

Letters from Maggie to Amelia Laws MS3290/13

MS3290/13/1

Bandawe

16th Sept. 1984

My dear Amy,

This is Sabbath morning. The 7.am. service has just begun. I go to the second Native Service at 10.a.m. We have the English Service at 2.p.m. in the house here. We are a large company just now. Yuraia, William, Fred & Charlie, & Dan also, come & can now enjoy our Eng. Worship. There goes the singing again in school. Oh dear me! One would think they were dragging trees behind them. Mr McAlpine hopes they will follow his harmonium more closely, by & by; but, unless they are continually pulled up to time, (as they used to be by the counting aloud the proper length of time to the notes during the week) this dragging & flattening may become more intolerable. The girls are re-beginning to perceive the beauty of time & expression in singing. The 'Infants' can sing Fa correctly. That much I have discovered since returning; while only 2 out of 14 advanced girls can sing it truly. The 'Girls' School is in great favour just now. The numbers keep well up; but the changes are frequent; nevertheless progress is showing week by week. The Cottage is divided thus – in the room next the Carpenter's Shop are the A.B.C –darians. In the middle room are those who are making much labour of the Syllabus, & from whom I daily try to gather one or more who should be able to see the meaning of joining the Syllables together – which means reading! It is tiring work; but light is dawning & in two months I hope to see 20 more reading the Gospel by Matthew. Ten have been enjoying passing through the mystery (darkness!) into the perception (understanding!) that if they will only look they can see & remember. The great lack (missing-link in the teaching by our monitors is that they show no life, no light, no joy in their work, & so much precious time & opportunity are spent for naught, as I would consider it; still we hear & know that many who have come & gone these years have struggled through spelling, & may be heard reading laboriously in the villages. The third room (next the byre!) is reserved for the 'Infants' where they can have frequent Exercises & walk round to the Nyaja setting of "follow, follow!" which makes them very happy indeed. I translated it a fortnight ago because I had not then found the 'Rounds' Father & I translated as composed before. How bright they are when I go in to help Jessie & Sarah who have been chosen for this Department because they like children. Again & again they rushed out of their seats to join hands with me at this new play; but they can be taught to keep order & to understand why not to break discipline. They prefer to sing the alphabet. The looking at the individual letters so as to distinguish them has not been continued to be made bright & attractive as it can be.

There is a leopard visiting nightly by this moonlight. Four large ducks have disappeared & several fowls. Two nights ago I heard the leopard cry 4 times just before it had knocked down the boxes before the fowl-house door, & had snatched the big drake & made off with it. Last night a gun trap was set for it. In Marenja's village last week a man was killed by one or two leopards. Another night another man was chased by one & when Ishilume (William) went out to help him to keep it off, the ungrateful coward ran off & left William to fight with a hippo whip & call out for help as best he could. On the Hills at Ekwendeni, one of the many hyenas there entered a verandah room, for which there is as yet no door & carried off Dr. Elmslie's portfolio & began to gnaw it on the verandah,

which Dr. R concluded must be a fowl or a dog & made no attempt to break in upon its feast; but imagine his surprise when he found his chewed letters strewed all over the ground!

Noon. After Service! On coming in I found Baby Murray quite quiet – now he cries for food; & he can cry. His father is nursing him while his Mother looks after the bottle. My Murray preached very tellingly, to-day, on the words: “Remember Lot’s wife.”. The women were most certainly impressed by the close application to themselves. Two dogs found their way in as usual. One was secured & carried out; but he returned & remained quiet near the door to the end; while the two (Beauty) bullies & another were yelping because they were shut up.

Father & I are delighted that you like the new set of Exercises. We expect that by this time Counting aloud is becoming an ever increasing pleasure to you. I am to learn 191&131. Here I have learned 322, 499 & 500 (Sankey’s)

Afternoon. Earlier I stopped writing because Mr Murray was playing a cornet while Mrs M was playing the harmonium. Many ask about you. We hope you are enjoyed your holidays; that you will be strong for work & happy in it, & in making others happy all around you.

I am your loving mother, M Laws

MS3290/13/2

Kondowe

9th April 1985

My Dear Amy,

Today I asked Father if he had no linear paper? He found for me this pink colour &, in handing the box, he remarked "That paper is 20 years old!". Are you not surprised that it has not become yellow? I purpose keeping a supply of it for writing you. It is delightfully smooth to write upon. It was a happy thought on the part of Aunty & you to write on the 1st January; & it is so nice of you to write all from yourself; because we can just think of you coming towards us, looking up into our face, & talking to us. Mrs John Moir writes me that her little Henry writes his own little letters. Her little girl is growing tall. She understands English, but like you, at Bandawe, she does not speak it. This is a pity. She might speak both & so please her Father & Mother.

We were much please to know that you wished to play the hymn on New Year's morning & also that you played it well. However can I take note of all the many presents kind friends sent to you. Mr Murray, even, enjoyed the picture of your little man on your dressing table. Then the beautiful little box containing all you need for sewing should not be far away. The pretty story books are often in your hands, we have no doubt. Are the cards too lovely for setting out, & where is the beautiful, floral calendar hung up? & what did you do with the gold piece? Such funnily delicious stockings some children begin the year with these days. With whom did you share the cracker. You who are so rich in friends & gifts, have you something, any of these days, for the little suffering ones in the Hospital, as for the blind?

We are much interested in your progress in every way. You will be quite rich this year through your musical supply. It is a most playful way of earning money & at the same time advancing steadily towards 'Excelsior'. Aunty Mary makes us happy by writing to us of your happy helpfulness & obedience. It is wonderful how the bright rays of a little sunbeam in a house may gladden & soothe what is dark & heavy to bear with.

"Madge" shines in her little corner, you in yours & Sarah & Willie in theirs. All our corners differ – the point is let us brighten them!

Here the boys often cloud my way & days; but I must not becloud those around me. Kande answers to the new name of "Carlo" when he expects this food or a scrap. Poor dogs! They are tormented by fleas!! Sometimes they have been hungry in this past time of scarcity of food. The other day "Jess" had the remains of a skin tied round her neck to punish her for having gnawed at it during the night. The boys think it is great fun to see a dog standing blinking while the marks of disgrace are being tied on. I would write longer to-night but father has finished for a time & the lamp is needed. This letter may go South this week, & may it carry, to you many kisses & love unbroken although we are far separated. I ever am your loving mother, Margaret Laws

MS 3290/13/3

Kondowe

24th May 1895

My dear Amy,

This evening I begin to write you, (& here it has flashed across my mind – the pink paper is not at hand; but you will rather I proceed on white than waste the writing time on finding it!) What with Literary & Musical dogs & rats we have frequently to remove papers & books: & even the Organ had to be looked into, & turned on its end, & much turned out that surprised us all. Quietly, & for a considerable time rats had been carrying in soft wrappers, leaves of magazines, leaves of Lancets & medicine price lists, & what not on similar lines, until one day the discovery was made. What a turn out there was! There were two sleeves of a lad's jacket which I was sewing for him. Perhaps I wrote about this before. Father & Mr Murray examined the Organ & found that they could put their fingers under the instrument at the ends. As it was a Sat. Morning only a temporary check to this play could be attempted. We counted also on their having been frightened away; but imagine our vexation when Mr McAlpine could no longer bring a sound out of the 'fine-tuned' organ which the day before had been giving all pleasure, tho' becoming gradually stiffer to play. We concluded that a tear in the bellows, which had been glued up with American leather, had become blown off. That was so; but it was most distressing to find that fresh & large quantities of paper were drawn in between the strings, & at some parts so tightly packed that it required a pen to draw them out where the fingers failed. The rent in the bellows was, this time, first sewed, & plenty of cement may keep it intact now. We were sorry to find that a hole had been gnawed through just behind the key board, so determined had our little enemies been to play at nesting in a musical case.

On Mon. Or Tues. Morning of this week, while at breakfast, Dr Steele called our attention to ("Bob") the dog listening at the Davenport. In a moment all were on their feet to give "bob" a chance of another discovery. There were 7, young & old, in one drawer there was a little damage done to the contents of the drawer, but the two ends of drawers were much gnawed to admit of ingress from the space below. Their mighty are most annoying. Many a time we rise to see what they are working at only to be laughed at by them as the scamper along the rafters & disappear in the thatch as in a hole just at the eaves. (There they go just now in the passage making as much noise as wee pups scampering after each other.) "Bob" has made a good clearance during his visit here. The other morning he killed two in a box. He disdains eating his spoil, & one morning he despised "Kande" for attempting to eat those he had killed & dared him to touch them. There was a big fight. We wish "Kande" would take a lesson from "Bob" for he is a superior dog.

The Organ is in first rate condition again. Mr MacAlpine plays most upon it. Dr Prentice also plays. We have been a very happy party. Had it not been that the organ stands in its zinc case it might well have been voiceless long ere now; for when the chewed refuse was being swept up, & the zinc case was tuned up we found it bedewed with damp from the floor. When Mr Henderson comes we expect him to be able to play. Father plays an occasional Voluntary.

Did I tell you of our having two small frogs in the house? They eat only a few of the cockroaches that come from the steamers in our boxes – even in the mail bags they lodge & sometimes even these

bags are opened outside! "Frogie" sometimes croaks when there is singing going on. As for "Kande" he has been howling his "baritone", accompanying the organ, stupid dog! While the learned & accomplished "Bob" made himself happy in a box of magazines, & "Gyp" was snug at our bedroom fireside – dreaming it may have been of Walter Elmslie, & the land of milk at Ekendeni which he had left at his master's request to accompany Dr Steele so that if any wild beast came near at night "Gyp" might at least warn him of its presence. Then there was the donkey on which Dr Steele rode over. Oh it was slow. Poor animal! It delayed the Council meeting for days. Its hoofs were in bad condition. It was frightened of the others.

