

1860

Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>

AL12908

Th. H. Friday 4 A.M.

My dear Emily

The night is slipping away so quickly again. I am astonished with the extreme shortness of the 7 or 8 hours of quietness. There is a good deal to do & the need of doing it slowly to avoid noise takes up time & I walk round very often to see if anything is wanted. It is a curiously fresh view of life. I am so fresh & hungry by 6<sup>o</sup> M & have generally had a walk and gone through no end of business by 8. Did I tell you that I have a room here now? It is a great enjoyment, & the only drawback to it is that I shall soon have to resign it so that it is not worth while making it very nice with carpet or other luxuries. I am going to have a pot of maiden hair from this from Acton. It has a sunny aspect & is very cheerful in every respect. The lunatics room that I am to have when this is taken away is not nearly so nice, though that will be a convenience. Thanks for your letter this morning. It reached when I was not at all busy having just come in from the morning constitutional. I leave the ward at 6<sup>o</sup> M and as the maid who is supposed to wait upon me & the officers who live in the adjoining rooms, does not come till 8 I am glad to put my room neat at once & get breakfast. Dusting & polishing was always rather a favourite amusement of mine & I

like the manual work & exercise after the night's duty. When I sit down to breakfast, it feels uncommonly like college life, if one had but "fellows" with whom one could be friendly it would be very jolly. It is pleasant enough now though. Miss E. Drewry & I have arranged to study chemistry together. I believe that a fellow student of wit will be more help to me than a master would be. She will come here every Thursday at 3 o'clock, & we shall spend an hour in talking over what we have read during the week and examining each other. I shall have extra help by talking to James & attending lectures if we can find any suitable ones. I do wish, as you said, that the Drewrys' dressed better. After the arrangement was made for her to come ~~she~~ I was almost afraid it was unwise on my part. She looks awfully strong minded in walking dress, but as my room is out of the way I hope she will not be supposed to belong to me by the students &c. She has short petticoats & a close round hat and several other dreadfully ugly arrangements. When I know her better I may be able to remonstrate - it is a serious mistake I think for a respectable woman to fall into oddities as not look so bad on her sister as she is better looking. I am very sorry about your paper for the Journal, more that it is very discouraging to you than for the fate of that one piece. I think you knew that I did

not heartily like it, though I thought weariness of the subject might be the cause. I should think writing for newspapers requires a much more familiar style than for anything else. My impression is that you should not attempt a very popular or light style. It is the old story again - give of your best & believe that people are capable of enjoying it. (This imperative mood was intended for people in general, not specially for you.) You were not made to sing English ballads nor to write ephemeral pieces. Do you ever feel wearied with your own want of power? The sense of it comes to me constantly now, if I were a much larger measure, so much more could be done in every way with the opportunities ~~being~~. It is hard to be contented with a gooseberry feature when one sees that a peach is wanted. I fancy Miss Smith here, it would be like an uplifting to all who saw her. The students are just of the age to be greatly helped by a noble woman's presence, and with the nurses & doctor (the latter especially) she would have great weight. I wish she could enter the profession. I have been having half an hour's chat with Dr. Willis to night, he came about midnight and was inclined to talk; I told him of the change in my plans & of the arrangement with Mr. Plastrete and asked him to give me some regular instruction in clinical reports & investigations. The pupils do not pay him any fees, but I should be glad

to do so as a kind of private pupil. My ~~task~~<sup>plan</sup> was  
to study the new cases (~~they~~ come on Tuesday) on the  
afternoon of their arrival & the next day, in spare  
hours, writing down the results as far as my know-  
ledge would allow me to get any. Then to go round  
with Dr. Willis on Thursday & Friday & see how far I  
was right & hear his explanations and the many new  
things that I should be sure to have missed. On those  
days I should have to go later to Mr. Plastret, so that  
there must be some arrangement made. Dr. Willis  
thinks that now the session has begun, he had better  
ask the Physicians if they object to my going with the  
students as there are often some with him. Dr. Willis  
seems very liberal in his views about women, he was  
very indignant at the want of logic in Mr. De Morgan's  
objections. I asked if he thought a woman w<sup>d</sup> be admitted  
into the Edinburgh College, but he fears not. He gave  
me a very long & useful caution against overworking  
& neglecting my own health, thinking ignorantly that  
these would be my temptations. I think your plan  
of a drawing-room meeting would probably succeed  
very well if you had a good manager. So much  
depends on personal influence in making things go well,  
but in any case it would bring the question forward  
& give people a better common ground of interest than  
they often have in county town society. I arrived the