

Woodbourne

October 12th 1881.

My dear James

I will address my letter this week to you in honour of your birthday - honour to whom honour is due, you know. You will know what to expect or rather what not to expect, when I tell you I am going to write in a room in which there are 6 boys. I have been trying to draw but I got frantic with them for shaking the table. It was a - missing them each one abused the other for doing it. Public opinion is very strong, that I shall

not be tormented when I am drawing or writing. Louis is my special champion. Just now George broke one of my paint brush handles, & Lou turned on him most savagely & began punching him away with his small fists till I went to the rescue.

Will is at home; he is going back to school tomorrow morning however. He hasn't been back yet since he brought them all the measles. He & I have just been out into the school room to feed a most charming pet that I have got. It is a young kangaroo rat. Will brought it home in his pocket for me last Sunday morning. He & Alfred were up some where near Woodside

& Alfred stumbled over its nest
in a stump, ~~and~~ out ran the
mother & this young one which
will managed to catch. I had
such a bother getting it to drink
& at last I managed by putting
the milk in the hollow of my
hand & then did all right. The
only thing is that it has a most
tiresome way of putting its nose
into the milk & then puffing
& snorting like a little gram-
per. There are two kinds of
native rats they say - the
forest & the Kangaroo. Mine
is the Kangaroo - it is rather
the smaller kind, of a lighter
colour & has a white tip
to its tail.

Friday - I meant to have
posted this yesterday, but

that card I sent you for your
birthday was (of course) an
inspiration at the last mo-
ment & I had rather a scram-
ble to finish it off in time.
In fact it is not finished, as
I was going to put a tinted back-
ground! But tho' but a poor
venture into unfamiliar fields
it gives you to understand
I have not forgotten your birth-
day.

The Longford Show was a
success in spite of the rain -
they only took £8 less at the
gate, than last year. Nobody
from here went on account
of the rain. The ground
was dreadfully sloppy. The
Secretary's Committee tent
had pulleys laid across it -

to keep it dry. Mr. Field had hoped to get the Cup for his sheep but Mr. James Looney carried it off for the second year. If he gets it again next year he will keep it altogether. C.

Last Saturday I was up at Woodfield to dinner. There is a Miss Bell from Lanesborough staying there. In the afternoon Mr. Field, Miss ~~Field~~ ^{Bell} Co-mond Field & myself went as far as the Lagoon - a large sheet of water some distance through the bushes at the back of the house. The dogs, which you know are always the companions of a walk in the country, killed a large forest-rat. It was a dark brown

& as big as good sized cat. After tea Mr. Field took me to see his sheep that were going to the Show. Such beauties as they looked even to my unsophisticated eyes. The wool is no less than five inches long! They say that one of the judges at the Show said that if there was any mistake in the awarding of the prizes it was in not giving Mr. Field the Cup.

I was to have met Mrs. Field on Sunday afternoon & gone to church with them but it looked so threatening that I didn't go. Will however persuaded me to go for a short walk down Eastfield way, but in the end we so tented if so much that we

caught in a pretty heavy shower & had a run for it. As we were going along a log fence we saw a black snake about 3 ft. long which Will quickly dispatched. I have never seen a snake killed before. Is it strange that they always turn & bite themselves in their death-agony. The boys have killed no less than 10 already at that same spot this season.

Woodbourne looks so lovely just now. The hedges are all in full leaf & the cherry trees are one mass of white blossom, while the pink buds of the apple-trees, which seem a little later, are just bursting - and then of course

everything is as green as a plentiful supply of rain can make it.

How did Jack Smith & Arthur Giblin's debate come off. Sam tells me that Jack was relying mainly on two or three puns to bring him through. Write soon & give me all the news. I feel extremely flat just now, partly owing perhaps to a headache the remains of a cold. Everybody here is suffering considerably from colds.

Love to the dear little mother, the girls & Bridget & George. Tell the latter I didn't forget his business but he. Later by day there is not likely to be any body wanted up in there but he will see. Yours affectionately
Mum