Dr Steele entertained us highly with stories of his adventures by the way. At one place both fell. Dr Steele had a narrow escape of being crushed. He arrived here quite worn out. Many men at work here had never seen a donkey before. Such amusement there was for them. When "Ned" hee-hawed men & boys imitated – our two dogs rushed out at the foreign sounds, & "Bob" who knows all about donkeys at Bandawe & horses at Home, rushed out barking to silence all. Such a stir there was! Then 2 nights ago a pretty brown calf was added to our stock. While all around us are heard stories of lions eating men & women, not one visit have we had. We all are more astonished at this because of our having the cattle. How delightful it is to see the cattle feeding & to hear the swishing of their tails among the much enjoyed grass. Just now we have our table beautified by large, white flowers of the Rhododendron order with the brown leaves of another shrub contrasting charmingly. This season also brought large purple Iris flowers & their pale shade against (common) bracken also graced the table most pleasingly. The beauties of nature are broadcast & compensate for many discomforts. It is one year to-morrow since we sailing from England; & one week more since we kissed our farwell to our little darling girl. To Aunty and to Grandma... Your loving mother, M Laws.

MS 3290/13/5

Kondowe,

Lake Nyasa,

Sat 10th Aug 1895

Our dear daughter,

My pen seemed to be ready to form the word little; but, on this your 9th birthday, & you growing so tall, my hand restrained it to picture you reaching the measurement Mr Henderson brought; & also to picture you as dear Aunt Mary described your new grey dress & the beautiful buttercups in your hat. How very tasteful & complete you must be in your rain-mantle. These are excellent lessons in taste, & thoughtfulness, & care which Aunt Mary is instilling into your young life. We try also to have a glimpse of your inner self from your own letters & also from Aunt Mary's little sketches of your having brightened Grandma's closing days; & of your daily shining alongside Aunty – every clouded day surely has beams of brightness, even as, indeed, 'Every cloud hath its silver lining'. At Craigo you had had a golden opportunity of playing the Sunbeam, even although Janet's sun had set, & left a little shade for one & all to pass through at first. It is just possible that your little rays may have added brightness to Miss Carnegie's far reaching light, & warmth & growth in, & for our one work out in the darkness here, as well as in the many shaded paths of life & work at Home.

Then, at Grandpa's, we hope your stay there left a large, bright spot on his heart into which he can look during the Winter months. And did your voice & gentleness light up dear Mrs Longmuir's face? Did you read any more geography to her? She lives on the Borderland of Heaven. By & by her veiled eyes shall beam in the Happy land – just beyond! Miss Longmuir, Barbara, & all the kind friends we hope, have had reflections from Craigo brightness & beauty, both of spirit & nature – because it is well for us to remember that all junctions of life are not alike, while we can all shine in our own little corners, & help to smooth down the harder (substances) circumstances of both young & old, & especially of the sick ones we meet.

Your happy letter of 22nd May is well expressed & carefully written. The garden party you must have enjoyed. Ella Sandford, & you also, must have felt as if you had already met. You also having happy times; & both Father & I are made happy by your telling us of them. Such nice gatherings of little people. Mr & Mrs Thin love the little folks to be about them.

Does the canary sing? A few singing birds are settling around us. We hear them in the morning. There goes Judy! The puppy!! Rushing out from among the ashes at the back of the fireplace where it lies to escape from its many tormentors – the fleas!!! Judy is a wise & obedient doggie. Mr Henderson trains her in the mornings on how to behave; but during the day her cupboard love for me binds her to our quarters. "Jess" condescends to play with her at times, but "Kande" – it is too late to call him "Carlo"! – objects most decidedly, & with low growling, tolerates any approaches from such a lively piece of impudence.

Yesterday you & Sarah & Willie would have laughed at a little yellowish, brown hen searching for a nest – all the corners were tried & scraped – the potato box & the box for the shavings were examined, & found unsuitable – while its companion, Dick, was equally interested, & was

encouraging in every possible way to settle the difficulty. One point was certain, & that seemed to be that the nest must not be in the fowl house, where they are wide enough awake to see that fowls have their annoyances. It was amusing!

Pastor Brown's dog Bruce may know you & allow you to be friendly. Another time he may receive me kindly for the sake of his master & mistress. Give my pleasant memories & best wishes to Both.

How are Miss Whyte & Miss Clark & their nephews? Also Mrs & Miss Richardson? I sometimes pass along the Drive & see them all as they were in -94. Now three mothers are missed there, but found above where we all strive to meet, 'Never to part again!'

Soon Aunt Mary & you may have a visit from Uncles James. May you have a very happy time together. Aunt Bella & Amy may be writing from some lovely retreat in Switzerland, which beautiful country you may visit someday. Languages are necessary to the fuller enjoyment of travelling, & so it is desirable that you acquire the habit of listening to & repeating a few familiar phrases as you may happen to hear them from time to time: it is amusing & it is easily carried about with one. I will be interested, increasingly, in our additional acquirement at St Margaret's College or wherever you may be placed this Winter. We would very much prefer the newer way of acquiring French & German. Aunty knows what I'm referring to. Here we have been longing for the expected "Series" "Gouin" published or was to. We have been trying to teach Eng. to the boys here on that same system & it will be a success. They grasp it & soon they may use it readily. They still have the idea that our language is ornamental for them; but is it to become ordinary all round. 'Sambo' my present cook, is of an inquiring mind: he'll get on!

My Murray fails to picture you with your hair tied up. It just occurs to me that you may be photographed when in Abdn. I hope so. With daily prayers, & every good wish for our loving & beloved little darling, & with many kisses through dear Aunt Mary, I am your loving mother M. Laws

MS 3290/13/6

Kondowe

Lake Nyasa

Sat 7th Sept 1895

My dear daughter,

This afternoon was set aside for writing you. Sam, the cook, had washed his jacket, expecting me to line the shoulders for him; but, as he had just bought the last of Mrs Strachan's goodly checks, I put him off till Monday. It is now 3.30p.m. We did not rise from dinner until 2p.m. to-day. The paying of the workers takes some time. Now it is very quiet. A young man, who was very ill this week with severe pains in his chest, was here now, & able to beg for salt. I told him I considered him better indeed when we could come to beg after I had sent him some nice soup.

Since then I have been feeding pigs with potatoes, & the 'dishwater' which is kept for them – much to the boy's amusement. Judy, the wee dog, does not understand them at all, at all! She tries to catch hold of their ears or their tails. There goes the heard for the tin! The calves are lowing & their mothers are answering!! The sheep & goats add their sounds!!! Were you looking around this afternoon you might think you were visiting a farm-steading. It is a goodly sight to see the cattle coming in. We expect some 20 more from Ngoniland. – They came!

How lovely our surroundings are! To-day it was clear, & we saw the silver-shining river on the other side Nyasa. Father & Mr Murray are at the Lake shore to-day. It will be warm down there these days. Many men have gone with them to build a house for receiving goods, & where one may sleep a night or two on occasions of necessity; for instance, if the Steamer reached Florence Bay at an untimely hour for fining men for starting up here with loads, etc; or if one wished to catch up the steamer from this station; or, most likely of all, if a lad or two begin to teach there, it will be necessary for them to have a strong construction in case of wild animals – all the more so as the house should be apart from the village for fear of fire. Of these matters again in the general letter when we know what has been decided on & where. Meantime I might feel lonely were it not that many rats keep me company. Although, as I have written before, they are literary & musical, still they are ordinary rates in that they require to search for food! (There goes a duck flying like a bird!) Now, where our rats show themselves to be extra-ordinary is in their choice here, when they do not mirite themselves across to the store. Fancy your tooth-brush, your nail-brush & your sponge, gnawed & nibbled at! Stranger still, Hudson's Soap Powder Wrapper has been enjoyed for two nights. A little water after that might cause a fizz!(?) A vulcanite pen-holder has been shortened & one of my pretty tortoiseshell hair pins (which Aunt Bella gave me) cannot be used until father smooths it!! A Hymn Book, on the back of which I had pasted American leather, was a dainty morsel. Even a flower cannot be left uncovered all night. A basket (native 'ntanga') must be put over it. The marigolds are picked clean! The green onion tops are tasty, & sweet tomatoes are a joy to them. (we are beset on all sides_:) Mr Moffat brought up from the garden 10 small potatoes – not sweet! To skew the ravages of a king of white any or worm which is destroying a few of our very promising potatoe plants. In Awm the rates demolished the "tatters". In fact, I cannot turn my back for an hour or so without finding a nibble or a dibble somewhere!!! Not I must go to the door to be refreshed.

Monday 30th Sept. It seems even long to me since I ceased writing to be revived by a little fresh air: & it must cause you to question why? Well it is the good old reason – work, of all kinds, crops up & I try to do the duty of the day in the day. Soon after Father returned from the Lake he was ill & very weak for 5 days. Then he went to Ngoniland & is now at Bandawe, I suppose, where he may have to wait a month, as the “Domira” cannot be kept back this trip to bring up many things from the workshops from work here. Then 4 lads were helping me to sew their heavy twill trousers, & I finished off Domingo’s 4th pair within a year. I also made a garment for the herd’s child: & so on. We have now 3 lambs, I think, & several calves. There is an abundance of milk – beautiful cream & rich butter. My churn is now in operation twice a week. To-day I have two pounds of butter – the greater part of which I will send to the steamer as we cannot use all.

The flowers here are lovely! Mr Murray gathered pink convolvuli & purple iris flowers while we were out a little stroll yesterday; & many hued leaves are a joy in themselves to look at, which are springing up from the blackened ground, (after the burning of the grass), & especially those of the ‘sugar bush’.

