

**Mary Dikes of Berwick to Mary Lincolne, née Isaac, of Bocking, 8th January
1791**

My dear Friend,

I can sincerely join with you in what you say of your *encrease* of Happiness from the exercise of the maternal affections. Though I have not like you experienced the delight of administering sustenance from my own breast to the dear object of some of the strongest and sweetest emotions the Human mind is subject to. That flattering partiality shewn by an Infant to its Mother when she is able to perform the office of nurse to it, must be highly gratifying indeed! This Pleasure I was oblig'd to forego, but I have enjoy'd enough to make me think the Happiness of being a Mother greatly overbalances the pains and anxieties attending it.

You will be surprized to hear I am in expectation of very soon producing a sharer with my little Girl in my affections. Next month I expect to be confin'd, I hope to be in Leeds if nothing prevent though it is possible a fall down stairs which I had a few days ago may hasten my confinement. The idea of being there is very comfortable to me, both on account of having medical assistance so much within reach, and also the addition of so much pleasant society to that of my kind and affectionate Dikes who will accompany me thither. How miserable should I be with a Man of cold and languid affections, I have great reason to be thankful that Providence has bestow'd on me a companion whose attachment to me I have every reason to believe is warm and fervent, and who is calculated to promote my highest and *eternal?* interest as well as my present comfort.

I have great cause to complain of the ingratitude of my Heart towards the gracious author of every Blessing I enjoy. It is our Wisdom and Happiness as well as our unbounded Duty to make him the supreme object of our regards, but how apt are we in the Gifts to lose all sense of the Loving-kindness of the Giver and to suffer them to estrange and alienate our Minds from him. Yet I am fully persuaded the only way to obtain any true enjoyment of Temporal Blessings is to receive them as his Gift and employ them to his Glory.

Since I wrote last to you a new Prospect has open'd upon me. If we live till the latter end of next summer it is most likely we shall change our place of Abode, and quit this peaceful retirement for the bustle of a large Town, though we mean to be as far remov'd from the noise and smoke as we can. Dikes is building a Church at Hull and purposes to take the duty of it upon himself. The expectations of this on some accounts is not very *delightful?* to me. Berwick is only 8 miles from Leeds but Hull is sixty two, so that it will appear to me quite a separation from my Friends which I scarcely feel to have undergone yet.

Dikes writes with me in kind regards to you and Mr Lincolne. Kiss your little Boy for me. Believe me your's affectionately

Mary Dikes

Written in faded but neat, legible handwriting on a folded, single sheet of yellowed paper.

Mary Dikes was born Mary Hey, daughter of a Leeds surgeon. Her energetic husband was Revd. Thomas Dikes, whom she married in March 1789. He was on the evangelical wing of the Church of England and they eventually had a daughter and two sons. They moved to Hull in 1792 where he built St John the Evangelist church and ministered there for 55 years. He was a great friend of William Wilberforce, the anti-slavery campaigner. Thomas and Mary's grandson was a noted hymn writer and the author of "Eternal Father strong to save".

How Mary Dikes knew Mary Lincolne née Isaac is unknown but they may have been schoolfriends. Mary Lincolne's son was William, born in March 1789 and therefore nearly two years old when the letter was written.