may be had in all sorts of ways; - considerably more by bank shares which are very safe. Miss <sup>Williamson</sup> Wilkinson gets 14½ in one of the banks. ...<sup>P</sup> At the same time I would advise no one to come

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who had not a real missionary spirit in the cause.

~~xxxxxx~~ April 1840. Hobarton.

I do not recollect whether in my last hasty letter I mentioned Mrs Bracebridge and the School master and Mistress she has procured for me. They will be extremely welcome, but I much fear that, owing to the lowness of the salary suggested by her, and to their going first to Sydney and Port Phillip, - which if they go free, they must do, - they will be taken up and detained at one of the latter places. <sup>in</sup> £100 a year might safely be promised to such people as she describes. <sup>in</sup> A single woman would not perhaps get more than <sup>fifty pounds</sup> £50, but in the free schools, or district schools, of the colony, a married couple is always required. P.S. I shall probably be induced to resign my idea of a school

<sup>at</sup>  
~~on~~ the Union in favour of other more  
 populous parts where they will be more  
 useful. Mrs Bracebridge need not fear  
 to send out several more couples of  
 the same kind <sup>as those she describes.</sup> ~~^~~ they are much  
 wanted and would be sure to find  
 employment. Pray thank her for  
 kind remembrance of me in this  
 instance and tell her I shall be  
 eagerly expecting the other letter she  
 promises me. ¶ Our district schools  
 have lately been reorganised somewhat  
 on the British and Foreign School  
 System. The Bible is read, but no  
 creed or catechism taught. One day in  
 the week however is given up to the  
 clergy to instruct <sup>the children</sup> ~~them~~ in the peculiar  
 tenets of the churches to which they  
 belong.

Tell Mrs Bracebridge <sup>that</sup> the next time I  
 write to her it will be to <sup>ask her help in</sup> procuring me the  
 means of forming a female Institution  
 - school, college, or what not, - to be acting

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on the female part of our upper ~~society~~ <sup>classes</sup>,  
as Mr Gill will be working on the  
other half. I want people just like  
herself, talented, benevolent, energetic,  
not daunted by difficulties, not easily  
disgusted, hopeful, fervent, and steadfast.  
They must not come to make a fortune,  
(~~that~~ <sup>though</sup> I dare say they will make one)  
but must come in a really missionary  
spirit, to do good. And a noble task  
it will be, to regenerate (for nothing  
far short of a new birth can do it)  
the race of girls in this colony.

¶ Their frivolity, emptiness, <sup>and</sup> ignorance,  
and boldness of manner are deplorable,  
- at least in this town. However  
naturally shy and reserved, they lose  
it all as soon as they go into society.  
And yet, they are sharp-witted, and  
pretty, and no doubt have as much  
moral aptitude for good things as  
the generations from which they  
sprang. ¶ I have thought that a very

excellent and sensible and talented  
 clergyman and his wife, such  
 people as <sup>were</sup> Mr and Mrs Penrose (the  
 parents of John's Rugby friends) -  
 only younger, would be just the  
 sort of people <sup>required for such a work.</sup> They must have one  
 mind in the same <sup>cause</sup> ~~course~~. The man  
 must not be above directing the studies  
 and forming the minds and manners  
 of the girls, even ~~if~~ <sup>though</sup> the wife were  
 sufficient for this. As a clergyman,  
 he might be on the Ecclesiastical  
 establishment of the colony, and  
 act as being so, having a Church,  
 and receiving salary as <sup>a</sup> Colonial  
 Chaplain? In addition to these two,  
 there should be an accomplished  
 foreigner, a French, Swiss or German  
 lady, a Protestant, and of high  
 character. Such accomplishments  
 as are not found amongst these  
 three, might be indifferently supplied  
 here - sufficient to furnish a show

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of accomplishments to please the parents or the girls themselves, and to enable them to digest better, the more solid food which would be their indispensable regimen.

¶ A great proportion of the women of this country live in much seclusion.

They ought to have a love of reading and <sup>an</sup> improving study. Their time is divided between housekeeping and their children; ~~the~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ being able to read with enjoyment and profit, the best works of the wise and good, would be of inestimable advantage to them. At present, it may be said of the girls generally, that they do nothing.

¶ I wish such a school as I am thinking of, to give a more solid and manly education than girls get at home, where the facilities for learning handy works and shew accomplishments are so

numerous and so attractive. <sup>P</sup>The Institution should be a few miles out of Hobarton, but near enough for me to visit ~~often~~ <sup>very frequently</sup>, not from a desire to interfere, but with the hope of establishing the most intimate intercourse between Government House and the School. I would have the older girls continually with me by turns, or together, so as to introduce them gradually into society and give them a taste for better things than they are accustomed to, and I should wish to be on the most friendly terms of fellowship and sympathy with the heads of the house. Such an institution, if it contained only twelve or twenty girls would gradually leaven the whole mass. It would be a normal school for imitation; a pattern for manners, <sup>and</sup> those who never entered it would be

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influenced by it. The heads of it would be benefactors to the whole ~~colony~~ community and would meet with their reward. <sup>P</sup> I would receive them all three into Government House till they could be settled.