“Judy” is growing – extending & distending - she is a ridiculous picture after a fine lapping of milk, sitting like “Frisk” with neck stretched – nodding & blinking, & with legs well extended for fear of rolling over. The day that Kande left with Father I tied “Jess” to the washing stool by my side. How she did tremble after her exertions to get off with them. After a while she set to chewing the cord & succeeded in cutting it through but too late to follow up. We are the better of one day to give the alarm when a wild animal is near. One night the lions were near as the garden. The cattle are frequently restless. The cry of a fox sharply awakened us one morning. When he was looking for the hen roost it was supposed a leopard was at the back of the kraal & Mr Henderson was out looking for both. Mr Murray also was up. He, Mr Murray, happily surprised me, by sending you a card & note with the German Steamer. Some time you may write him shortly. By & by I expect to hear how you have enjoyed your holidays & also how your music progresses & what school are you now attending. Father & I send our kisses thro’ Aunt Mary.

From your ever loving mother, M.Laws

MS 3290/13/8

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

14th Dec 1895

My dear Amy,

A fortnight ago Father expected a mail to go from this but the "Domira" passed South in great haste. Now we look for her return soon with more letters from the Homeland. Sometimes we think you would like to take round here to see the great number of animals all about the Station. There are over 60 cattle- one of them is known as Amy Laws' cow, as it was the calf of your very own cow at Bandawe. The goats do not thrive in this district. We have yet to learn the cause of their sudden departure. "Brownie", the beautiful goat Mr Swan presented me last Xmas was well in the morning & dead by sunset. The sheep provide us with mutton when the fowls are scarce. The pigs trot out with the calves. Of the latter there have been 15 or 16, I think, & so we have meantime, a pail of milk twice a day. Cream, milk & butter are the order of the day now for those who dare indulge in them. We all enjoy our porridge. Watery puddings are of the part. We have good health because of all the good things strengthening us from day to day. Some days we are very tired because of the steaminess of our surroundings. Even my sleeves feel clammy when preparing work for the girls along with Miss Stewart. We have many ducks – large & white as well as greenish black. We have many chicks in the kraal – some in the fluffy stage, others just showing a tiny tail, & others crowing & strutting about with their mothers. Father has told you about Kande. Poor dog!! Jess & Judy showed great fear for some time & made desperate efforts to sleep inside houses; but they are beginning to forget their fears. We must have them outside because of the company ever attached to them until they attach themselves to us. The three puppies, Jackie (Miss S's doggie!), Spotty (Mr Moffat's) & Grumpy – because of his temper so called! (Mr Murray's) all three are like little barrels with legs moving them along. Poor wee creatures! The 'jiggers' pain their toes very much. Last night Mr Murray removed several of these pests from the toes of each of the three while Father & Mr Moffat held & soothed them & blew upon the cut parts. While we all pity them we were greatly interested in the manner each showed its temper & power of forbearance under the painful treatment. "Jackie" was patient tho' groaning like a human being. He made two starts forward as much as to say – 'Ah, but that is more than I can bear'. "Spotty" was a model puppy – after a pathetic look all round he closed his eyes & bore with the manner of grinning & bearing. As for "Grumpy" he showed fight from first to last & required his head held fast. How they did enjoy their milk after! I close with haste, Your loving mother Margaret Laws

MS 3290/13/12

Kondowe

3rd June 1896

Our dear little Amy,

Yours of 26th February brought us much pleasure. We rejoice with you in the results of your exams. Do not strain your abilities. Indeed, you'll have no occasion to do so if you apply yourself happily & at the right time to your tasks. Aunty is the best judge of the time to be given to the different subjects. The more you practise now, & the more carefully you do so, the less shall it appear difficult – & far less, drudgery, when new pieces are given out.

Had I been at Home I think I would have given you another six pence because you spent Aunty's one so well.

Here I find myself smiling again at you writing 'our friend Mr Waddell'. How he in turn, must smile at you a little sister from Bandawe, binding him to Nyasaland & at the same time attaching him to school-days & so Little Folk's interests in the Animal Kingdom.

Such a pretty picture you drew of Aunty & Sarah & you carrying off Willie for a walk in the sunshine after such a dark cloud for the bright-eyed little fellow to have been under.

Miss Selford & Mr & Mrs I T Thin are all specially interested in your welfare. Aye, your very happiness makes them brighter & happier.

We are very sorry to know that a little play – fellow of yours had been killed by a car. How did it happen?

When Mr McAlpine was at Mwenzo, boys brought 2 leopard cubs for sale. They were each in a box when brought here; but not there are in one box- a much larger one. How they grew in two weeks. They were being fed on a fowl each per day; but Mr Whyte who was fond of leopard pets when in India long ago, said ration gradually withdrawn & rice, with a little soup poured over it, given instead. (He was vexed to find that the cub kept in a cage at the Resident, at Zomba, have been fed on flesh for a time. Now it is so tame that boys can go in & clean out its cage.) Our little dogs were puzzled when they heard the growls & looked into the box. Our cats also had a look through the cross bars but they were not so interested in their wild cousins as the dogs were. There are 4 wee puppies about just now. "Jess" & her two were taken out to the kraal because she made 2 large holes in the kitchen walls for egress & ingress to suit her convenience. "Judy" & her two were put into an old pig sty because she was digging up holes in the floor of the passage. They do not like these changes for they think there is no milk for them because they are outside. Milk is scarce just now for or calves are dying. We are thinking of making a "Tulchan" – (please look the "Dic" for the meaning!). We have 6 more ducklings. No chicks this year. We are using all the fowls the people bring. Soon we hope to rear fowls on the Station. The natives are trying to do so.

It is late. I must chat no more to-night on paper. With many kisses ever am your loving mother
Margaret Laws

MS 3290/13/15

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

11th Oct 1986

My dear little daughter,

This is Sab. afternoon. I would like to acknowledge your happy, happy letter, of 14th June, before to-morrow when the pressure of household duties & general writing might push you into a corner. Dr Prentice is with us these days. He hears of you from Miss Brotherston & was telling us what others think of your success within a year, at 'College'. It is very gratifying to us that you have talents and that you are burnishing them while they are brightening your path & may shine along the path of others less gifted with so many good things from day to day. Here goes "Kitty" climbing up my back to claim attention although she may be half the day at me when passing by, the moment I sit down to sew she comes to catch the thread; & if to write the sound of the pen is as entertaining to her as if is annoying to me. Often she has had to be shut up. The monkey "Jako" has been very, troublesome lately, stealing eggs both in & out-side. Everything has be covered up & made secure in case of breakages & that is not easy without conveniences. "Jet", Dr P's dog has brought much jealousy, mutual growling into our meal hours &, as usual there is much praising of individual dogs.

I found reading your letter that I have already hurriedly referred to most items per last mail. The Hymn Tunes I turned up to-day. With only one -274- am I acquainted. Several of the others seem specially pretty. I hope to practise them by & by. Now you must know a great many more than I. It was a great pleasure to me to read that you had learned a Classical Piece at Home, & that quickly, too. To master one so means that many more may come under the same smile & pleasure.

Where do you sit in Mr Currie's Church? Do you remember the children's tea-party at Miss Gobbons when the little Curries, & the other little boy were all propped up at the table - & how they all enjoyed the games after tea? Please give my kind remembrances to Miss G & to her nieces & to their Father & Mother when you meet any of them. Also to Mrs Currie. And to all the kind friends who do not forget us tho' absent.

Charlie Domingo has begun to learn to play on Miss Carnegie's organ, along with Sam Katena. Charlie is far in advance of Sam as far as they have gone but as they are not allowed to practise, it is slow work – much to Miss Stewart's regret. Perhaps soon now, when Mr MacGregor comes from Bandawe, we may persuade him to mend up the bellows of the first organ you handled – that which the Brothers Moir presented to the mission, & which our enemies the Rats, have again & again, destroyed. Mr Murray, Mr Thomson, Mr Aitken & father have all done their best to been is sounding but for a long time now it has been silent. 5 o'clock! Mon afternoon. We had gone out for a short stroll & before our return at 3.30 the mail had come. Your letters via Zanzibar were a most agreeable surprise. A 'Fortnightly Review' should shorten time & distance very considerably. Your journal may now be reduced ½ sheers not to burden you in your increased preparation of studies. How would you like the plan of jotting down in pencil any item of interest which might be enlarged upon or shortened as you feel inclined or had the time for? Your photos brought much brightness last night. Many happy & affectionate remarks were made by all after the service.

Six prizes & 1 certificate do undoubtedly certify many surprises. How pleasing all these merited delights are. Have you handsome books worthy & pretty names? There came a blank page from you which caused me to wonder about their titles & what your thoughts might have been of the Senior Exhibition which you mentioned. It passed by with a wave of the pen!

How did Mary Grant surprise her mother? How funny about Polly Findhorn. "Brother Alexander" trains you in most pleasant practical ways. How good & kind all our friends are to us. Much love & many kisses to your bright & sweet little self & to Aunt Mary. From your loving mother M. Laws.

MS 3290/13/16

Livingstonia

9th Nov. 1896

My dear little daughter,

It just occurs to me I may address you so, until you are the height of Aunt Mary; so please keep me informed of your growth. This note may well be short – your letter arrived yesterday & the mail is just being closed by Mr Moffat, who has much trotting up & down on account of “Father’s” foot which he dare not set on the ground. He now sleeps well & we hope all shall be well before we write again.

Walter & John Elmslie are great curiosities to the boys & girls who have not seen white children before. Walter can speak to them & is a great amusement to them. John is a handsome children. You would like to run backwards & forwards with them I am sure. There is much I might write about them but I must leave you to picture them until you may see them in Edinburgh. Your very happily written letter has given pleasure to us all. The items I must not refer to singly or else no one else may have a line written except yourself. Your birthday must have been a joyous day for you. May you have many of them. Walter espied me in here in the dining hall & was walking: hence my mistake over the leaf. I already look forward to your next letter. I am very sorry about Miss Fotheringham’s illness & also about Miss Carnegy’s cares & anxieties. It is a very happy thought to know that you may help Miss Carnegy to look out for hidden sunbeams.

