February 17th 1891
Friday evening.

Dear Mr. Reed,
I have just heard that you are to take the train at Bridgewater this evening, and therefore I have written you this letter, as I may not be back in time for the train tomorrow morning. It will be but a short letter.

Your letter came this morning. We were all delighted to find you had made up your mind to go to Plymouth. It would have been pleasant if you had not gone, and we have our best wishes for you. I hope you are enjoying yourself. Of course we shall expect you to send us some photographs.

I went round to Mr. Whitaker this morning to get some information.
and of course he has been holding forth all the time, so that I could not get away. Result -- it was 12:30 before I got home.

I am glad to say that poor little Mary Stephens is better today. The Friday and Saturday the doctors had no hopes of her, but she took a turn for the better at the beginning of the week and there seems to be just a chance of possibility of her recovering. I am not very surprised myself about this.

Poor old Stephens looks like a broken heart. I am very sorry for him. He takes most despondent views.

Lizzie went off to-day by the express for Zionsville with Harry and Tatie Dickals.

He told the cab to go...
Some colics for the children, but they reached the station just as the doors were being shut. Dick wasn't in the least put out, though Harry had gone them up, but walked calmly to the carriage as if he had had half an hour to spare. It reminds me of Alice, thin, fat, who was always late, always calm. I was very glad Liz has not a holiday. It is years since she had one. She goes to stay with Edie in Hope for a fortnight, but you know her way, and I think she'll be surprised if she stays a month or more.

Ms Lewis was married on Saturday. (Stuck) It rained nearly the whole day, but after the weather was frightfully awful. Not only weather,

Frank beyond compare, but the last few days we have had sharp frosts and lovely weather. The floods have been out in the north. The worst damage to the line has been near Covington, in the approaches to the South Side Bridge, always a weak point. For several days they had to take the passengers round the obstruction by coach, but believe the line is quite repaired now if the trains will run as usual. No doubt you will want to know how things are going at the office. Mitchell has fixed up business most satisfactorily, and doing now, far from involving me or leaving the office (which I always knew he could not stand) is trying to find
1/2 offices for himself; but this is not easy at present. There are no offices to be had, and it is also said that there are no houses vacant in Hobart, but lots of people looking for houses and unable to find them. Young has been quite friendly. I hope our Solicitors will be able to settle matters and wind up the business in an amicable fashion. Every day convinces me that the course taken here was the only possible. One of my friends, a civil engineer, says it is the worst thing he has ever done in his life, and all my friends agree. More or less emphasising, there is little doubt that all this is wrong.
have a hard struggle at first, Malphas & I will improve our positions in the long run. I don't think that Russell this time will be able to keep a business together. I have not told any one here, don't wish to say a word against him to inquire him, but I have been told that even since he has been back, with every possible reason to keep straight - he has been on the spree. Facing his predicament I should have been in if I had agreed to take him into partnership. He would have done the business instead of him. As it is there is little doubt that Malph & I will keep a fair proportion of the clients.
as our expenses will be lighter
five small bolts work, our
pecuniary position ought to
be as good as in the old
firm. On the whole I feel
the change to be a relief, and
demanded. I shall feel a
pleasure in the future. In years past I have
felt the explosion was
likely to take place, & it is
just as well to know the
worst. To feel that it has
happened before one gets too
old for work, & when could
fail, hope to make a business
again & keep it together.

As soon as I get to Dorkin,
Duckett, where we are,
Mr. Adams, I am to go to
Thistle, where we will
get a salary bigger than we
had been able to pay them.
He has been very well, & is
the old story. Indeed, I don't
know what we should have
done without him. It is a
great pity he is going away.

I intend to go over to the
Fugeres at Bridgwater to
Mooroak, taking Bernard with
me. He has never been in a
train before, & I expect to have
a great announcement to his
relief. The Fugeres are
going to England in Feb.
I will get them to look
you up. Fugeres has come
for a lot of money. But
poor fellow, he has heart
illness. Fortunately, I would
rather be without the money
and without the heart disease,
I have, say he would also.

By the way, Dawbin is quite
tired. They are off. This is confidential
The new firm will be "L.B. Halken & Son, Ltd.". This will distinguish me from other Halkens, and most people now refer to me as "L.B." or sometimes as "Old L.B." It is nearly time I got the last designation.

As you know, I will be 50 in October. However, I am glad to say that, all this, I may be old, I have not been in such good health for years past.

I will try to send you next time some photos of the Maatsuyker Islands, away off the South Coast of Tasmania. I think I told you some time ago of my trip to the opening of the lighthouse.
Mackay Kee is one of the names old Abel Tasman left on the coast 250 years ago. You will be glad to hear that my morning spec looks fairly well. I have about £300 in shares and I hope there is a chance of making a fair profit. However, I am not very sanguine if I get my money back, I shall not be greatly disappointed.

It is nearly 10 o'clock and I must be down to the office soon after 10 to read better. So I had better go to bed.