

LETTERS

WRITTEN

by MARY POTTER

to MARY FULKER

Editor Note: Mary Fulker was a maid in the Potter household in Southsea. She had been employed as a maid of all work by Mrs Potter, but was fired by her employer for ill-temper and for "answering back". During her time in the Potter household, she had formed a strong friendship with Mary Potter. The relationship was important, for Fulker provided Potter with a companionship she was lacking within the family home. The relationship was not deemed "appropriate" by Mrs. Potter.

Fulker was instrumental in introducing Mary Potter to Father Selley. Upon leaving the Potter household, she went to work as a machinist in Spitalfields, then a centre for the weaving/textile industry. She was a parishoner of the Spiralifield parish, and had come to know Fr. Selley. When Potter finally went to London to see Selley, she stayed with Fulker in her single room Mrs. Potter was dismayed at such behaviour from her daughter, and the whole venture lead to acrimony between Mrs. Potter, Father Selley and Mary Fulker. Fulker did join the Little Company of Mary, but did not remain.

No. 1

Probable date 1875.

My Dear Mary,

Your letter was an unexpected pleasure. Knowing your dislike to writing I did not anticipate hearing from you so soon. I am so glad to hear you are having a rest and are again so happy as to be under the care of the good Father you so often spoke to me about. I daresay he welcomed the poor little lamb back.

Now what do you mean about my having something I will not tell you and that your Father would be pleased to see me? You are quite right that there is something I may someday tell you. Likewise, I had really the thought in my mind of writing to your Director and leaving to his discretion to tell you the contents, but I do not remember saying so to you, but I suppose I did make some remark as you are not a Saint and gifted with intuition.

At the present time I must keep quiet upon the matter or should really feel inclined to write to your kind Father. I may tell you however this, that Fr. Horan now knows about it and wishes it settled one way or another, and either has already or is going to lay it all before the Bishop, so it may be under discussion at the present time - therefore you must pray, for though of course we believe Divine Providence overrules everything, we must do our part and likewise you must pray that when I have an interview with the Bishop I may speak as God wishes me, but you know I am not like you, and have a dislike to talking to priests etc.

It is very possible I may soon be in London, though how it will be arranged I do not know. I have not got even a penny to post this letter. We go on the same as before in housekeeping. It saves trouble, but keeps me very short of money. I should indeed be pleased to see you, and shall try to arrange it, but however you must be first consul and transact my business for me and if you know any Confraternities of prayer etc. please ask for prayers in honour of the Maternal Heart of Mary. I have not got any stamps to write myself.

I sent you a book you liked today. It is not mine, but keep it as long as you like. If I sent you some M. St. writing, please take care of it and send it back as soon as you have read it, or if you would like to show it to anyone else you could do so. I have to correct, perhaps write it all over again, perhaps shall not have time till the holidays, but it might interest you. Father Corbett has part and likes it.

I am sorry if there is any good work not succeeding as it might, from misdirection, but you know if it is a work of God it will stand. Perhaps He is marking it with His Seal, the Cross.

Goodbye, perhaps we may soon have a happy meeting. Our friendship was crossed, but I do not think forever. You wound yourself strangely round my heart. You may perhaps someday know how much you were and are loved by yours in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.M.

No.2
33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

My dear Mary,

I thank you for so soon and so kindly answering my letter, and so a little piece of curiosity was disappointed at not hearing all the news. Very well, I must try.

First, my brother is very well. My sister, as you anticipated, very delicate. She does very well regards housekeeping considering she was never used, but is not fit for doing much herself. They are a funny couple, one of their idiosyncracies being that it is essential to their happiness to sit on one chair. Poor Mama watches their entry into her room with dread, trembling for the springs of her chair. Regarding the number of chairs they have broken (ours not being the strongest you can find) I should really be afraid to say. Mama's old fashioned ideas quite put to the rout you may imagine. "Your Papa and I, Mary, never took any notice of one another in company."

Just like my brother, was it not, to let the cat out of the bag at the hotel. Coming down to breakfast the first morning after the wedding he said, " I will take a chop, Mademoiselle, I beg her pardon, Madame, will take eggs." The wedding was the grandest seen for some time at Portsea. Fr. Corbett rode home in the same carriage with the bride and bridegroom, my brother rather amused at a voice from the crowd, "She's gone and done it now." Breakfast was at the school - Champagne etc. Wedding supper at our house after the honeymoon, some company. I made Matrimony Pudding, which Fr. Horan in his dry way opined he and Fr. Corbett better not touch.

Madame, the first week of her marriage, set out early to hear Mass (Feast of the Guardian Angels) having previously woke my brother at some unheard of hour, to know the time as she wanted to hear the "Mass of the Angels." He came and told me next day. I fancy he was rather mystified - first time he heard of such a Mass. Well, returning home she goes to her own house saying, "No, I won't go to Mrs. Potter this morning, I may be late for Mrs. Marsh's." Walks some distance, then suddenly recollecting, stops all of a sudden and exclaims to the surprise of some passers-by, "Dear me, how stupid I am," and retraces her steps. Did you ever hear of such a thing?

Fr. Corbett I must tell you, is now military Chaplain at Gosport, whither his penitents, as you may imagine, follow him. Monsignor leaves shortly, so we have great changes. Now have I satisfied you, or am I to receive another reproof when you have answered this, which I hope you will, for though you do not think it, you are particularly dear, and have a special place in the heart of yours lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.

I am so glad to hear you are better. Do try to keep so and don't think you are going to heaven without having done your work. Considering what a long letter I have written I shall expect equally long prayers.

You see I always go back to the same thing. I am like the foreigner trying to learn our language and could only think or returned to the same thing. For instance - Mr.). . do you think, the foreigner interrupts, do you think, do I think, dost thou think, do we think, do you think, do they think. I was going to say - continues the friend - Ah, retorts the indefatigable, thou wast going to say, he was going to

say, we were going to say, ye or you were going to say, they were going to say etc. But seriously I daresay you have more time than I now, so there's a good girl, pray every day this month of May. I shall be glad to tell you some day what for. I have so much to do, I gave up two private pupils yesterday, though I want to get all the money I can.