With much love & many kisses & with every good wish for your steady going progress I am your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/17

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

Mon. 30th Nov. -96

Our dear little daughter,

Last night Father wrote you. This afternoon I write because I am prevented going & coming freely as the middle room is being laid with bricks. Such a turn up again! Afterwards, however, it will be clean & comfortable. This room, our bedroom, may be done immediately afterwards if the rains hold off. One more dry fortnight would permit of much desired additions & improvements being rapidly advanced. The new brick school (& church combined) has risen, like a mushroom for time, but not for substantiality! Hundreds of people, chiefly men, carried the bricks from the field & prepared the (clay) mortar; women carried water, & tied up the grass for thatching; the school boys handed the bricks to the European builders & native lads who have learned to build; & so now we look with pleasure & great gratification on as school room 80 feet long secured from the overdue rains – one class room ready for thatching & more being added quickly as material can be handed. Such a great but happy noise there was in the schoolroom this morning. All the little boys have been helping to gather & throw in the broken bricks to make a firm floor; so, while they and others were breaking them down, they sang, shouted & whistled tre-men-dous-ly! At 2.p.m. it was so different & so pleasant to hear them singing 'Jesus is our shepherd'. There was a strong pull to begin today this new session. The accidental burning of the small wattle & daub school hastened on larger premises. Some of the little children are giving promise of learning the 'three R's' easily & well. They are very fond of seeing pictures & of singing hymns. They are most attentive under religious instruction: hence we hope for early & good fruits this year & every year. There is one little boy in whom I am sure you would be interested. His name is Alexander, which unfortunately is being shortened to "Lsander". He is a manly little fellow of 4 or 5 years of age. In every way he excels his older brother, William, who however, is improving in every way these months. They are the brothers of wee Mary Penelope Gill. Their father, Jakobi, is one of our most helpful & successful evangelists. Their mother is still very young & has gratified us all by throwing off her old sulky ways & by cheerfully trying to read the Gospel for herself. She & Martha, the wife of Jared, have striven successfully to improve their opportunities. They other married women are self satisfied & lazy.

Baby Thomson continues to thrive well. She enjoys her 'bottle', & already knows when her bonnet is being put on for going out. Her beautiful, white bonnet. And I will sketch her cot for you to colour. Her Father & Mother took a large packing-box & padded & lined it with pretty striped cloth. Outside it is draped with cretonne with golden ground & brownish flowers, traced & trailing. A tiny half-tester pole shoots well up & projects to form the beautiful canopy of spotless mosquito netting which falls gracefully over the bonny wee sleeping child under the tiny snow-white coverlet. You'll be interested to know that Baby's education has already begun practically. When she says O: I say A. When she says A. I say E & so she is learning the vowels. She does not cry as yet! How happy you must have been at the farm.

With many kisses I must close. Ever you loving mother M Laws.

MS 3290/13/19

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

20/3/97

Our dear little Amy,

Your closely written long letter of 30/12/96 brought us much brightness direct from the Xmas trees & the many other Home lights & joys of your young life. "Santa Claus" favours you highly. Your description of every gift was a gifted pleasure to us. May you be well to enjoy all, & may you be led to share with other in the good things that fall to your lot. We followed you closely from party to party: we even in advance saw little Madge receive her friends & you may tell us, by & by, of a very enjoyable time spent there.

Miss or Mrs McTavish we met in Stirling, at Miss Stein's, the young lady who sand & played "Can you sew cushions, can you sew sheets?" We remember her well. Her playful message of love we most earnestly return, should you meet soon.

Miss Marwick we also remember well. Her mother you also saw at Mrs Johnstone's Portobello. After that I visited at their at their house. Then Father knew well the son & brother in the Old Calabar Mission. You may from time to time, meet with many I may or may not remember so well.

It was specially kind of Miss Orr to present you the three companion copies which her beloved sister & our much loved friend had given a place on her book shelves as pleasant, wholesome reading; which many books are not these days.

Miss C's half sovereign, I wonder how it was laid out? The Lady's Companion will remain to assist you in many way. The "Napkin Ring" may be 3 times Daly with you & memories of the skipping in, & amusements of the parrot at 17 Park Circus Drive may be wound round it. The Candy & the Chocolates found a good place, did they not? The Books & the Baskets are for different stores & storing.

Little Madge Erksine's Father I met at Mrs Blaikie's Students' evening, before he left for Africa. Father knew her Grandpa well – if not her Mother also.

We were very sorry about Pearly Moir having been so ill. We trust that she has long since recovered.

Mon. 29/3/97

Henry must be a tall boy ere now. I will write Mrs Moir by & by. It was Mrs Fred Moir who made your first bonnet. It was she who was at Mandala House at that time & who has received us with open arms – not in the least afraid of the extra work with us in our helplessness. She was so fond of babies that she was rejoiced to handle & fondle & care for you. Both Mrs J & Mrs F Moir are very kindly remembered by those - & they were many! who enjoyed their warm & kindly hospitality & care in the days of long ago. There have been very many changes in the past 5 years; & many are

rapidly following in the Shire' Highlands. There are names of people settling there quite strange to us who used to know everybody who came. Even altho' we had not seen all we heard about them.

Agnes, the daughter of Albert & Jessie Namalambe is about your own age. In many ways she is far behind you; nut much less shall be required of her. She promises to do well from her quiet, yet frank manners. Her brother, who is younger, shall have good opportunities of learning steadily here. The out-schools permit of great laxity in attendance & great diversity of progress – while here the very youngest must climb up to a standard - & equally, or much more so in all the 3 R's than Agnes seems to have done. She says she cannot write. Miss S has likely tried her to-day. She came only on Fri. afternoon & was very homesick – that night after the toilsome pull up the hill & being placed amongst so many girls strange to her. She is also feeling the Hills cold as compared with the Lake Shore – especially at Cape Maclear. There are two or three specially smart little girls in the 1st standard. Miss S's brightest hopes are in their rising to help to teach others. Already, Puziri has a little class in the morning to prepare her for teaching next session. She is delighted at this. Now I must close with many kisses from your loving mother M. Laws

MS 3290/13/22

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

20/7/97

Our dear little Amy,

Last mail carried you a letter from father & a promise of one from me. Now I mean to try to fulfil that promise, however shortly or uninterestingly, since no letter of yours lies unanswered; & as we are on the "qui vive" for a mail arriving perhaps to-night, as a steamer was seen to enter Deep Bay, yesterday.

On Sab. morning I took the little boy, Kachinombe, into my bedroom to wash his face & to bathe 'a cut' from which I wished to take a very much blackened bandage by wearing of which he seemed to consider himself quite distinguished from his little playmates. Certainly our remarks singled him out these days. On showing him his face in the mirror his eyes instantly glanced up to me whom he recognised. Fear, at once, passed off &, instead great wonder filled his eyes as I drew the towel across his neck to dry it better which action of mine he saw in the mirror while he felt it alone to himself. He quickly & feelingly touched his head to convince himself of his being that very same boy standing before him.

Wed.11.20am. Now I have a few minutes before dinner. I had just finished about that amusing little scene above when father brought Aunt Mary's letter & yours of May 2nd & 5th; so I had first time to run over them before supper. Later I re-read & took notes so that I might hasten forward acknowledgement of them to-day. We are very very thankful to know that the "measles" have left no "sequels". Your appearance – so healthy, stout & rosy! is a happy reality to yourself & to those who can & do appreciate such good things; while to us, the picture is very gratifying indeed. The thinner times come to us all sooner or later! You have not told me is you have a badge? Mr Fraser possesses a gold one with which he has been presented. We have not seen it. We are very pleased to know that you love, & are loved by your S.S teacher, Miss Cowie – even that bond between you may draw others out of themselves & warm them within an ever increasing circle of love & light.

How very vexed we were immediately on reading that miss C had been suffering. The former letter had brought bright tidings of her visit up & yours down. We trust, however, that the summer weather has restored dear Miss C. to good health & more & more fitness for service of her & Our loving master. I must run!

Afternoon. Brother Alexander has practically given you a very good lesson for future guidance. You will now be very careful not to express wishes, lest he should gratify them before the great gift of patience has come to you. The 'Ruby Spec-Case' gave father a laugh at my expense because of a denseness clouding my thoughts at the time. By all means have a ruby dress before you are much older. I was about 12 or 13 when, together with Aunt Bella, at a school exam; ruby dresses were worn by us. Aunt Mary will decide about it.

Miss M's dog would not be inclined for a steak off the huge buffalo shot last night. Great excitement on to-day because of this event: also because the Angoni visitors & some of the carriers attached to Mr Fraser's 'journey' are starting. No girls' school this afternoon – in much haste I close. Ever your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/23

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

Sab. 17th October 1987

Our dear little daughter,

Four of your letters are before me showing no sign of "Ans" in the corners; so as I seem to be so very far behind the times it may be best to take "Father Time" by the forelock until I first of all, refer to your midsummer illness from which you were recovering when you wrote. We are so glad, also grateful indeed, that you were so carefully and kindly relieved from suffering & trouble. How very loving & attentive Uncle James & the Aunties have been. Daily you can repay this debt of gratitude by "loving obedience" into which two words you can read & fill in much of your young life.

