

But a very pleasant and happy surprise awaited Dolly that morning, for lying upon her plate, on the breakfast table, was a letter in a thin envelope, addressed to her in a well-known and well-loved hand. The child could hardly eat her breakfast for impatience to open and read the first letter she had ever received from her mother; but she could not trust any one to read it to her, no other eyes must rest upon the loving words it was sure to contain. She must wait till she was alone, and then try and read it to herself.

So she carried it to her own little bedroom as soon as ever they had finished their breakfast, and there she opened it and found the letters written so clearly and largely, that she had no difficulty in reading all that was there. Dear, kind mamma, to have thought of making it all so plain for her!

And it was such a loving, tender letter, written only one week after she had parted from her two darlings. Great tears gathered in Dolly's eyes as she read, she hardly knew whether they were tears of sorrow or of joy. She read the letter once and again quite through, trying to hear her mother's voice in every word, and to picture her expression as she wrote this first letter to her dear little daughter.

There was much in what she read to help her, much to think over; but there was not time for much thought then. For before she had been long alone, Parker came in to dress her for church, and Dolly hid away her letter carefully in her pocket, unwilling to trust it out of her own keeping for a moment.

They drove to church with Lady Temple. Duke did not at all relish the idea of going; but he had no choice given him, and so he sat in sulky silence opposite his sister, and would not answer when spoken to. Master Duke always resented greatly being made to do anything against his will. He did not mind church in India, when it was cool enough to go, and when he could always sit beside his mother; but to go with his grandmother was anything but to his liking, and he was proportionately sullen.

Poor Dolly, who always felt very grieved when Duke misbehaved himself, cast many imploring glances at him: but he took no notice of these, and remained obstinately silent.

"You had a letter from India this morning, I hear, Dorothy," said Lady Temple. "Is your father quite well?"

"Papa and mamma are both well," answered Dolly, "and they both sent their love to you."

Lady Temple made no reply. Dolly felt certain she was not pleased, and that it was the mention of her mother's name that had displeased her.

(To be continued.)

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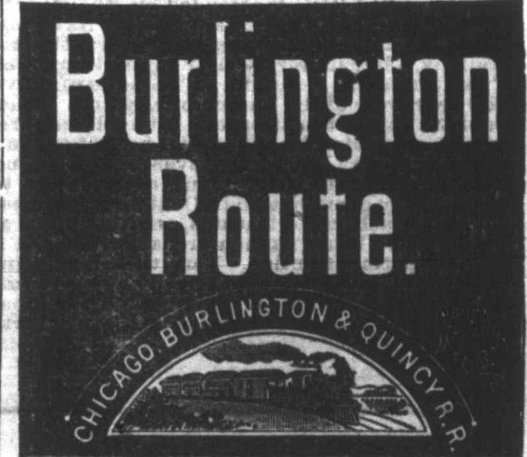
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