I feel sure you do not think of Mama's not shaking hands with you. You know we are all liable to momentary feelings. She was so sorry afterwards, as for myself, I would rather someone had given me a blow. If she knew I was writing she would send some message. Goodbye.

Thank you very much for the flowers, please put some more when you write again.

No. 3

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea

June 1876

My dear Mary,

Thank you for the books and MSS. Received this morning. Please pocket your pride and these enclosed stamps and then say a Hail Mary whilst I make a proposition to you.

I hope within a month or two to have this house as my own to open a school on a larger scale than I can at present, and with others to live together under a certain rule, the principal of which will be to honour the Maternal Heart of Our Lady, to work, pray and suffer in union with It and to assist the dying. I hope likewise that I may have a chapel in the house.

I saw the Bishop who told me I might induce others to join me in devotion to the dying, kindly mentioned the prayers we might use, we might live under a certain rule, and see him again. He, at first, refused to let me have Mass, said he had not the power, that it must be a public Oratory if so, and the demand must come from Fr. Horan.

I am praying now that we may have this house, that my mother, sister and brother may move, which at present they have no intention of. Then that Fr. Horan may accept my offer of either the ground floor or drawing room for a Chapel, and that all the necessary arrangements may be concluded by the time Monsignor leaves, which I understand is July.

Do you think this is too bold a prayer to join me in? You need not. I have great hopes that Our Lord will show how He loves us to honour the Heart of His Mother by Himself joining from the very first those who are united together to love and to imitate it, but of course, He expects that we should pray earnestly for so great a blessing.

To increase your faith I will tell you a circumstance. Fr. Horan said he must have proof of what I told him - that God had a special work for me to do. I told him if he wanted a miracle I would pray for it. One day, speaking about his want of money for the new Church, something struck me, does he want me to pray for that, and will he take it as proof. It so happened I was, in obedience to the Bishop, praying ever since Lent for the new Church, for a benefactor. I thought I would ask Fr. Horan if the benefactor came would he take that as proof? Imagine what I felt when my brother came in a week or two since. "Mary, I have news that will make you more glad than any you have ever heard in your life, someone has given such a large sum of money (we do not know how much now, 4 figures it is) that the church is to be begun in a few months."

Sufficient of that - to return to my proposition, I cannot explain everything. You see the good work to be done, Chapel and all - would you like to join? If you would write me a word, likewise what money you have. (How stupid of me to put it that way.)

I mean have you enough money to live on for a month or two in the meantime, because if not, you must not mind taking some from me in the meantime quietly, and if your Director thought well, make a Retreat in the Convent, because you will know yourself, we shall all require great grace at the commencement of such a work as this. You also know that you have the disposition to be a Saint, if under the influence of grace and - what shall I say - the disposition of being a devil if not.

Whether you join me or not, I shall count upon your prayers and may rely you will never be forgotten by yours lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Mary Potter, S.J.M.

The Bishop likewise said we might visit cases pointed out and he gave his blessing to my school. I may rely that you will consider this confidential. After opposition that would have crushed any work not from God, the first real encouragement I had was from Fr. Corbett. The thought dates years back. Be sure and pray earnestly. I feel assured the devil will do his best to hinder my going to London and I shall have particular pleasure in defeating his snares. Do you pray likewise that if I get there I may not be a "noodle." Do not forget this favourite month of the Precious Blood.

Understand distinctly - if you come, you come on an equality the same as all the others. We are simply poor women devoting ourselves to a good work, but still, like poor women we must earn our living. It was your favourite St. Paul put that into my mind. The school is not part of the idea, it is our means of living. In another town we might have something different to do, but it so happens schools are sadly wanted for the middle classes here. We shall have no fine lady ways. We must have our meals in the kitchen. You will understand you will not come any different from a grand lady, if she wished to join us. We shall be all equal and as regards you slaving away at all kinds of things you have not the strength for, I should think it really wrong of you. As there may be 2 or 3 of us to begin with, we shall have to be employed a good deal in school. I should pray Our Lady send some strong girl you would train. We should look to you to provide some dinner, and make visits to the chapel etc. and thoroughly rest yourself for whatever is in store for you.

(Mary Fulker had been a Domestic in Mrs. Potter's house and had been dismissed by her. The Servant of God had always had a great compassion and affection for her. Mary Fulker entered the Little Company of Mary at Hyson Green but did not persevere, though until her death she cherished the greatest devotion and veneration for the Servant of God.

No. 4
33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

My dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter. I know you do not like writing therefore value it the more, but I am really grieved to think you work so hard. The only thing I can do is to pray the Holy Angels to help you, as I am sure they would if we asked them, and there would be no presumption in expecting extra help so to speak, above what is natural if we do our part, as you certainly do. I shall often think of you and do beg you will offer for my intention every day the busiest hour you have. I should like to know which hour it is.

As to how the "work" is progressing, your own dear little self has forwarded it wonderfully and may God Bless you for it. What I want to do at present is to go again to London and see Father Selle. He expressed a wish to see me, but obstacles were raised at home directly I mentioned it, so you must offer something to overcome them.

Did I tell you a funny mistake I made? Father Selle wrote me that some pious children of his were going to Holy Communion at his Mass, which he would likewise offer for my intention. Now, not being accustomed to such a fatherly way of expression, I thought he meant little children, and blessing the little things in my heart, I thought, what can I do for them? Going into your Mama's shop she showed me a sheet of little pictures (painted ones) which seemed to me just suited to the little children. I do not know how many dozen there were, but I bought them all (that is, they are not paid for yet) but I brought them away, took pains to cut them all out and sent them for the little children. The most amusing part is that though Father Selle wrote "Did I think he meant little children?" He says he shall give one to each though they are adults. Now, the picture I have in my mind of Father Selle gravely dealing out my little pictures, one a piece, to his penitents so tickles my fancy that it amuses me whenever I think of it.