All the Drs (& they were many!) soothed & relieved you in diverse ways. Mrs Elmslie with "Grapes Again" also added her quota of comfort & delight & many ore who may not recur to me in writing quickly. Sir John Cowan's gifts = that most elaborate Mission Box (which you described so minutely that I can picture it in all its details); & the Jubilee medal which you consigned to the future for its merits & greater value with a few passing words are full of interest. I think I asked you to describe the medal. May your Mission Box be largely filled up by yourself. Aunty Mary will guide you as to how & when you may bring it before interested friends, & also non-interested who may be pleased to have a new outlet for their generosity to extend by.

Your remarks about Mr Rose & his daughter were very interesting & some of them amusing. Here I have blurred these words by adding to the above unsatisfactory sentence.

You would love Mrs Goldie of Stirling were you to see here. She reminded me very much of Mrs (Prof) Calderwood. Such a number of Missionaries & Missionary Children there must be in Mr Currie's Church. Rev Douglas' name is quite familiar. The Praise, Missionary, Flower and Curio gatherings are all very good times for the "Little Folks" of these days.

It is gratifying you find yourselves comfortable in your downstairs pew. The playing on the violin is a real pleasure to you & your progress is certainly astonishing. Brother Alexander will continue to look for improvement as your time & health permit.

It is a very great pleasure to know that you are knitting stockings for me; but don't scruple to give them to Aunty Mary first as she has sent me many pairs for years to come. Miss Carnegie has knitted much for the good & comfort of others & she knows the pleasure of it. While I could I did so for others: now I many not without harm to my hand.

Father was shaking his head over your discovering his eye.

We were amused over Prof. P & his remarks. We are sorry that Mrs. P. Suffers from rheumatism. Sara has excelled in Music. Her parents are doubtless very pleased with the results. Polly's weet voice made us do more than smile. Your visit must have been very happy. I hope to send stamps to

Mr Lochhead for present mail. I think I mentioned before that Mr L & Mr Fraser are cousins. Mr Fraser would be immediately attached by you as a "Big Brother" were you to meet him.

Again I have had a walk with your from room to room in your new house. Your outlook also is very pleasing & your description sounded very poetic!!!

A gas stove I may long sigh for in Africa. Coal even is distant. Yes! I think your dress is pretty & well chosen. Your first button hole in school is very finely & regularly done. It runs in my mind that you tried your hand at button holes at Bandawe – I may be mistaken having taught so many! The winter school term has begun ere now. We hope if you have resumed work that you are able for it, if not don't fret but be happy in being occupied as circumstances allow. Do not press before older girls who are working hard to keep or hold their position with other ahead of them. There is good time for acquiring lasting knowledge.

Now for the 4th letter! which is practically entered with the foregoing 3 as is refers to your times of pain & recovery. Again & again we are grateful to our Heavenly Father for restoring you to health & freedom from pain.

Your prizes, 6 in number, had brought you a keen joy after your hard times of sorrow & crying & disappointment at not being present to receive them etc; but your enjoyment of Uncle James' little speech & the sight of the handsome books had brought sunshine again into your prospective school life.

As to your beautiful curls being cut off I confess to a great sinking of something within me while reading your having just enough left to make a boy of you. I have looked since at your photo curls. They many soon grow again & meantime it must be a great relief both to you & Aunt Mary that pulls are of long ago.

Two firsts are first rate results. Your Parchment certifying that your that you are distinguished in all subjects made us all laugh heartily. You may say why? It is because all of us consider you to be so young tho' not little – O, no! I go out now for a stroll.

I am trying to fancy you with your hair tied up!

It was far more easy to fancy you rubbing up furniture in the Spring cleaning. Jeannie could not have known till then what you could do. At that busy time the porridge must have been quickly disposed of, as cleaning time & Springtide wait for no one. Now you go early to College, even before Uncle James did & we desire you to come out of it as a good girl as dear Uncle James is a good man. Mr Murray is delighted with your little messages. Think of him keeping your 'buttonhole' of Bandawe days. I learned this lately as he was placing a small blue flower one Sab. evening. He is sad these days. News came now telling of a sister's death from inflammation of the lungs.

A little calf came a fortnight ago & now we have more milk. A little kid came a week ago & to-day Mr Moffat brought it to me – to be amongst my feet – because it was found yesterday under a basket to save the lazy heard boy looking after it. Of the doggie there should be more to tell next time. It was pulling my dress today & trying to catch the boys' feet & legs which they do not like. Good night & dreamless refresh you for each new day is the wish of your loving Father & Mother. Ever after yours in love. M.Laws.

MS 3290/13/25

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

23rd Dec 1897

Our dear little daughter,

This evening I devote to you as this is the last mail for this year. It is impossible to refer to your letter, just lately to hand, further than that the bicycle is granted. I do not know what Father may write or if he has time at all for a scrap even to you, as his hands are full of business from day to day. He seems far away from me even over in the office as compared with the study in the house at Bandawe – standing now no longer! I may not know whether he has written until the mail has closed & gone. We are pleased you have your roses restored to you & that you are enjoying full mental & physical vigour. Do not strain after more than you can easily accomplish of what is required. Happy & speedy preparation is a goal to strive after under all circumstances even when bucling (Whatever is that word I have written? I meant bicyling; but the noise of excruciating singing in the girls' dormitory is becoming intolerable. Miss McCallum is our nursing a case this evening & very soon I will command silence & all may be quiet for finishing this letter). This mail I expected to have had letters long & many for several friends; but circumstances have again prevented me carrying out my good intentions.

As soon as this mail passes I will take up the notes waiting for extension. I do not, at this moment, know where they are & cannot spare time to look for them.

Many many thanks for all the beautiful cards you & Aunty Mary sent just in time for distribution. It must take from you some time & thought to choose & to arrange all. The art calendar is a beauty – it will replace the former in the office as Father can see it well from his table across to the fireplace. Mine here is purely ornamental. Aunty's cards are reserved for our new bedroom. We'll often picture you & Aunty cycling along over the roads & far away. What does Miss Carnegie think of all this. Father says that at this rate he would not be surprised altho' I took to it on my return. The trio might tri. Here I would like our donkeys to be ridable; but that may not be for months as, last week, two colts came, one the one day & another the following day. They are fine, frisky creatures. Their Mothers have been taking liberties there days by destroying our fine apples while the herd was off with the goats, sheep & pigs. Some rare times there are.

Now peace reigns & I will try to write a little more to Aunty Mary. With every good wish for you in the coming year. I am ever your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/27

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

Fri 21/1/-98

Our dear little daughter,

It has puzzled me to remember whether I had already written from the notes I am so sure I jotted down for you, or whether a most luminous intention impressed them in my mind only & not on paper at all.

Two nights ago I reread & noted items for reference. Now I write an Extension of the same. How strange it is to be reading your regrets regarding your leaving East Linton when already your Xmas holidays are past & your Easter holiday may be near ere this letter reach you. We were indeed glad to know that your roses had come back – may they stay. They are somewhat rare in Cities.

I was greatly amused over your reference to Uncle James cycling. Certainly he would be very much more so over my learning it; as Father says he would not be at all astonished at my attempting it – even years hence. We are very sorry Miss Carnegie had been suffering as you write. How good & kind of her to have kissed you twice. May she know that you are always trying to do the right, just as we wish & hope for.

How happy all your New Books have made you. May your pleasure in them have prevented any dilatoriness in preparation, which saps the sweetness from the Home Branch of the Tree of Knowledge – which Branch as tended by Aunt Mary, is a great & sure feeder of your whole trunk.

“French without Tears” at first made me smile but later on I remembered one special occasion on which Mother had to plead with Aunt Bella to help me with an Exercise.

The tile seems attractive. May the contents bring smiles & much pleasure.

The E.Linton heather is on the mantelpiece altho’ it looks dry. Miss McG brought a plant which died. It was very good & thoughtful of Aunty & you to gather & send to Mrs & Miss L & Miss B. Here, honey has been more abundant this year – at least, more has been brought for sale. The bees pass overhead frequently when warming. From some cause or other I have missed seeing the C’s Record with the extract from letter. Some time I may ask it from Mr Thomson who now collects & sends round all Public Papers etc. The “Helpmeet” with enclosures I have - also the “Prospectus” of the Y.L’s School, Rome. It is flourishing & ought to.

I am wondering if I have met with Mrs Thomson of Kirkcudbright. The old lady of that name whom I met there lives directly opposite the Robertsons who were so kind to me. You will remember Beatrice who called at C Drive one day.

We hope Uncle James has been fortunate in reducing the debt on the Chruch. You will have missed him very much; but he may soon be with you again & so renew Sweet heart travelling & sojourning in a Paradise such as East Linton if not there.

Mr Crockett's Book has not yet reached us. Mr Moffat & Rev. Hendersion receive many new Books & they kindly send them round.

How my stocking must be growing even tho' you were trying to take it in. You must be gaining your shillings more & more easily for 'Pieces of Music' now that you are advancing in the knowledge of the requirements for Practice & with Aunty to simply lift you over difficulties.

We hope your tooth is no longer troubling you also, that your ear is quite better & has left your hearing sound.

2nd letter of date 26/9/97. Your story of Dicky & your providing for her – ay, even buying the sand was very amusing.

I have had two bigger boys looking into the mirror lately. One day I was dusting after the weeping & for a moment was not aware of Swalema & Georgy standing by me when I raised myself from a corner. It was a high farce! Georgy had been there before, probably frequently, as he is chambermaid but Swalema, after one or two grins or twitches of the mouth to prove that he was looking at himself turned quickly & looked at G. & compared him with the image in the mirror. Then we all three looking in & had a good laugh after which they had much to say.

The singing is over & I go to set bread.

