

The Judge's Cat

Letter from Emily Bradshaw to Elizabeth Halkett

12 South Bailey
Durham
20 October 1872

Dear Mama

I have received the most distressing news of Cousin Caroline which, in spite of everything, I feel I should share with you. As you know, I had not heard from her at all for some years, although I have written every Christmas and told her of the birth of my babies. Then yesterday I received a letter from Mr Charles Craigie Halkett Inglis of Cramond, Caroline's father's brother, informing me that Caroline has been admitted to an Asylum because she had attempted to end her life by jumping from a window at his house.

I am so shocked by this that I hardly know what I am about. He mentioned in passing that Caroline's father died over two years ago and that she has been living with him since that time. Mr Craigie Inglis says that Caroline has been diagnosed with Asthenic Insanity – whatever that means.

I shall write to the Craighouse Asylum for the Insane in Edinburgh where she is lodged and see what I can learn of her true condition. I cannot ignore this Misfortune that has befallen my childhood friend and companion, and I will not rest until I have done my utmost. If Thomas will permit me to travel to Edinburgh to see her, I would like you to accompany me. We have not seen each other for many months and this presents us with an Opportunity. I would prefer, however, that Thomas