I forgot to thank you for your other letter with the flowers. I was so pleased with your kind thought and as for the flowers they were just what I was wishing for, for Sunday evening. Before I finish, I want to tell you a little anecdote that came into my mind in connection with you.

There was at the convent where I was, a very humble sister who rose to be Mother whilst I was there. I heard her speaking one day, of her

vocation and she said what seems rather strange, that she had prayed that a vocation to the religious life might be given her and afterwards it was. We are accustomed to look upon such a vocation as a pure gift from God to whom He will, but it is evident it can be had by prayer.

Pray earnestly for me for I have a great need. Goodbye dear. Is it not a remarkable thing. People are wondering at it. Monsignor is sold up, the china he valued so, and all. He is in apartments in a back street in Portsmouth. I called the other day. You would hardly credit the change. There was a plate on the door - "Mrs. Green, Dressmaker," and the place - Oh, dear me, and he was such a gentleman, I mean different to the other Priests, you could hardly imagine him shifting like them.

Yours in J. & M.

Mary, S.J.M.

No.5

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

My dear Mary,

I was glad to receive your nice letter this morning. You are wise to think and pray before making a decision. Whatever it is, it will sure to be right as you leave it to your good Director, but in the meantime, you must have some money. We must see about it. I have good hopes, through dear St. Joseph, that I shall have this house. In fact, I may say that the one great obstacle in the way is my mother. As regards my brother and sister, they will move if I can show my brother on paper that I can, without great risk, take the house. That is a great point gained, but there is the greatest yet, my mother's consent to our separation. That will almost require a miracle, but it occurred to me to pray to St. Aloysius who used such earnest means to obtain his father's consent to his vocation, and that by thanking God for the grace He gave St. Aloysius, I might so speak, make use of his penances etc. His Feast occurs next week. Please join in the

prayers. Until her consent is gained, I can take no step.

I hope you are taking care of yourself. Please excuse this hasty note, have so much to do. Saw your Mama this morning, she is not very well and seems rather depressed.

Goodbye dear Mary, you must pray very earnestly for me, you have no ideas what difficulties I have, and have - you are well aware - not the advantage you have, as regards a Director. It came into my mind this week to choose Fr. Corbett and go across to Gosport, as his penitents do. May God direct me. How grateful I am to Fr. Selle and thankful to you for taking me to him.

Yours lovingly in J. & M.

Mary, S.J.M.

NO.6

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

1 August 1876

My dear Mary,

I was very pleased to receive your letter this morning, will deliver your message. If I had known you wanted to see me particularly I would have arranged you should. Thank you so much for your prayers. It was very good of you. I can assure you I needed prayer and yours were heard. I quite knew someone prayed for me on Sunday. I thought it might be Father Selle or my brother Geordie, but I attribute it now to you.

Am much better , but that journey! I was half a mind to get out and stop somewhere for the night, but had no money to pay, mind and body in pain, but however, I was glad when I got home to be able to keep it all to myself. I want to give God all the honour and glory I can

and did not want to come home sighing and dying. I daresay you understand what I mean, and so - ill though I was in the train - I was able to keep up when I got home. My money just lasted me, paid cabby, and entered the house without a penny.

Your Mother has been very ill. She is better now. Why do you not come and see her? There are plenty of excursions. If you do not mind my hinting I think you would make her so happy if you were to spend a week or two home in a different spirit. I do not want to hurt you but I think it as well to tell you - she once said to me you were only trouble she had .

Write to me soon again. I did not know till a few days since, that August is devoted to the "Heart of Mary." That is why I hurried this letter, that you might say the Litany or do some devotion every day during the month with a special intention for your Father, and your loving friend in Jesus and Mary,

Mary.

You will excuse me writing shortly. I feel now that I am taking time away from something I have to do for Fr. Selle, but be sure and write. I like to hear so from you, poor little one who I hope were in the Mind and Heart of Jesus dying on the Cross and loved and there embraced with a special love, not given to all, a love given alone to those who watch with Mary on Calvary.

Mary, S.J.M.

No. 7

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

11 August 1876

Dear Mary,

I enclose a letter for you from Father Selle. Received yours last night, am not at all sure about praying for money for you. You know you

asked me before. I will leave the matter in Our Lady's Hands. If it is good for, or rather if you will make good use of it, She will certainly give it, if you pray well for it.

I enclose an old ticket, I have lost the prayer. The Holy Father wished us to join. There is no money required. Would you join and then copy the prayer for me.

Goodbye and God Bless dear, and make you happy here as well as hereafter is the prayer of your loving friend in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.J.M.

No.8

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea

9 September 1876

My Dear Mary,

Thanks for the note. Could you manage to meet a young girl at London Bridge Station? She will leave by the 5 minutes past 11 train, so arrive I think, a little before 2. I will pay you what you lose by staying from work. She may want to be with someone for a day or two. If so, perhaps you can accommodate her? It has occurred to me that it would be a good thing if you could, in the course of time, keep a little house and let it. However, you would want a good bit of money to furnish it. In the meantime I may often want to send a young girl to some safe place to make a Retreat or stay a day or two. Shall be glad if you can accommodate.

I hope you are not overworking yourself at your machine. Your health being so delicate would be another reason why such a scheme as keeping house to let would be good for you, rather than being obliged to go out. If you cannot meet Mary Hanlon, she will try and find her way to Fr. Selle. He may send her to you, so please stay in on Monday evening.

I have put some stamps in the envelope. I have no more at present. Let me know what I shall pay you, likewise do not let Mary Hanlon go to her situation without any money. I will pay you if she cannot, and she will repay me when she can.

Goodbye dear Mary. Shall always be glad to have a letter from you.