3rd Febry Thank Aunt Mary, please for all her long, chatty kettters & accept the same expression of gratitude for your own dear self. I tore off a half sheet frm Aunty's letter as there is not time just now for filling it up. Letters of Nov. & Dec. Came together. We read them late last night. The Bag goes to Deep Bay first: hence the short time for referring to them. We are so pleased all had been so well & happy. Of course both Aunty & you have missed Uncle & Aunty Amy. Such lots of beautiful presents Aunty Amy has given you. Are you in turn giving away what you have outgrown, & which might carry some little pleasure to Lesser Folks! Your Essays are well done & neatly written – also the sums. The two last letters are even better then the former. Your style of expressing yourself seems to have given you far less trouble & much more easy pleasure. How we did laugh over your expression regarding the two watches & also over your remark about Aunty's first ride on the Road!

The mail closes at 8 o'clock. 7 has struck & I must go to look after the boys & the breakfast. Little Baby Thomson has been in better health altho' he needs it all in this very trying weather. We are so glad that Miss Carnegie was able to see for herself the brightness that have been given to you to enjoy.

Wishing you every good gift & true happiness & with many kisses. I am your loving mother M.Laws.

MS 3290/13/28

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

4th Febry -98

Our dear little daughter,

To-day I came upon the notes for your letter which could not be found because I did not recognise the paper on which they were written, altho' it must have been in mu hand when searching. It was a 3 cornered cutting off a lamp shade – shaped as you may remember we did at Bandawe.

1st note – Xmas dinner! We had a jollification in the usual Kondawe quiet way. Mrs Thomson had presented me with a duck as large as a turkey: & it was enjoyed, altho' it was known to have been one of the waddlers & puddlers on the Station. It use to be very amusing to see the large family of ducks & drakes setting out & swinging along from Mrs T's to the kraal & to the place where the girls pounded maize – which feeding they enjoyed very much. At sunset they returned in a line – a funny sight! The singing has commenced again to-night & I am alone & free to write. Last night also there was a practising because Tues. night was all out of order on account of Miss Jackson's arrival. This evening Father has received very disturbing news from the Karonga Station. Dr Ramsay is very ill & Father has gone to talk over his last illness during which trying time Mr Murray was there building & helped care from him. Mr John Henderson is still with him. The letter was brought in 2 days through many swollen streams. We must hope for the best. Later on I will refer to the care of Dr R as circumstances develop.

Rev. J. Henderson gave a dinner to his teachers * some ½ dozen of the girls – betrothed & favourite! The Europeans also enjoyed the novelty. Later we joined the party at the Concert – which was a great success as showing the native talent. I hope to send you a programme which has been 'forgotten. The little brick platform was decorated behind & in front & quite delighted all who saw it (Sevelar Behold that word & note the hard struggle some of the pupils have with their interchanging of l & r; & the ugly impression it leaves not only on the mind of a teacher, but on this occasion, on the paper too! You would not be surprised if you heard the strong singing in the dining hall & the chattering of some of the wee lassies left to wash up the dishes & clink, clink at the spoons. A few plates have fallen – luckily they are iron else our hearts might be broken & the purse strings at Home cut off from connection with us))

Several mottoes were written & others were made up of printed letters slid into a grove (which RE used for word making by the very youngest ones & also by the very stupid ones!) & these mottoes peeped from among the beautiful leaves & flowers which Miss McG, Mr H & the older boys & girls brought & arranged.

The Games on New Year's Day were a much greater success this year. The Exhibits were few, but my cook had excellent bread & Mr Moffat's had made his with honey, so it turned out to be a cake; therefore could be no competition, & so both received a good prize. The porridge was ? & the maize was so good & so highly commended that Mr Moffat ate heartily of it & was handing it all round

amongst us to try it when someone laughingly said 'there'll be none left for the husband & the bairns'. There was a general laugh & Grace was called forward to secure her prize & her maize. Jakobi is her husband – a good main he is. Their 2 little boys are very clever & giving great promise of being useful when trained in the years to come. Their little girl Mary P. Gill has a most decided aversion to look at Europeans. She will outgrow it soon, we hope. The 4th baby is quite our infant & was baptized Amy. Mrs S. happened to be present & was much tried in waiting the close of the service.

Mrs T's wee boy was baptized last month. His name is Thomas Marshall.

Some time in Dec. I was prevailed upon to accompany the young people to Mount Waller. They all enjoyed it very much; but I was quite vexed with myself because giddiness prevented me acting like the others, & it seems so fussy to have one & all taking entire charge of one who dare not look at the heights, depths & grandeur on all sides! Oh, I was glad to be able to walk down part of the base & to return to the bower where the Rev. Henderson had has a grand spread before ascending & where there was tea again before starting for Home. The road seemed long & fever came on to add to the length of it. One or two of my men were dancing characters & their grotesque movements in the dim moonlight were more than funny. Such a pull up they had to bring me here; but they would not hear of my coming out of the machila. They all were very kind. Henceforth I can very decidedly refuse to go to pic-nics where climbing is required.

Such lovely roses are on the tables before me. I call them 'picture roses!

Father has come in & he has decided to wait for another message from Karonga to-morrow.

Tues 8th Febry. On Sat afternoon another message came with the news that Dr R was worse; so in a little more than 2 hr & 1/2, men, tent, canteen, food & necessary clothing were all ready for Father to get into the machila before 7pm. As usual, Messrs Moffat & Murray were very helpful all round. That evening all had engaged to drink tea in honour of Miss Jackson at Mrs J's. She very kindly waited to accommodate us in the circumstances. Father enjoyed his tea, pudding & pancakes before he left (of the latter he pocketed some much to the amusement of Mrs J) & the men were so good & considerate in their knowledge of Dr R's illness that they went on late in the moonlight: & Father wrote a note at 2a.m. saying they were again starting – just beyond Lion Point – after enjoying hot water & milk & the pancakes. At such speed we have calculated that he must have been with Dr R on Sab evening. May he have been in time to help him.

Dr R may bring you a monkey skin.

Your much enjoyed letter of 28th Nov to hand on Sat. I will not refer to it at this time. All items are most interesting. M L

MS 3290/13/30

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

15th May 1898

Our dear little Amy,

These few days I am sure you would be very much interested in little Baby Aitken's little ways. (Here I must pull up & write more slowly & consequently less than I would have liked to have written you at this time; but the Steamer may be back soon to carry to you a larger letter, since I have not had or taken an opportunity of culling notes from your last one of Febry). Notes. On Sab 1st May Baby Aitken was baptized & named Eva Sophia. The latter is her mother's names. The former is the name of a little daughter of Dr Glover, of Abdn, who was nursed by Mrs A. All your items were of great interest. Your progress, & the good will you enjoy along with it are sources of great pleasure to father & me. Do not strain!!!

My ducks are now great, big waddlers. My fowls have ceased to die in large numbers. Five chickens remain of the brood of seven – one more was killed by a frolicsome boy. One puppy has been taken by Miss Jackson. It gives much amusement down at the girls' house. Mr Henderson may take one or even two at once & I will be very glad to get rid of their yelp-yelping etc. Flora, their mother, has been troublesome because I turned them all out to a tumble-down shed where she does not consider them safe from the hyena walking around the house at 3am in the waning moonlight. Two nights ago she barked so loudly & long that Baby could not sleep; but all the same she was not frightened, for she cawed & good for about an hour where as we failed to quieten Flora who was in desperation until the hyena, after crying out with anger & disappointment, cleared off. Father said it must have been a heavy animal from the noise is made bounding off round the house & into the grass after he went out with his gun. How cold the morning was. We brought in one puppy & she settle down after some growling & restlessness.

The Box! Oh, it is long in coming; but, when we hear of some who have been very short of food – now relieved happily! & when we think of our own great & past wisdom in ordering oil for our lamps long, long, long ago, & would have been in darkness (not total!) unless Karonga had had cases of oil to spare – we can all the more patiently wait – for clothing & other good things – of which again!!!

There are many wee boys for this session. My two boys are reading less laboriously. How hard it is to wait for them to discover the simplicity of their phonetic language.

Georgie had had a rousing opportunity of going to his home for a little time. Mr John H's house boy had wished, again & again, to come down to work with me. When I told G. that Komaso wished his work his very jaw fell (I only meant that I did not mean to have an idle boy in a third: and when I wished to pay him he was breathless declaring that he was coming back. All right, I said, come back when you are tired playing. He will not stay long away.

Mrs A's cook Yosam, who learned under Henry & me at B. Is here now & has given great satisfaction to Mrs A as he has turned out exceedingly under further training.

Bah-wa! What a turn up of fowls flying & cackling etc. – a hawk swooped down & as I stood up, I saw it rise with a fowl dangling from its beak.

Your sewing is very neat indeed. How happy you must be in all your classes & work. The cycling is of great service to you at this time. We are very glad that you have benefited by it & also that Aunty Mary is renewing her youth in accompanying you. Now I must turn to matters from No 36 & with every good wish & many kisses through Aunty Mary, I am your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/31

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

19th May 1898

Our dear little daughter,

This afternoon I will fulfil part of my promise in taking up yours of Febry on an early opportunity. This is Thurs. The steamers went South only two days ago.

We are sorry Mrs Geddes was far from well when you wrote.. What of Mr G? And the bright wee lassies, are they growing up fast as so many of them do in less favoured circumstances of life! Poor Phemie! The lives of some are hard! She needs sympathy in her surroundings. May she get it!

The life of Mousa was pathetic – her story equally so. It reminds me of Aunty Mary's pet canary which was encased in a match box & buried under a tree far far north in Aberdeen.

