

LETTER No. XXI.

October 21st, 1868.

Mrs E. SWAIN, Edinburgh.

MY OWN DEAREST MOTHER,—I received your kind and loving letter some time ago, and hope you will forgive my not writing before this, as I have been travelling about a great deal, and never had an opportunity till now.

I received Mr McKie's telegraph on the 9th inst., and that pleased me very much, as it at once removed all fear of their not purchasing. I immediately gave my note for thirty days to the owner of the property, so as to avoid all chance of a bungle at the last moment; and am now anxiously waiting for the draft, which I expect will get here to-morrow or next day at farthest.

You all seem very anxious for me not to come home this winter, and seem all to think it would damage my prospects, &c. Perhaps some of you will kindly allow *me* to be the best judge of my own business and private matters, seeing that none of you know anything at all about them, consequently are unable to advise.

I suppose the specimens gave the highest satisfaction. I expect a whole package of letters from you all this week, and will then see all about it.

My birthday was on Monday: only fancy nineteen, and now in my twentieth year. It seems but yesterday that I left school, and was so proud to go into the office of J. C. F. & Co.; and here I am, three thousand miles from home, and getting on as no boy my age ever got on before. Mr Donnelly gave me a champagne and oyster supper in honour of the occasion; and all the girls beat me, and then gave me five kisses each,—that is the custom here.