Your loving friend in the Sacred Suffering Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Mary, S.M.

I want you some day to make a little pilgrimage for me to "Our Lady of La Salette," Melior Street. I have heard of great graces being obtained there. It was put in the paper, people who cannot go to the real place. I should think God would look to the intention. Monday next, September 11th.

No. 9

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

12 September 1876

My Dear Mary,

I have sent you two books, thinking you would be sure to sell another. I think the good sisters you are with would take one. I enclose a letter from a young girl who asked to write to you.

How is it you have not been to Fr. Selle? If you do not go before Saturday you cannot see him for some time. He goes on Saturday to France.

I have been afraid you have been ill, knowing this time of year is trying to constitutions like yours. Write and let me know if so. We must all expect to suffer something this month, the month of Our Lady's sufferings. Offer up some of them for her Little Company.

Did I tell you I was expecting to hear from Rome? Through the kindness of a Jesuit Father who has been years in Rome and whom I formerly knew (he was the Director of the convent where I was) I hope the Holy Father has already received a letter of mine. It will be a glad day for me when I receive an answer, but they are always prudently slow in Rome. If you had seen Fr. Selle and been allowed to attend yesterday's meeting you might have heard the various crosses that have already beset this "Little Society of Mary". We must look at it in the light our Father Director put it. He wrote to me months ago, he rejoiced at them for he never yet had seen the work of God without them.

Goodbye dear child. Please sometimes make a little intention in your prayers of supplying some that I am obliged to omit.

I have to make little compacts with God (before my works, I have so much to do) that I wish every breath I draw, every beating of my heart may be acts of love. The will of God sweetens everything so that when He wishes us to work we must wish it, when He desires us to suffer, when He calls us to speak to Him we must answer gladly, Adsum est, - Lord, we are here.

Yours lovingly in the Sacred Suffering Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Mary,

No.10

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

My Dear Mary,

Thank you very much for your kindness to Mary Hanlon. She tells me you have been so good to her. I hope you are not overworking yourself. I am sadly afraid of that machine for you.

If Mary is with you, please tell her how glad I was to receive her letter

and hear from it everything had gone on satisfactorily. I do not write to her, not knowing if she is with you.

My principal object in writing is as usual to get some prayers. I am sure the object is after your own heart. It is Fr. Selle's retreat, which I suppose you know he departs for France tomorrow to make, and it seem to me, we his children, are bound to pray earnestly that he may have a special blessing from God during it. We take up time he might spend with God, (you have specially done so by bringing me and my affairs to him) so now we will unite to beg a very peaceful happy time for him with God alone in solitude and that some special grace may there be given him.

If you can see Agnes Smith please tell her how much I wish her to do this, and likewise to tell any others she knows who would do this, and offer up one special Communion for this intention.

Sunday, dear Mary, is I know your special Feast. I shall think of you on that day. Please give the enclosed to Mary Hanlon and ask her to send them to any friends she knows. She may get some Orders from Ireland. If she is not with you make use of them yourself. Say a little prayer that the reviewers may not cut up the little work. It promises to pay at present.

Goodbye dear Mary, your loving friend in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.M.

Your Mama has been ill again and looks so delicate, though I think getting round again.

No.11

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea

10 October 1876

My Dear Mary,

If you knew all I have had to do these last few weeks you would readily forgive me not answering sooner. I thought it better to have it altered for you. Are you in immediate want or would a week or two do?

Am so sorry to hear of you being so poorly. I wish you to make a novena to Ven. De Montfort that you might be made better, if it would be better for you. I will tell you a little secret I have told no one. You know the weak stomach I used to have. Well, I thought it would be so nice to be able to be more like poor people who are obliged to eat anything. I happened to read in Ven de Montfort's life how someone was cured, who could not take food, and able afterwards to take anything, so I thought I would try. I made my novena and now take everything that comes, you would be surprised. Ven. De Montfort wrote "True Devotion." Please ask Agnes Smith to send it back to me, I only borrowed it. You may take another look if you like, before it comes back.

Did you see last week's "Universe" My brother Henry's letter was quite a mistake. I was really frightened what would the Cardinal say. I never said anything of the kind. Suppose the Cardinal writes denying. Do pray St. Edward, Cardinal's Patron, and his Guardian Angel and the Angels of the Diocese and the Souls in Purgatory. I like to go everywhere for a prayer as you know, so go))) I had got as far as this when another extraordinary occurrence is brought to my notice. What can it all mean? Please get "Catholic Times" and "Universe" and when you have read send to me. "I have devoted my labour to the cause of persecuted priests in Germany." Who could have said such a thing? If the Holy Angels could put into people's minds what was not true, I should say they were answering my prayer to get the "Path" distributed, by causing these extraordinary statements to be made. I must write and contradict this last. It will be as good as an advertisement or better, but it looks strange.

Yours lovingly in J. & M.

Mary, S.M.

I thought the little tie would be becoming to you. I can almost fancy your smile as you say, "Much she knows about what is becoming."

No.12
33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

11 October 1876.

My Dear Mary,

I have important business for you to do. Will you please see Fr. Selley and tell him that a lady will come to see him on Saturday. The ostensible reason for her visit will be more to bring Josephine (Miss McKay) and ask his advice as to whether it is the duty of the poor girl to stay as a servant to endeavour to help her mother, or whether she ought to follow the advice of her Aunt and go to another Aunt, who is a Rev. Mother in America, to be instructed in her religious duties. The poor girl has been so grieved not knowing what was her duty, please tell Fr. Selley that I am anxious for him to meet this lady.

She is the widow of Captain Sughrue. When a young girl she wished to be a nun, but her friends brought her away, insisting she must see the world. Years after she went back to her convent with the tale of her sorrows such as are rarely heard of. Husband dead, buried at sea, one child after another until I think the 13th and she was left with but a grandchild and she was finally separated from her. When the Rev. Mother heard, "Did I not tell you," she said, "your place was here?" Mrs. Sughre is a beautiful character.

