

West Bank 24 / Dec. 1865

My dear James

It was with great pleasure that I received thy likeness the other day & take the pen to thank thee for it, tho' it is so altered from the school-boy likeness that I can scarcely have known it at first. We should all be very much pleased to see thee amongst us again, but thou too wouldst find that the hand of time had wrought great changes here. Our dear Aunt Elizabeth desired me to give thee her dear love; she has been very ^{unwell} ill for some time past. I do not know whether thou mayst have heard of her

having had a sunstroke
about 2 months since, from
the effects of which she is still
suffering. It affected her sight
(which was poor to begin with) so
much, that she resolved to
have an operation performed
on her eyes, which was very
skillfully accomplished by Mr
Hutchinson, who told her that if
it had not been done, she would
have gone quite blind that very
morn. The chloroform answered
well, but altogether the shock
on the nervous system has been
very severe & almost critical -
now however she is beginning
to improve, though the progress
made is very slow - but it will
indeed be a great comfort to us
all if she may be restored to
a comfortable state of health again

We must hope that - as her
strength returns her sight also
may increase. Father & Aunt
Sarah are nicely.
We have been interested in
thy history of your benevolent
exertions which I hope may be
blessed to the good of many -
We had quite a grand wedding
here a week ago yesterday - Dr
Nitching's eldest daughter Elizth
to Thos. William Carr of Carlisle.
It was a nice meeting & the house
was well filled except a few seats
on the men's side, the crowd
outside were quite extraordinary -
& after meeting, people (friends to the
stayed in the yard to see the ^{company} as
they passed to the carriages, leaving
a lane for them to walk through.
I could not help thinking I did
not envy them! John Ford was

not there, having gone to attend
another wedding at Loughshaye
that of Sarah Stansfield and
Rob^t William's Salkaus - my cousin
W^m McCroyst's 2 eldest - little
girls being 2 of the bridesmaids
~~I of course much elevated~~
consequence.

My dearest J. has been only
poorly of late, & is now at Ambleside
for a little change; I am glad
to say he finds the more bracing
^{air} do him good. I am sorry that
we have not a likeness of him
left, but I hope soon to have him
taken again & the children too
when I shall have pleasure in
sending thee them.

With dear love from us all
believe me to remain thy
affectⁿ friend,
Mary Backhouse.