

The Judge's Cat

Letter from Constance Bradshaw to Mabel Daniell  
12 South Bailey  
Durham  
27 March 1877

Darling Sister

Yesterday we held poor little Humphrey's funeral and it was *so sad*. He was such a darling child, and with us for *such a short time*. A few friends joined the family. Some of them asked where you were and Mama told them you were to be confined in a couple of weeks so the doctor had forbidden you to travel. Poor Nanny has taken this harder than any of us. She was away visiting her parents for the day when the tragedy occurred and returned to the awful news, whereupon she flung herself to the floor, beating her head on the boards and wailing and sobbing in a most distressing manner. The doctor who attended Humphrey had to administer something to calm her. She doted on Humphrey, calling him her Little Angel, and she still weeps every day until one of us reminds her that he is in Heaven with all the other Angels, and in God's safe keeping.

Papa is also distraught, and poor Hugh thinks it was *his* fault because he called out to Humphrey and caused the accident, but certainly nobody blames him.

We are all in mourning and the house is full of white flowers.

Mama is feeling quite faint from the scent of lilies.

Grandmama took to her bed and was too prostrate to attend the funeral. Now Mama says she must arrange to visit her for she cannot be left to mourn alone. I think I must accompany her.

Alone of all the family, we haven't heard a word from Aunt Maggie. I think there is some rift between her and Mama – but I don't know what it is and now is certainly not the time to ask. If you hear anything from the Halkett girls about a quarrel between them you must promise to let me know. I didn't think to ask Emily Charlotte when they came up for Muriel's Dance – but that was before Humphrey died and I didn't suspect anything was wrong. They were *so close*. Mama was the one Aunt Maggie sent for when Uncle James died. I simply cannot understand what is wrong.

I have sent my Godson a small birthday present. Please kiss him for me.

Write to me soon, dear one. I hope all goes well with the birth.

God bless you.

All my love

Constance

From the Journal of Emily Halkett  
July 1877

I still feel an almost unbearable sadness, not only at losing little Humphrey, my youngest child and the one with the sweetest disposition, but my heart aches also for my darling Thomas who had barely recovered from the death of Victor when this tragedy occurred. He has now lost *three* sons – it is heartbreaking. We seem to be in constant mourning and his