She seems one of those who have always been good and respected everywhere and has most influential friends.

I particularly want her to be under Fr. Selley's direction. Will you please tell him I have not mentioned a certain matter to her at all. I do not think it prudent. I simply told her that I felt sure that if she told her trials to Fr. Selley, I felt sure she would come away comforted. She is so full of charity and ready to do any act of kindness that I think she is more (going?) up about the young girl than anything else. She wrote to me this morning. "Thanks also for telling me your thoughts concerning myself. I only wish Almighty God in His Mercy would settle me in some holy house. I have made remarks to a dear kind friend whom I have and she always says, "No, you are wanted in the world," but God knows best. I place myself

entirely in His Hands and my dear Mother's, and I pray for grace to do my God's Will in all things. I rest upon them etc.

Please dear Mary, tell Fr. Selley as this was nothing to do with me, I thought there was no disobedience in sending this message. I had written to the lady before I received his last letter.

I should so like to have replied to his last letter but did not know I might. For you I ask, if you have any charity in you, pray for Fr. Selley and pray for me. It is simply not natural the griefs one upon another that accumulate. One of my great griefs is that I bring my own cross upon others too. May the Precious Blood strengthen us to suffer more.

Yours lovingly in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.M.

I wrote this before receiving yours tonight.

No.13

11 October.

My Dear Mary,

I have just received your letter. Please give the following message to Fr. Selley:

" M. Fulker m'a dit que vous avez attendu une letter de moi. Si je puis ecrire une letter plus a St. Anne's je voudrais bien et il ma donnerait beaucoup de plaisir, mais si je n'ai pas permission de faire cela il faut somettre et offrir le croix comme tous les autres. Ce que vous avez souffrir me fait souffrir aussi, mais les ames souffrantes en Purgatoire vous aiment beaucoup, parce-que par vos souffrances j'espere que vous mis en Purgatoire un grandes nombres des ames maurantes et elles vous appellent leur sauveur.

Je n'ai pas aucune consolation a vous dire, je voudrais bien avoir, mais je prie Marie vous consoler elle-meme j'espere qu'elle le fera. Je

suis que l'obeissance que vous avez pratiquer maintenant donne a elle grande plaisir, comme il vous rende comme Jesus obeissante a la mort.

Pardonez-moi, O mon Pere, je ne sais pas quoi dire a vous manitenant comme vous n'etes-pas permis me diriger. Je ne comprends pas assez votre letter de savoir ce que je suis permis a faire et ce que je ne suis pas permis a faire. Il faut attendre. En temps Dieu montrera. Donnez moi votre benediction. J'ai ecrie en Francais parceque je ne sais pas si vous m'aimeriez vous envoyer un message par M. F. mais il est plus difficile dire ce que je voudrais, peut-etre je puis ecrire un fois plus a St. Anne's."

Will you likewise try and make out the enclosed letter and read it to Fr. Selley. They are so difficult to read. Please return to me within a week. I had already written to you when I received your letter this evening. It was not, of course, from want of time I did not write. I could always make time to write to Fr. Selley.

I have not received all Fr. Selley's letters and many other letters I expect I did not receive. It might please Fr. Selley to know that though he suffers (I might perhaps say because he suffers) he sheds happiness around. He has almost sent that good child Helena to heaven already, he has made her so happy. Her mother says there has been a miracle worked in her regard too. Helena writes to me , she and Agnes wish their friend down here was with them to be as happy as they are. I am so glad you told me of Fr. Selley's Feast. I should so have liked to have gone and bought some little memento - must not go to Portsea to buy. Would you give him the enclosed and likewise buy a blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception and tell him I wish him a very happy Feast and God for ever bless him.

I have received the new edition of the "Path." Had an order for America, and 12 to Glasgow where it is much liked. One officer's lady writing, "your invaluable work." Another person, learned too, after deal of criticism wrote, "on the whole I like the book especially that » , in that and in other parts there is a dewy freshness about the book like that of early morning, which brightens and strengthens one." Another - "your dear little book which I value so much." I am writing this as I thought it might please Fr. Selley, and I would be so glad to do that, but must finish or shall lose post.

Yours very affectionately in J. & M.,

Mary, S. M.

When I wrote the smaller piece of MSS. I used the word Order. When the Bishop (Danell) told me not to use the word Order, I was told by Fr. Selley to use the word Little Society. I should prefer to call it the Little Company of Mary's Own.

No.14

Please let Fr. Selley see this letter and return it to me by return of post. I think probably I sent him a wrong letter before and this was the one I had let him see. I have a letter written to you but never mind it now. It is upstairs.

Goodbye dear, and God bless you. Pray for those in grief, it is a great act of charity.

Pray for yours lovingly in Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S. M.

Dear Mary,

If ever you prayed in your life, go now like a good girl and tell Our Lord you won't leave Him until He grants your request that I may come up at once, if it be His Will. Go to Holy Communion. When you show Fr. Selley the enclosed ask him from me to take off from me any commands he prudently laid upon me. I know he would wish it now, but I must have it from himself. Send me word by return. I may have to act and should be uncomfortable without leave. Get his blessing for me and some earnest prayers. I want to see the Cardinal myself. I have just received such a threatening letter from someone. What will come next I know not. Please tell Fr. Selley I received a letter today from Ireland saying " the whole affair is so strange that I suspend my judgement."

No. 15

25 October 1876.

My Dear Mary,

Many thanks. You are quite a head consul. I write a few hasty lines to tell you a piece of good news. It is quite settled we leave Southsea. We may not be able to give up the house till March, but if I heard of any suitable engagement I might, I think, be allowed to stay at my brother Henry's until the others could leave. I don't know about that, but still I shall listen about, and do you ask Fr. Selley. It will not do to try for more pupils here now, and yet I must be doing something.