I cannot help thinking such an institution might meet with Government support (such as the rent of a house) but I cannot answer for this, and perhaps it would be better not, for if they <sup>Government</sup> give money, they would give laws also.

I was grieved, ~~and~~ <sup>though</sup> not altogether surprised to read the other day in the "Record" Newspaper the death of poor Mr. Davies Gilbert. I wish much to hear the details and how my Aunt bears it.     +     +

~~—~~ I am anxious to know what feelings he expressed, if any, in his last moments, as to his future being. I fear he was barely

a Christian. He was however, a moral and most amiable man, naturally free from vice and endowed with singular tenderness of heart. When I hear from home of this event, and the particulars of it, I think I shall write to my Aunt. + +

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I suppose I ought to write to thank my old friend Mr Willis for his book, if not for his "sweet" remembrance of me. If I do not write, will you tell him I am overwhelmed with work at all times, at this moment in particular, but at the same time I have found leisure to read and admire it, and I shall be pleased if it meet on the London boards with the same success, which must have been so flattering to him in his own country.

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Postscript to former Sheets.

1840  
Hobarton. 13<sup>th</sup> June 1840

I glance my eye over former sheets, which were partly written but put aside. On returning to town, we found the last ship for England, for the season (as it is called) already sailed, and this interrupted my proceedings. + +

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ In connexion with this subject I may tell you that we are about bringing out the first number of our "Tasmanian Journal of Science" which we expect you will all patronise by purchase in London. We can<sup>not</sup> afford to give it away, for our sale of it, be it ever so considerable, will not pay the expenses. It is in contemplation to ask our friend Mr Murray of Albemarle Street if he will undertake to republish it in London. There can be no doubt it will excite some interest

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and much indulgence will be shewn to the infant efforts of our antipodean philosophers. Mr Gillie is now writing the introductory paper which will give the origin of the Society (in the Library of Government House) and our purposes and resources. I think Sir John will write to Murray about it, but perhaps not ~~until~~<sup>until</sup> he can send him the book. If you see him, you can perhaps announce what an ambitious purpose we have, in looking to no less a man than himself to usher us into notice in England. Mr Gould's paper (upon the Bush Turkey) which he sent to me from Sydney, will appear in our first number.

I received your letters by Mr Gill at the beginning of April at Launceston! He landed at Hobarton and finding us absent, staid only

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one day with the Archdeacon (the only person in the colony he knew) and came up to Lunceston where we took him in, and he accompanied us, (as I have already said elsewhere) in our wild coast tour; and since our return to head quarters, has continued to live with us. ¶ I cannot tell you how much I like him, he has a profound and original mind and pure and noble feelings. "It does me good to be with him, though I am made exceedingly and even painfully anxious as to his success. ¶ There are certain things he thinks essential for this purpose, and they are precisely the things which are most doubtful of attainment. The first of these is a Charter of Incorporation for the College, to enable it to receive endowments and to give it a legal and independant existence,

instead of existing solely by the yearly votes of the Legislative Council. This must be procured from home, and Mr Gill writes to Dr Arnold and Sir John, to the Secretary of State about it.

In the mean time Mr Gill opens the "Queen's Schools" in connexion with the college; a house having been taken for the purpose by Government for three years while the college is building. ~~and~~ he desires the latter to be out of town and so does every body who cares for the morals and discipline of the scholars, but the townspeople like it in the town, as more available for their sons as day scholars. Mr Gill is responsible to the Governor alone and the Governor alone has taken every step hitherto, but he can do nothing if the Legislative Council do not.

vote the money, and thus things are in a state of abeyance.

If we do not get the Charter from home for the College, I much fear Mr Gell will leave us. He will ~~not~~ <sup>never</sup> remain (and ought not to remain) to keep a boarding and day school in Macquarie Street.

The Presbyterians have their jealousies and suspicions strongly excited about Mr Gell, because he is writing home for a charter and they think it may be managed so as to give them into the hands of the Church of England. It is of no use telling them <sup>that</sup> the liberals, Arnold and Peacock, are to do it.

They know little more of them than that they are not Presbyterians.

A Roman Catholic barrister on the other hand, lately arrived from England Mr Chisholm Anstey (known I believe to John's

friend Stanley) writes against any religion at all. He wants a Gower <sup>Street</sup> college and desires to be heard at the bar of the Legislative Council on the subject. I am afraid both parties will be very troublesome.