

Scale How,
Ambleside.

My dear children,

It is eight years since I had an opportunity of writing to each of you and to all of you as a body. Let me repeat the welcome that you received at Winchester in the words of Isaak Walton, that wise fisherman who gathered wisdom while he waited for the trout to rise:—

“I will tell you, Scholar, I have heard a grave Divine say that God has two dwellings: one in Heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart. Which Almighty God grant to me, and to my honest Scholar: and so you are welcome.”

Some of you may still have the card with this motto among your treasures, but all of you, I know, have brought the meek and thankful heart that Isaak Walton desired for himself and his Scholar: meek, because we shall be thinking about great persons in a place touched with the magic of holy and serviceable lives; about the work in stone and on parchment of famous men and women of old, and of the wonders of sea and sky and earth; of tales told by the very rocks, all uniting in a chorus:—“The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance.”

Let us remember that the works of men indirectly, and the work of Nature, directly, are the great and marvellous works of God. Thinking of these things, we shall be meek and very ready to learn, and so we shall find out that “the meek shall inherit the earth,” for those things that we love and delight in are far more truly ours than the things, so easily spoiled, which money can buy.

A famous schoolmaster was asked by his boys to explain that saying of our Lord’s about the meek, and he said,—

“Napoleon thought he inherited the earth by force of arms, and he died on Elba. Wordsworth had no such proud thoughts, but he *did* inherit the earth; all the Lake country and much of the world besides belongs to him still.”

Being rich in these great things we shall be gentle and generous, and I am very sure you all have thankful hearts, thankful for Whitby and all that it means and will mean for all your lives; very thankful that God has set us in a world so full of beauty and joy; thankful to our kind and hospitable Whitby friends; thankful to the beloved friends who have brought you
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here, and tenderly thankful, I know, to those other kind friends who have taken great delight in planning and arranging for this wonderful week. That is how people writing to me about Whitby describe the Winchester Gathering, “that wonderful week.”

How I wish I could be with you to share all your joys and to see your dear faces!—the more so, because you have made me quite intimate with you in those examination papers which give me happy weeks; because I can see how happy you were in writing them, and what great joy you have in that knowledge, some of which you pour out in your papers.

I have news to tell you which will, I think, give you a great deal of pleasure. Nobody can enjoy a treat by himself; he wants other boys and girls to share it with him, and the bigger the treat the more friends he would have to share it. I know you think of the P.U.S. work as a treat. I get letters every day to tell me how much So-and-so *enjoys* his or her lessons, and, though I cannot see you to-day, I know what happy faces you carry. I wonder do you know what gives

happy faces to children and grown-ups? Just this, people look happy when they have nice things to think about, and you have so many delightfully interesting things to occupy your minds that I have never seen an unhappy-looking P.U.S. scholar.

When we are happy we long to make other people so too; therefore I know you will be delighted to know that thousands and thousands of children have joined the school since the Winchester days, and, what is better than all, many of them are in elementary schools; these dear children too wander in the woods with Titania and Oberon, pitch their tents on the plains of Palestine with King Richard, see the wonders of the Parthenon, and lift up their eyes to the hills and to the stars. Some of them, with their teachers are, as you know, present at this Gathering, sharing in the generous welcome given to us by all our kind friends in Whitby, and all of you together have your thoughts full of great and beautiful things, and mean to learn and be of use in God's wonderful world.

I wonder, would you like to add to your prayers at night, "God bless all children, parents and teachers in the P.U.S."

As you are by the seaside I should like to give you a verse to think of which I like very much. You recollect about that storm at sea when our Lord was asleep upon a pillow; this is what Keble says of it:—

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"Well, if we pray till Thou awake!
A word, a glance from Thee
Soft silence in the soul can make,
Calm peace upon the sea."

I must not keep you from other pleasures by writing too long a letter, so I shall only add my very loving greetings to each of you.

Always your affectionate friend,

CHARLOTTE M. MASON.