I could not get my mother's consent to go to London, though she did not absolutely forbid it, but I had better not talk about forbidding, or I shall make you cross. I hardly think you believe obedience is a virtue at all. You are like the pagans - think it a degradation (I don't quite mean that) and so it is from their point of view, as I should think a philosopher's point of view would be, that it was a reasonable thing as a preservation of order. But in a Christian point of view it must be one of the most glorious things we can do - to obey, that is to say, with a good motive, which I know I have been very far from always having. Now, there is a lecture delivered on the water to you. Don't rile up about it.

To return to my usual subject, tomorrow being the Feast of St. Teresa, ergo I want a special prayer in her honour. You might, if you think he would care for it, give Fr. Selley the enclosed. I cut off a little piece that really touched, not the tomb, but the heart of St. Teresa.

Yours with much love,

Mary, S.M.

My time lately seems taken up with writing, denying extraordinary statements. I had to put by a new book I had begun. Did you see my supposed appeal on behalf of the persecuted priests? I begin to think it must be a trick of the devil, causing such confusion to hinder me writing. I have upwards of 30s. if Fr. Selley wants to pay the binder. Please tell him, save me writing another note now.

Floating Bridge so excuse going to oblige.

(Ed. Note: Floating Bridge is a card game)

No.16

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

26 October 1876

My Dear Mary,

I ran out after school to get some money from a lady, not having the sum Fr. Selley had asked for to pay binder, but as it did not make up the exact sum, I shall go tonight somewhere else, though I think he would be displeased with you, if he knew you had spoken about it. I did not trouble about it, thinking Washbourne's would do. Perhaps you did not refer to the money for books however. I enclose a few stamps.

It will be better in future if you will kindly take in any young girls, to make it a matter of business. I will arrange, if you like, beforehand. Make out a little tariff as it were, of charges. You were very kind to them I know. You did quite right to tell me.

Yours Mary, S.M.

It is rather strange, I have forgotten about P. card to you. I do not know how it could contradict what I wrote to Fr. Selley. However, I am very glad about the prefaces. They will do to canvas both books with. I was thinking this week how useful they would be. I wish I could send more but have not a penny left now. Had not enough to pay Post Office Order for F.S. Owe 2d at the P. Office. I will however send you a couple of books. You may be able to sell them to some friend, as you might a lottery ticket and that would be 2s. more.

No.17

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.
16 November 1876.

My Dear Mary,

I did not write to tell you of your brother's recovery as they told me you had been informed. Your poor mother is now laid up. Agatha however, is I believe at home for good. Are you better now? I hear Fr. Selley is.

I have had a threaten of bronchitis and upon that, what I expect I shall some day die of, haemorrhage. Better now. We have a baby in the house - little Winifred Marie Pauline Marguerite Potter - a very fine child. Both doing well.

If you see Agnes, will you tell her Bridget is coming up to London to remain. Was it not strange the other day, a young girl named Mary Bray went to St. Anne's to see Fr. Selley, but he was not in, and she writes to me. She saw another kind Father who enquired kindly after me. Who it was I know not, or how he knew she was connected with me. If you happen to be speaking to Fr. Selley at any time (don't go on purpose) would you ask him if it costs much to have a picture for frontispiece. I should like to have one of Our Lady to the "Path" The one over my altar would do well if it could be had smaller, but there is a remarkable picture I should like to show you. If ever you see one of the kind please buy it and give it to Fr. Selley, for I particularly want him to see it.

It was sent to me by a stranger from abroad, saying that the Holy Father was especially pleased with the devotion and always carried one of these pictures in his breviary. It is Our Lady holding towards us a Remonstrance, underneath is written Mater Jesu Sacramentati, ora pro nobis. It happens to be a coincidence that years ago I told the Novice Mistress at the Convent, I could love Our Lady under that title, might I use it. But I never saw it till the other day that picture was sent.

Did you ever make that pilgrimage to Our Lady of La Salette? Do, there's a good girl. Don't you know Melior Street, somewhere between London Bridge and Bermondsey? I sent you some stamps for the omnibus. I want to ask you three things. It will be for the good of your Father and I think you would do a great deal for him. Ask Our

Lady to remove the hindrances in the way of her work, and in my own humble opinion, perhaps the greatest is myself. If Our Lord would accept my life and if it were mine to give (which it is not since it belongs to Our Lady) I would willingly die, and it really seems to me the best thing I could do. If I had leave I would pray for it, always supposing it was really the best thing, for it would be very selfish not to want to suffer more, but it is not that.

Don't forget me next Wednesday, St. Cecilia, my birthday. I have suffered so on that day I almost dread it. The old enemy made a terrible attack upon me last year.

Our Baby was christened Wednesday. I held it in proxy. It being a very cross baby, I was afraid it would disgrace me in the Church with its remarkable wailing. That Fr. Connolly would think I did not know how to hold it, but to my agreeable surprise it was very good. When I came home, it appeared I ought to have pinched it to make it cry, there being some old superstition of its being a bad sign when a baby does not cry at being baptised. I showed my displeasure, it appears by spitting out the salt
Goodbye dear, Yours affectionately,

Mary, S.M.

No. 19

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

My Dear Mary,

I must write a few lines to tell you I managed , thanks to your good prayers, pretty well. I gave good Fr. Selley's letter to the Bishop. I likewise wrote down what I had to say (just the heads) as he told me. I wish you, please, to thank him for me very gratefully. I can do nothing in return but beg Our Lady to reward him, which I feel she will do.

I thank you too, dear, very much. You were both very kind to be so

interested in a matter that you know nothing about. Do take care of yourself. You are worth a good deal more than you think. There now, shall I increase your "infernial pride" (your own words). But you know what I mean.

Our soul is of more value to Our Lady than the whole world and I want you to belong wholly to her. It seems to me that after Himself, even God cannot give her anything Mary values more than us. I hope you will read "True Devotion" more than once. But it could all be put into a few words, and that is, to make an offering of yourself to Our Lady as Our Lord did, body and soul, and depend entirely upon her. You will find the Act of Consecration at the end. I would not of course mean to do it without the advice of your Director, only you might not trouble about making it, thinking you were already a "Child of Mary", but you will find, if you read, it is a far more solemn act.