Again I refer to your excellent quarterly results – daily work done patiently, perseveringly, faithfully & honourably brings due reward sooner or later to all. We are very sorry that Miss Carnegie had been suffering. We trust that the better weather has brought brightness & strength for longer service. How delighted Miss Carnegie would be to see the boys waiting their turn to practice one her much admired organ. Miss S had taught several & Mrs Denver had also prepared a few for continuing with Miss S. The few Europeans who have enjoyed the privilege of playing on it are delighted with its richness of tone. The boys have been well told of its cost in cattle' so they are wonderfully careful of it. In the near future we hope the young Africans may uplift the still younger & at the same time, give pleasure to the 'Old folks at Home' in their now peaceful villages, by singing & playing on instruments removed far above the tom-tom for their midnight dances, now largely becoming a thing of the past. The last concert here was a surprise to ourselves even.

We hope you enjoyed your Easter Holiday to your heart's content. In your next you may tell us all about the Concert & the results.

Rev H has chosen two puppies. 3 still remain – fatties they are! How fond of potatoes they have become. The sweepings of the wheat were fusty & they turned away from it & all the more so as milk has been very scarce for them.

Thurs 2nd June. It rains! And the mist looks like a snow storm. It is cold & raw for us. And so you have already been 6 years in dear old Scottia! How the Birthdays follow us, ay even chase us forward into the unknown future. We may soon have a 'Notice' from your pen of how you have observed Father's last birthday/ We are quite in your C.Book in your Essays & in your letters. Carefulness & neatness are written largely on the face of all. Your sums are also very creditable. We write in the strain of praise occasionally just to encourage you to persevere. As to the Local Music Exam, Aunty may either have been able to coach you in the very short time your teacher allowed after their decision that you should go forward or she saw it to be more prudent to deter you for another year. We'll see. Exams come to be easy & easier when the day by day application becomes part of oneself. Your 1st Class results of "Quarterlies" are most gratifying. Let there be no strain to keep place if it is to

hurt yourself & others. Be very careful to heed Aunty's training & warnings. Were you coming in just now you would laugh & exclaim "Oh Mother!" for I have risen to put on my helmet to sit at the davenport altho' the sun is forcing itself through the mist now it is approaching noon.

How pleased Father & I are that Miss Carnegy has been restored. In your next you may tell us you have seen her able to enjoy the beautiful flowers at L.Bank.

Poor Annie Binnie may be a great gainer of her short stay while Aunty may have been a loser for a time. Such changes go on revolving!

The soirée, & the Bags of Cookies etc, brought up many young thoughts long covered over. The Cycling gives both present & prospective pleasure. Good health & many a ride together to both Aunty & you.

Do you remember the ugly hyenas in the Zoo? Fancy my standing in the dim moonlight looking for Father hearing one bounding in the grass & crackling the branches a very short distance beyond the house. It knows there are puppies on the station =. As yet Flora, our dog, & Gispy, Mr McGregor's dog & perhaps others have kept it from doing mischief to them or to people. Now I must see after dinner. Many kisses & much love from your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/32

16/7/-98

Our dear little Amy,

This morning a box of Rose plants has been set down at the door; but I told the two lads to leave them & I would pot them after the mail leaves.

I write you 'these few lines' in order to keep my promise.

Very soon now you may be carrying off your rewards for good, steady labour. We would not, on any account, that you should at any time over strain your abilities – physical & mental.

May you enjoy thoroughly the coming holiday. I can picture Aunty Mary, & perhaps Aunty Amy, cycling along the good Edin. roads I know. Then where you may go for more change we'll know later on.

You may be surprised to learn that I could not discover you in the last class photo. Father discovered the brooch & then all was plain. Are all the 49 in one class?

Last night the little boys read with much & comic expression. To hear the grown up men reading their Ngoni was a special pleasure.

Many kisses & much love for the 10th Aug. The Cap. is to bring you a white ivory ring when he sees you.

I am your loving mother, M.Laws

MS 3290/13/33

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

7th Aug' -98

Our dear little daughter,

This is Sab. 8.30pm. All the Services are over & we wish to have a chat with you. Father is ahead of me, from the remark just made regarding your thankoffering. It was a great pleasure to us to talk over your motive for giving it. We will not forget your action. We know somewhat of your trials at school (& of the fightings within at well); but the letter of J.S. was a revelation which to other side lights could have thrown on the circumstances. We are very sorry for her – in a manner ore so that for you, because your conscience is dictating the right to you, while she is twisting & blurring hers. We will remember you both in your difficult positions. I would like to know where she is in the class photo.

We are very pleased that your steady work secures you continuous high marks. All these hundreds of bring gratification to all concerned in your welfare. Your awards may be many. May you have had the great pleasure of receiving them personally this year. Last year had its peculiar trails for you. We are truly grateful that you have been given the enjoyment of good health in the past months.

What grand times for cycling the holidays should give you. Of the exhibition Awards & holidays – all in good time!!! Your letter from W.Lintion was doubly valued because you found the time to tell us of your pleasant rides & equally pleasant reading . “Uncle Tom’s cabin” and “the Lamplighter” carried me back to my school days. The latter I do not recall to memory at all clearly.

I fancied seeing you polishing & rubbing down your ‘iron pony’.

Of Miss Kemp’s parrot we expect to hear some amusing remarks another time. We most certainly agree with Aunty Mary in that you have earned your marks & your holidays. We also with you acknowledge Aunty’s care & help in every branch of your training & the best return you can make to her is to love her & help her by your ready obedience day to day.

Mon 8th Aug. Last night, after Father read his sermonette, all my lighter flow of thought dried up & as we have to rise early we retired. My little dog is going with his Mr Croft when he goes away able for his duties again. “Charlie” is feeling the cold up here very much. He has been accustomed to the sea & fails to realize that tho only 40 miles from Karonga where it is hot, our altitude maes all the difference. We all laughed at his brisk exclamation re. the distance from Karonga. We had remarked that Mr Murray had written that the heart was already felt at the L.Shore.

Mr Eyre relates splendid ‘yarns’ of his early sea life & travels. How he sometimes keeps us laughing! We encourage this because it is well that Mr C should see & enjoy life at a Mission Station, where some young men might think that Christians, especially Scotch ones might not see a joke, - far less have a jolly good laugh over wholesome, true stories.

Have just found more 'notes' for Amy – Raleighing her Father!!! Keeping it in view from all sides may secure it for you; unless another “Sally” with an “Osoeasy” saddle comes riding up in front of us. All the items of your letters are very interesting, always. Teh other night Father was going down to the Station when a fox, or a young leopard, (more probably the former, because one took a fowl at midday last week, & we know they prowling about.)

How wise you must feel to know Father's age. Yes, we were both amused & interested over your Miss Box. We trust many more of your thankofferings aer to be dropped into this year. What about your Music Pieces? Are they much more difficult now? And that does Aunty say about the cheerful practicings?

This morning Aunty has enjoyed your loving kisees for her birthday. Of course you were “Proxy” for us. On Wed 10th Aug. We will not forget you tho' far away. With love & many kisses I am your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/35

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

Fri 16th Sept -98

Our dear Amy,

To avoid adjectives big, or little, or even growing, I have this time, chosen the "dear" one. Yes, I saw the e after you had drawn my attention to it. Thanks.

Aunty gathers much information from African Travellers & Workers. It must sometimes be amusing for her who has behind the curtain when similar scenes have been rehearsed.

And so Aunty Amy found you in bed! Well, well!! Henceforth you will help greatly to rub out this 3rd rate mark against you by scoring a 1st rate mark every morning, as we all would like to see you, not only aiming at, but most happily acquiring day by day. What a pleasure it would be to Aunty Amy to think that she had aided you in this most admirable of beginning the day with delight in the new energies of the day: & for Aunty Mary to be free of vexation & worry in the morning duties, so that she & you may enjoy the morning together, & both of you part happily – she to think often of another good morning, & you to bound along to school full of the happiness of having helped others to be happy - in a word to act the "Sunbeam". Shining in one's corner means reflecting rays into the other corners. As you grow older Aunty can tell you how very difficult are the surroundings of many who desire in vain to have only a share of the good things which have been given to you to enjoy. This is no sermonette! It is a reflection coming from my sunset which is still very bright, as yet! Father & I are very early risers, however late Father is in retiring. An hour in the morning is worth two later on. Her Rev Mr Eyre is afraid of becoming lazy; so he rises & has a stroll all alone if he has no other invalid to take out of his bed. He took Mr Wright & now he sometimes takes Mr Darrah, who is not always able.

We were very please indeed to know that Aunty Amy was so strong as not to be overfatigued with her long unbroken journey. Of the cycling all together we expect to learn of great adventures & travels.

With a good laugh we accepted the ready payment of kisses for pounds!

We also enjoyed your pic-nic to C.Castle through your pictorial description of the scene.

The half of Sept. is gone! We trust you have enjoyed your holidays to the full. I noted all details about dress, sash, mits & stockings, etc. Perhaps we may receive a photo(?).

Aunty Amy's gift for you was very considerately chosen. What a number of pretty gifts you must have. Some of them you may have outgrown & may have passed on the pleasure of looking at & possessing them.

Craig, one more! How very kind of Miss Carnegie to share with Aunty & you the beauties & luxuries of her dear old Home. This visit to Craig is a special pleasure to us out here, & for many reasons

which Aunty can explain to you e.g. the associations – the surroundings - & the effects are splendid Object Lessons when learned & carried away steadily & well. Of the Abdn visit by & by.

Mr & Mrs Daly may have had a very good time in Switzerland. We are hoping so. They work hard in Glasgow, & out of it, too! Uncle James may be enjoying golfing these days; & you, too! You surprised me by mentioning the large number of eggs Dickie had laid – 17!!!

26th Sept (Mon.) Sab 2 weeks past your July (prize!) letter arrived & we are very pleased with the happy, happy results of your past year's work. Steady work deserves success & should bear no strain with it as you advance. Your special letter brought a special surprise & pleasure. What a splendid record for the Camerons. The names of your books are strange to me. After this mail leaves I hope to have more time for writing. With much love & with every good wish for you to enjoy every day I am your loving mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/38

Livingstonia

Lake Nyasa

2nd Dec 1898

Our dear Amy,

Your nice, chatty letter of Sept was much enjoyed. It was very, very kind of Uncle James to arrange for these happy outings before you settled down to the winter's work. How quickly & happily your time must fly! It seems no time at all since you all enjoyed West Linton so much: & yet there have been many changes since then. These months (& which months so not?) bring dates & memories along with them!

