

Ingldesthorpe  
Eastbourne.

Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> 1897.

My dearest Mary.

Your last most welcome letter  
was to Heather and came a few  
days ago - Today is grey, raw -  
wet and stormy - the sea heaving  
like dull molten lead - Inside, in  
this little sitting room dear Sah  
is curled up on the sofa reading  
within four feet of me - Mother  
also reading in an armchair -  
Lil - knitting muffaters! dropping  
two stitches to the minute - Dad  
has just come & joined us having  
finished his letters for the mail -  
Heather is "tidying up" things in

her bedroom - It seems almost  
too delightful to be true to have  
Sah really amongst us; I think  
she looks a trifle better than  
when she came - but it is disap-  
-pointing that the weather is so  
bad now, for she can get out  
so little - & we did want to have  
some drives whilst she was here  
into the South Downs etc: We have  
great talks about you all and  
everyone in Tasmania and  
at night, she, Heather & I have  
earnest discussions over her  
bedroom fire which are a great  
refreshment & outlet - Heather  
takes the stern scientific view  
Sah takes a broad, mellow one  
& I a dream one. I'm afraid -  
However we agree very well.  
We were so pleased to see the

photos of Isa and Mr. Walker  
and Sah has kindly lent them  
for general use whilst she is  
with us - so they are set up about  
the room & look quite at home.  
I don't think Mr. Walker's could  
be better - the expression is him.  
Heather is now often so successful  
with her photos of people. Will  
Mr. Walker please let us have  
one - we should prize it very much  
& please Isa dear, do send us yours  
it is nice to see your face again -  
Mary, you really must have  
yours taken for our sakes. Don't  
put it off - but be a good mar-  
tyr and do the deed. Your  
water colours are giving great  
pleasure to us all - we like them  
very much - and have all chosen  
our favourites - I can't remember  
which are the favourites of each one  
but the ones I like best are the ones

with the gum trees in the foreground  
(a little narrow one) and the one  
with the sketchy willows - They  
are both so full of feeling and  
poetry. It is like a little glimpse  
of you to have them to look  
at. The clear skies & sharp out-  
-lines strike us afresh now that  
we have been away from them  
& it brings all clearly back.

Our Christmas Day was quite  
an ideal one for England. Blue  
sky, cloudless - sunshine, and  
a slight frost on the roads -

We all sallied out to Church in  
the morning - and in the after-  
noon Baby went to play with  
some small cousins and Dad  
& Mother to aft. tea with some old  
friends the Dodsons - Sam, Heather  
& I took a quiet cup of tea and  
chatted together at home -

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Baby sat up to dinner & pulled  
heaps of crackers - (He had one  
small present - and cards at  
breakfast.) We made it "Baby's  
Day" - and she kept it with presents  
in her stocking at an early hour  
and had a most joyful day  
altogether. We were so very sorry  
about Isa not being well again.  
Tell her how much we sympathize  
with her & hope for better news. But  
it would not have suited her at all  
to come to England with Sah. I feel  
sure - This inclement weather would  
have been much too severe for her.  
Now, in the Summer it would be  
delightful. We are much cheered  
by the boys' letters lately - all so  
much brighter. Now we are looking  
forward to the sight of some of  
their dear faces. Sammy & W.

Bern are very contented "pot-  
sticking" and apricot gathering -  
They do take such an interest in  
everything. When Mr. Dawson comes  
to Hobart dear Mary I do wish  
you would do a tiny mee sketch  
of her for me - will you? Just  
a glimpse of her - in any medium  
you like.

Dagman Bonocret's new picture  
is much reviewed I send you "The  
World's" Critique - Heaters is  
modelling a design for a salt-  
cellar, very nice, artistic and  
useful, standing solidly & with  
a place for the spoon - unslip-  
pable - ought to answer very  
well - Have you read "The  
School for Saints"? it is un-  
common - by John Glean Hobbes

I hear that Mr. Im Thurn is  
at home at present. Her hus-  
band has come over about  
the Venezuela Boundary Question  
She is at Edinburgh now & will go  
my later to stay with the artist  
brother in London - Mr. Lomax  
is better but not strong again  
yet - I am only sending a  
hasty scribble as Sam is writing  
too. Much love & all - very  
much to your ain self.  
Your bonny friend  
Auntie V. Mason.