I began this the night I came home (Monday). I saw Fr. Horan last night but he wishes to make quite sure that my account of my interview with the Bishop is correct. He told me he thought as I had kept it quiet for so long, I might keep quiet a few days longer and I might pray during the time. Do pray still as earnestly as you have done, because it is probable the Bishop may not be quite as explicit in writing as in speaking and cause another hitch in the way. When you see Fr. Selley would you ask him to pray still, to continue praying until I write and thank him, which I hope to do before Whitsuntide is over. May Our Lady grant him the dearest wish of his heart, he is one of her own.

Goodbye dear. I am ashamed to send this scribble, but please excuse and believe me as ever yours lovingly in Jesus and Mary,
Mary, S.J.M.

I sent you a circular of my brother Henry's. Whatever is wanted has to be written for - clothes, food, wine etc. at wholesale prices. Sample sent if wanted.

Mrs. Fulker I saw last night, glad to hear about you and told her how much better you looked. Think your brother was married this morning.

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

My dear Mary,

Father Selley is very ill, so ill he cannot even read letters. An important business letter of one of my brothers, after many days was answered by a gentleman.

I write in haste that you may ask all his children to make a Novena in honour of the Maternal Heart of Our Lady, this being her month, we must beg her to cure him. Ask likewise a prayer in honour of the Ven. de Montfort who I believe, is one of his patrons, and we should always pray in honour of people's patrons Saints when we have a favour to ask for them. To make a Novena there should be a special Communion.

God bless you dear. Very lovingly in the Precious Blood of Jesus,

Mary, S.J.M.

No.21

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea

19 November 1876.

My Dear Mary,

Thank you very much for your kind comforting letter. I could hardly think it was your own. I am smiling now to myself at the thought of your so far coming out of your shell , to write such a letter and wondered if Fr. Selley had told you.

I was not in the least disappointed at the letter he sent me. The only message I have about it is, that I should very much like it (The Path) translated into French - all expenses will be paid, send the bill home -

and presented to the Holy Father. I do not wish another edition brought out without the Imprimatur, now that it has been applied for, and though not refused, it has not been given. The Secretary of the Cardinal told my brother, before the Cardinal left, he would try and get it before. I will not have even the appearance of acting in opposition to lawful authority, therefore I will not publish any more books without permission.

If I had a Director I should, of course, leave the matter in his hands and not use such a word as will not, but not having one, I must act myself. I have not spoken confidentially to any of the Mission Fathers. I just simply received the Sacrament. What is the use of troubling Priests who are staying here but a time. The good old Franciscan monk at Gosport, I might have spoken to, if he had been going to stay. He almost invited confidence by asking me, "Did I know if I had ever committed a mortal sin" and being kindness itself. It must be God's Will that I am to have no Director and though it is a dangerous and painful state to be in, I do not see how it is to be helped. But it may not be for long.

Pray for a happy death for me, dear. I really think it will be a prayer according to the Heart of God. Those who care for me, will I hope, not let me be in Purgatory long. Be sure of the earnest prayer I shall make for you when I Am where I shall have a greater power of prayer than I have now. You will feel the "touch" from God Himself. You will not resist but throw yourself as ardently as your favourite Saint Paul, into the work, the glorious vocation God will give you.

You wrote you would not like anyone to hurt a hair of your Father's head. Supposing you were told he was condemned, that he would be lost. Your grief would be but a slight resemblance of the grief Our Lord felt at the sight of one lost soul. Now imagine that by a little exertion, prayer, suffering etc., you might save him from the sentence, would you do it? Draw from this what Our Lord asks you to do for those He loves, and the desire He has to find unselfish souls who will devote themselves to work for Him, the way He wishes, which is not always the way they wish themselves.

Goodbye and God bless you now and forever, pray yours lovingly in the Precious Blood of Jesus and the Sweet Heart of His Mother,

Mary, S.M.

If you went to the church of La Salette you have been praying for me whilst I was writing to you. Will you tell Fr. Selley how from my heart I thank him again for all his unselfish labour on behalf of God and Our Lady. Beg his blessing and ask him to offer Mass for me please, on the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple, in thanksgiving for all God's Love and Mercy to me. If God could be thanked as I wish.

No. 22

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

7 December 1876.

My Dear Mary,

Just a line to wish you a happy Feast and ask you to accept what I know you will value, Monsignor Virtue's Breviary. He gave it me one Feast of Our Lady, and I can assure you I make a sacrifice in giving it, pictures and all, just as he gave it me, but I know that like myself you valued what a Priest had used even.

I hope you are well now. I am, but - stupid-like - whilst talking to someone, took up the kettle with my left hand and poured it over my right. I only was amused about thinking it was a nice bit of Purgatory beforehand, (I know a sister at the convent who jokingly said, on account of having both her hands burnt, said when she got to Purgatory she should stand with her hands out) but it does not appear to be a joke, for it has gone right up my arm. I have had to put by my writing, but wanted to send the little soul I love a few lines with the book, and sound my own praises, but then sacrifice is the very essence of all good on earth, so mind you make the sacrifice next time you have a pain and let me have the benefit of it. You told me you offer them for the Holy Souls, well let me take the place of the Holy Souls for once, in a way.

Goodbye dear. Yours lovingly in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Mary, S.M.

I thought you might know a little baby, to give these socks to.

No. 23

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

15 December 1876.

Feast of the Expectation.

My poor child Mary,

Your letter has gone to my heart. What a world of sorrows we live in. I wish I could say something to comfort you in return for your ready sympathy with me. I felt I must write a few lines though I have much upon my hands just now.