We are very glad that Dr R is looking well & able to look forward to work somewhere? Mrs Thomson had observed the death of his Father & told us last mail.

We were much interested in your reading aloud alternately, & I was more so in the title of one book - viz; "Probable Sons". As to "Chess" Father shook his head & said "She'll be in for her work"; but it is neither improbable nor impossible for him to learn it.

By & by, per mail we'll see you & your 'bike'. Could you see us face to face you would not press for our coming Home next year. We are so very well, & it is so hard to find workers for what is simply lying to hand to be doing. When we do come we would like you to be a little older to appreciate a little travelling we hope you may enjoy & benefit by. Meantime it seems out of place to refer to such plans with the far-reaching sounds of war per telegrams which we pray may be averted. We do not expect another Dr out to relieve Father for furlough. Dr Elmslie himself, as 2nd in seniority, takes the place - & all it means & is known to Dr Elmslie. It is a great pleasure to us that Etta has been allowed to cycle so young - & so successfully too, in the time.

The needles arrived in perfect order!!! Thanks.

How pleased we were to learn that Miss Carnegy was able to receive Uncles James & to enjoy a chat about their work. Her kindness is like the oft recurring dews which visited & favoured the beautiful flowers & fruits exhibited. How graciously considerate of her Majesty to have fruits sent so far - first for exhibition & then for distribution in the hospitals. Of honey I could have spared this week, for four posts or gourds were brought from the Nyika plateau behind us by men who were specially sent out by Mr Moffat to hunt for & bring in for us all - each household had a similar supply & we pay as agreed upon by Mr M. It took me a good part of 2 days to see & to help in it - the honey- being extracted from the marrow mouthed vessels - to gently heat what would come out - to strain - to wipe bottles & jars, & to find places for the same where I can watch the small ants attacking my goodly stores. What would our Friends at home think of all the insects that best our food & belongings here? At present I dare not sue my 2 large cupboards (safes?). They are overrun with wyerere.

One morning recently a hyena was trying our foulhouse door. It was most probably heard that same night by Mr Bradshaw who hastened to get into the house.

Two nights ago a lion ate the greater part of the 3 wild pigs down below this plateau, near the village of Ruatiz, & poison was sent down by a trustworthy man to find out remains which he was to prepare against the lion's return to his feast, but we have heard nothing to-day. It is well to be warned of their being in the neighbourhood again. Your canary amazes me with its numbers of eggs.

How very kind of Miss Kemp to bring roses. Sorry her sister has been ill.

MS 3290/13/40

Livingstonia

British Central Africa

Thurs. 5:1:99

Our dear Amy,

When planning for taking advantage of a little time for writing this afternoon, my 1st thought was to write Miss Kemp; but, as Father may send for me any time to see boxes opened my 2nd thought was to write Aunty Mary, re – some of the parcels minus names of senders: lastly, just as I was dating my letter, I decided to write you the 1st for the New Year which, I know well, Aunty will not object to.

Our united and hearty good wishes for you & Aunty, & for all at Home & not at Home, were wafted with the approach of the year. We had been asleep, but were awakened by sounds of chanting by the Boys, as usual. On this occasion they were preceded by Mr Stuart & Miss McCallum. Mr Moffat & Miss Jackson brought up the rear. Of Mr S it is laughingly told that, when Mr Moffat went into his bedroom to awake him, he was well heard exclaiming “You Beggars!” The Rev. Henderson used to enjoy keeping the Boys up to Time, music & marching. Mr S was new to all this & he must have been astonished at the noisy singing & shouting & even a little shooting. Even my 2 boys knew not to come in until the great fun was over. All were very happy. Father opened the window & wished all “A Happy New Year”. Next day I was chaffed for not being seen or heard; but I could afford to laugh over all as I had had dinner to prepare for seven the previous day, & later in the evening three more joined us at tea, just as on Xmas Eve when those who were not dining came up at 6.30 to have a chat altogether. Friends at home may think it a small matter to prepare for such a small party – in some ways it would have been as easy to prepare for fourteen (had I space!); but here bread & cake cannot be bought & boys cannot be responsible for such extra times. Over all I had been feverish for some 10 days. Not much. Something within our system answers to the great amount of rain & mist of these times.

My rheumatics are very rare as yet. There is one in my right wrist which puzzles me a little. My knees are cosy & quiet, & only occasionally a thigh gives way suddenly & awkwardly. This house is very comfortable. It is far too small for all our goods & stores. We ourselves could make it sufficient for ourselves only, but we have to be ready for emergencies, & to have stock for more than food for others. Father is to try to have part of our permanent house built this year which we may occupy, & so allow Mr & Mrs MacGregor, perhaps to settle down in this one. The season for hastening forward the one-storied part of the proposed house is that Offices – mission, Telegraph, Telephone & Post may all be at one place. What a boon it will be to have all the above working - & working happily & to purpose!

Evening. Father has written Jon & now I close to take the opportunity of an early mail. With every good wish for the New Year & many kisses I am your loving mother M Laws

MS 3290/13/41

Livingstonia

British Central Africa

11:1:-99

9.P.M.

Our dear Amy,

Aunty's letter showed us the dark shadow of the cloud that had flitted across the bright horizon of love that has glowed above & around you these 5 years & more. I use the word 'flitted' purposely because we, in our sorrow, are still hopeful that such shadows have not been, & are not to be thrown between you & your best friend in this world.

We regret that you have been so unreasonable about the carrying of your waterproof. I think I was more than twice your age before I had the pleasure of carrying one. How grieved Aunty must be to see your pretty dress spoiled after all her care of you & your clothes, of which latter she gives an account as we desire her to do. Here Father & I wear old clothes at our work that we may have you nicely clothed, & that we may help on our work all the more.

It will be a great pleasure to us, when we meet to find you adorned by that extremely rare jewel of good sense in the little things that go to make the loving & beloved woman – both at Home & Abroad.

Scene No.2 – Aunty's letter also shone behind the cloud when the flowers of honesty raised their head & reflected the rays of righteousness in your school surroundings. Many such little acts tell in the formation of the character of other girls who have not had the training you have been blessed with. All are acting & reacting on each other: & hence our daily prayer for you is that you may live unspotted in this life.

The lives of all of us are made up of little things. More & more do I find it is so in my life out here. Always remember that you have Father's, Aunty's & my sympathy - & above all Christ's! in your young trials; but try also to remember not to add to ours. Had Uncle James been still at Home with you – also Aunty Amy – what unhappy times might have arisen all from a withering look in return for love & care. May Aunty be enabled to help you prevent a repetition of that deep offense or anything approaching it. And may both of you continue to rejoice in your loves.

What would not Miss Carnegy give to have all Aunty's love & care for herself? Do, please, be kind & grateful to Aunty & cause to shine forth the love of your young heart to Miss Carnegy in the days of her sunset. Father has read Aunty's letter & is waiting to read this one.

With loving forgiveness I am your affectionate mother M.Laws

MS 3290/13/42

Livingstonia

British Central Africa

Tues. 17:1:-99

Our dear little daughter,

This evening I begin a letter to you lest there be interruptions later on.

Mr Murray most decidedly says that your photo does not flatter you. He is even disappointed that it has not come up to some ideal picture in his own mind. All here were surprised at his remark, for we, & all the other friends who have seen it, were highly pleased with both yourself & your bike.

Mr Bradshaw when here did remark that your gloves – the gauntlets- seemed large! – all the more so, doubtless, because hands & feet have always to be kept well in even when not grasping a bike well in front. All have been most interested to learn how the bike is secured.

Out like black kitten (not a white hair in it!) is the personification of mischief when playing its pranks. On Sab evening it appeared in time to walk up to father just before commencing the evening service. There was not help for it but for me to call softly in approaching to secure it & then hand it over to my boy & send him back to the house here with it. In the forenoon Nimo, the dog which Mrs Morgan had given to Miss McCallum, had been tied up but we very easily heard it howling to escape & follow his mistress. Fancy our mutual smiles when it walked in & straight up to Miss McCallum trailing a long string – a ream, I think behind him. Poor dog, just now it is to be pitied for it has had a jigger or two to lame it & the worms of a fly in its back to discomfort & disfigure it & fleas innumerable to torment it - & all these troubles altho' so well liked & cared for.

Last week a strange bird was brought for sale & the nurses bought it. It may be a heron? It is very fond of frogs & tadpoles & gobbles up any number in a very short time. The girls are sometimes sent out to the clay pools to find tadpoles & the boys go for frogs – for which they receive a little salt. Soon it is expected to eat maize just as the crested crane now does: & it is a marsh bird.

The granadillas are in fruit just now. The other day we had a telegram from Karonga requesting 50 lbs flour, 1 doz. melons & 100 granadillas. How we laughed at the _____ of such a telegram! The order was fulfilled the following day & as the "Adventure" (which is one in the service of the A.J.J.Coy) took them up they were free of freight at Karonga.

20/1/99. Many thanks for your chatty letter. How that 3 pence piece must continue to shine in the M.Box. If the rays of your happy times fail to wake you in the morning the disagreeable darkness of not being awakened for school may cure the ugly fast gripping habit in a way you may regret & yet be grateful for.

The little boat in the seascape was well done. The next time you draw the moon please do not draw a circle – only shade round an imaginary one.

Paper is not scarce, but I do not wish to add more than many kisses & much love from your loving mother. M.L.