

5474

In replying to this letter, please write on the envelope:—

Number 15399

Name

Alice J. S. S. KerHolloway Prison25-3- 1912.

My Beloveds,

I had a p.c. from Margaret yesterday, written on Friday, glad to get it, but now wanting something more. Letters have not come round this morning yet; of course it takes some time. I hear that Lady Constance is still at home ill, I am afraid pretty bad. I am afraid we shall not see her when we go to the Sessions. = I am wondering what will be definitely settled about your holidays. Aunt Lisa said that Aunt Ella wanted to have you at Aberfoyle, so I wonder if you are going there instead of to Glasgow. Be sure you let me know, because if you do get a chance of writing, I shall want to know where to write. After we are sentenced, find out from some one* what our restrictions are, and then you will know what you are able to do. I don't suppose I shall be able to communicate with you. If we get hard labour, I believe we have no letter for 2 months, but if the sentence is without h.l., I hear we may have a letter in a fortnight. Rules may be modified later on, therefore I say find out. = I wonder if Margaret did not write on Saturday or yesterday. I have letters

* I have asked Lady Conroy to tell you whom to ask. Let her know your address when you go away.
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today from Cousin Susan and Mrs Tracy, both written yesterday, but none from Jon. Please tell Cousin Susan that if she wants special Suffrage prison news she had better take in "Votes for Women" till this business is over. If I am still free to write tomorrow I will send her a letter myself. N.p.c. from Jon would do. I have written to Miss Parker at the Nurses' Home to see after a case of mine, and my third letter shall be to Lady Conny. Miss Robertson came to see me today, and Mrs Arnoux came in for a few minutes at the end of her visit, which was very pleasant. I gave her back her big book, which I was glad not to have to drag about with me to and from the Court. She gave me another, "Ideals of Theosophy" by Mrs Besant. It is sweet of her to come and see me. When I first asked her to come, I had no other visitors in London, but since then I have had both Aunt Lisa and Miss Robertson. I had a bath today and washed my hair, just before my visitors came, so I had it down when I went to see them, I did not want to waste any of the visiting time putting it up, and it was quite wet. It is not nice, of course, but it will be fairly clean, and it was getting uncomfortable. Are you sending me my other combination, as I asked you to do? If we only have 2 months I can do for clothes, but if we get 4, I would like my lilac cotton blouse and the grey cotton one, for it will get warm. So you had better send them off before you leave home. It is very awkward not to know, but, after all, one can't expect the Courts to take pains to make it convenient for us! We shall certainly not be bound over now, because it would make people say

that now the leaders are in prison, the Union is weakening and melting away. You will see that, I know. So I am very glad to be absolved from my promise. I sent a message by Miss Robertson, asking her to ask Aunt Liza to tell you, so ask her. It is details of conditions after we are sentenced, which I thought might not be allowed to pass in a letter. Miss Palethorpe had a letter from Mr. Jenkins today, in which he said that ^{we had been told that} the daughter of a Suffragette now in Holloway, a doctor in B'head, was behaving in a most eccentric manner, that she was eccentric at the best, but that now she locked the door from the outside, and then climbed up the spout into her bedroom window, saying she preferred to get in that way! The same man had assured him that it was quite certain that Christabel was staying at Prenton with the Thornleys! I need not say that I do not feel at all uneasy.

You might look over some of my recent letters and see if you have answered all the questions I asked, for I don't think you have. I wonder if trains will be accommodating for your going away. Miss Robertson said she had somebody to see at Highbury yesterday, where there are usually trains every 8 minutes, and she had to wait half an hour each way. The strike negotiations do not seem to be going smoothly. Would you like to send me some Peter Pan collars to embroider? There are some in the drawing room table drawers, if you can look them out. Even if I do prison work, there will be odd moments when

I can do my own; or you might send me some stuff from which I could make covers for the arms of the drawing room arm-chairs. I've got plenty of white linen thread, and I could invent patterns for myself. Brown holland would be rather nice, embroidered in white. See what you can find. You might find something in the linen cupboard, the lower shelves. It is getting much warmer, I sit now without a coat, and today I was out exercising without one. There was some nice sunshine. Don't forget Mrs. Ellison's 6/- on the 1st of April. Perhaps you had better send it to her now. Her address is 24(?) B Queen's Buildings, as they like to call the Dock Cottages. I am not sure of the number, so I generally put it with a question mark. - Now, duckies, if this is the last time for a while that I can write to you, never mind. Everything is being arranged for us by a higher Power, and there is no need to worry. Do always what you see to be right at the time, don't do evil that good may come, and trust that we are all being guided all the time. Just think, when we get our political freedom, how much more it will mean to us than to those who have not suffered for it - like the difference between a real child of your own and one that you have found on the door-step. As I have said so often, it is quite impossible to try to guess what our sentences will be, and, therefore, how long it will be before we see each other; but you will both know that I am continually thinking about you, all the more when I cannot write, and we will remember 6 in the evening. My darlings, I kiss you a thousand times. Always your loving Mother, Alice J. Stewart Ker.

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See the marked passage in the letter dated 25.3.12

The only possible foundation for this peculiar piece of news was that on one occasion our elderly charlady got locked out when the door banged shut while she was cleaning the steps, & my sister climbed in through the diningroom window to let her in again.

It was a Victorian house with a semi-basement & a flight of steps up to the front door, with a big sash window each side with a broad sill level with the balustrade at the top of the steps so her feat was not a difficult one.

She had been out & came back just as the char had applied to a neighbour or two for assistance so she had an audience! A passing stranger may have elaborated the story.