You know dear, you would set those who loved you , almost against you, would you not? I am sure you feel that yourself, but I am quite sure likewise that in the present case , you must have misunderstood Fr. Selley. He may have purposely crossed you, or God may have permitted Him to act unintentionally, as an experienced Jesuit Father would act intentionally. You must not mind my giving you my opinion, but it seems to me that anyone who understood you, would say, that either you must mortify yourself, or bear being mortified by others, if you are ever to be what Jesus expects of you. I am not at all comparing Fr. Selley's mode of treating the soul with the Jesuit mode. I prefer his simple mode myself, but I can assure (you) he has a little bit of the Jesuit in him too, and may have been purposely contradicting you.

I know you must indeed be suffering. Please God I get to Heaven, I will write as I wrote to you, pray. I do not know how it is, but I feel I must wait, and that the time has not come for you. I do not feel inclined to pray very much for you now, but now you are in sorrow, I will, and particularly before the picture of St. Monica, as you have mentioned her. When I am praying to her, which I do several times a day, I will think of you now. I remember your Patron Saint was St. Augustine. You must pray every day particularly for me.

I should be very glad to see you, very glad, for I do love you and

remember this, I could not love what Our Lord did not love. May He grant me the grace to love ever as He loves. He is Patience Incarnate. His Love endures. If the whole world wearied and were to tire of us, He would not, for He never wearies, He never tires. " He loved us first, unlovely that we were." He will love us to the end. Go to Him dear, with your trouble and burden. I am sure He will comfort and refresh you.

Goodbye and God bless you, prays yours lovingly in J. & M.,

Mary, S.M.

I hope Fr. Selley is better now. You did not say. I have heard a sad account. I send you this week a little tea too. Please accept.

You asked about Winifred Marie Pauline Marguerite Potter. " Misericorde" said the poor priest who baptised it, when he heard all the names. She is alright, Mother too. As regards who she is like I can't say. Fr. Corbett says like me - " Exactly Mary's eyes" and my sister with a Mother's pride of her baby told me , as you may perhaps understand she would " compliment to you."

No. 24

33 Norfolk Street, Southsea.

3 January 1877.

My Dear Mary,

Many thanks for your letter. Why mind telling me anything? You know I should not be offended. You must wonder at never receiving what I said. I have been waiting since Christmas to send Fr. Selley, through you, a comforter. It is my work but it washed so badly, in hot water I think. It is such a bad colour I am ashamed to send it, but it has been washed again to get it right, but it seems to get worse. Never mind, Fr. Selley will take the will for the deed and put it on cold nights, if he is called to the sick.

Regarding your letter, though grieved you are so suffering,

nevertheless it is better than if you did not. God is trying your soul. I have known a young girl who had had great graces, but she married a Protestant and left her Church to go with him. Now that young girl seemed happy and comfortable in conscience. She used it in an argument to me. Would she not feel if she had done very wrong. I did not know how to account for such a strange phenomenon, but the thought occurred to me - God must have reproached her when she first went to the Protestant Service and neglected her religion, but that after a time God so far left her to herself, He was not with her even to reproach her.

You dear, do feel reproach of conscience, though I am not comparing you with this young girl. I know how you love your religion and are ready to die for it, though some people who will die for their religion, won't live for it. I hope you have seen Fr. Selley by this time and are praying for him.

We are fighting a battle now. All contributions (of prayers etc.) are gratefully received. All benefactors remembered.

I have been so busy. Christmas brought my brother, took up time, Christmas Day especially, what with the housekeeping in the morning, dinner etc. in the afternoon, cards in the evening - hardly time for prayer, but I got to Benediction in this way. Service was to begin at 4 o'clock. Four o'clock came and we were still at table, when Rita recollected that Mama had instructed her it was the English custom for ladies to leave the gentlemen after dinner, (be it known it was a ruse of Mama's to get her nap) so she got up, the others followed. I escaped, seized a shawl and bonnet and got out into the street. Well, I heard a cab behind me - I thought what a long way it was and I might lose the Blessing. I had got no money, but I hailed the cab. Cabby shook his head and passed. Crossing a place I got up to it again and looked at Cabby. Cabby's Guardian Angel said to him "take her up." Cabby himself said, "Where do you want to go?" - "Portsea." Cab stopped. " I don't know if the old lady will mind," said Cabby, but M.P. did not ask if the old lady would mind, but got in and sat down opposite to the old lady, (very old fashioned lady she was, never been in a cab before she told me) did not at first enquire the meaning of M.P's entrance, but earnestly enquired about the windows being shut. Having satisfactorily arranged this I explained why I was there, because Cabby had said if she did not mind I might. "Well," says the old lady a little bit surprised, "I think he must have liked the look of your face." Not knowing that the old lady was far

enough advanced in theology to explain to her the doctrine of Guardian Angels, I remained quiet and remarked I wanted to get to Church.

The good old soul then let me know she often wanted to go to the Catholic Church and she liked to pray to God and that we were all going different ways. Of course I told her there was only one Way, One God, and one Church. The old lady herself repeated the words, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." Cab put her down not far from the Church, I got Benediction and ran home in time for tea.

I always write rubbish to you. Give Fr. Selley the comforter and pray earnestly for him and yours in Jesus & Mary,

Mary, S.M.

Tell Fr. Selley the comforter is not dirty, but changed colour in the wash. I have not time to work another or would gladly. It came into my mind whilst I was saying my rosary that it would be a good thing to offer yourself to Our Lady just as you are. Tell her you know you are not worthy, (None of us are) but nevertheless if she will accept you, what you are, that you offer. When you are Her Own she might obtain some great grace for you, to make you better in the sight of God. She might give you her livery. It is to the honour of the lady of the household that her servants should be well clothed, though when the robes are given, the domestics are expected to do their best to preserve them.

Go on Saturday and make your gift. You are more valuable in the sight of God, a more pleasing offering than gold, frankincense and myrrh. What a pity God should ask something of us that we will not give Him. -

"My child, give Me thy heart."
