

Tillipalle District of Jaffna Ceylon. May 20 1817

My dear Parents, Brothers & Sisters.

This is the fourth letter I shall have sent to some of our family since I arrived in Ceylon, but I have been much disappointed in not having received a single line from home tho' I frequently hear of the arrivals of vessels from some of the eastern ports of the U. S. &c. I cannot avoid often enquiring why this delay on the part of my friends to gratify me with a few lines at least -

But then I think you may have written & the letter has failed to reach me yet the letters of other friends have reached us from time to time -

I have however heard from home. The painful stroke of a righteous Providence in removing my beloved sister E. has reached me. I have seen the account of her death published in the Panoplist. Our sympathy is the loss, but hers I doubt not is gain - infinite gain -

While we mourn her departure from us, let us be wise & prepared to follow her into that world from whence no traveller returns, & without mention of blessedness, when her happy soul is joining with the redeemed of the Lord, saying worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power & riches & wisdom & strength & honour & glory & blessing. A few days more we shall follow her into the eternal world - O that we may be prepared to dwell with her forever. I was daily in expectation of a letter from her when the news came that she was no more - & And who of the remnant of our family may have gone before this, is unknown to me. Let us be always ready?

Since I wrote you that is in Jan'y. my health has been usually good. Nothing of particular importance has occurred to us since I wrote - Mr. & Mrs. Poor & myself with their little daughter Mary Annis enjoy a very peaceful & happy abode at Tillipalle. Our neighbours are heathens. There is not an European family within eight miles of us & only one friend out of our family besides them that with whom we can converse in English. That is a Magistrate of Dutch extraction tho' a native mother about two miles from us. He is a most valuable man eminently pious & much engaged for the temporal & spiritual good of this degraded people. We are making all the progress in the language of the country we can. -

We only begin to stir a little with the people. I long to be able to pro-
claim to them myself in their own language the wonderful love of God
for sinners in giving his dear son to die for them. At present we preach
& talk to the people thro' an interpreter. He is a native but understands
our language very well. Much of our attention is given to establish
schools & to instruct the children & youths. We often have to use much
persuasion to induce the parents to let us have their sons to educate
& often have to give them some support before they will send
to us, especially the poorer class of people. We find many entirely opposed to
sending their sons lest we should persuade them to forsake the religion
of their forefathers & embrace ours. But there are the persons with whom
the Bramin priests have much influence. I am happy to find that
their influence is not very extensive. & that many are now be-
coming anxious to have their children learn english that is their
sons, for not one will suffer a daughter to learn to read even
her own language. We have made several efforts to get the girls
to teach but in vain. They reply is. We have no custom, & if our daugh-
ters learn to read they will never get married, which among the Mal-
abars the consider to be one of the greatest evils that can befall a
family. The daughters are often betrothed to an intended husband at the
four or five & are usually married before they are ten years old. That
is in those families of good cast & possessing some property. The bargain
is made by the parents & usually the daughter has a dowry of land money
jewels or something from her father at her marriage. We hope soon to
overcome these foolish wicked notions of this people that we may
teach the women as well as the men the important truths of the
religion of Christ. Females generally will not come to our meetings &
we cannot always see them when we go to their huts. The wretched degra-
ded state of this people is enough to move the stoutest heart. No
person, who believes in the divine revelation of the scriptures, can
calmly witness their real condition. I do not acknowledge the importance
of sending the word of life by the hands of missionaries to raise them
from their assenilation to brutes to enjoy the blessings of civilized
beings if we enquire what is it that maketh us to differ from them we
say it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is owing to the rich mercy of God to us