

Deering, Alaska

Feb 3rd, 1903

My Dear Father and Mother,

It has been some time since I wrote to you and I suppose it seems sometime since you heard from us. I wish you could see little Gladys as she sits on the bed and plays and talks. She is trying to get hold of the kitten but it keeps just out of her reach. Whenever I look towards her she laughs and hollos?. She is a fat happy little girl with large blue eyes and Edward says her hair is that golden shade which is so "costly". Edward says he wishes you were here to take a ride behind the reindeer. It was 41 below zero this morning but is up to 30 now and I think you would prefer a ride behind your own horse.

Gladys went to sleep and I took Vivian out for a little walk a while ago. I am afraid to take both children on the reindeer sled because the reindeer is likely to make a sudden leap and run sideways, upsetting his load. The sled is so low that the fall does not hurt but with all our furs one of the babies might get caught. The winter is passing quickly and we keep too [sic] busy to get lonesome.

Edward has a school of 27 pupils. ~~We wrote to~~ Vivian says she wants to tell you "to come home and bring me a baby doll and that's nice talk". I cut Vivian's hair because it hurt her to have it combed. She is getting to be quite a womanly little girl but is still full of mischief.

We are having a great deal of cold weather this winter. The coldest was 59 below. We have a Japanese boy stopping with us now. He says he has no money and very little food at his cabin so we are trying to help him out. He is quite a good carpenter and has been doing a little work inside. We are expecting Mrs. Dearborn to spend a few days visiting us. She is living 25 miles up the river and Mr. Dearborn says she is very lonesome to see some other woman. I met her last fall and we have shared their freight here and they seem like very nice Yankies.

On account of dogs we sawed off the horns of our reindeer and have them up on the wall and keep him inside a shed at night. The horns (antlers) are very pretty, measure about 5 ½ ft. He is a very gentle, well trained deer. He got away last year about this time and was not heard of again until he arrived at the herd at Cape Prince of Wales in August, and the mission boys brought him over to us a few weeks ago. Edward aske me just now who I am writing to and Vivian said "Mamma is writing to Jesse and May. Papa, you ? ? understand May?" She is now holding service. She has sung "Throw our the Lifeline" and is repeating the Lord's prayer. She knows a great many of the words of songs we sing. She is quite particular that nothing shall keep us from having family prayer. She never fails to repeat every slang phrase she hears but after once corrected for it she never repeats it and if she hears it again she always says "Don't say that word". She reprovred me every time I said "scat" at the kitten for a while. She heard someone say "you bet" and was saying it to the songbooks. I said O Vivian that's not a nice word at all. She looked at me a second and burst out crying.

Several of our natives are over at Kotzbue Mission now holding a dance. I don't know what kind of a welcome they will receive or what steps the missionaries will take in regard to it. Their dance is something like a series of athletic exercises combined with an auction. Sometimes the young children "dance" using arm movements and body movements while others sing and beat the drum. Sometimes they trade as they dance, someone offers something for trade then all sing and swing then somebody makes an offer. This is an old custom with them, it takes much wisdom to know how to talk to them or how much of their lifelong customs to discountenance. Loapp of Cape Pr. Of Wales told us that he looked upon their dances as athletic exercises and never tried to stop them.

The mail came day before yesterday but there were only two letters in the sack. But we expect something next time as 400 lbs is reported just a day behind the carrier.

Edward sends love and Vivian sends a kiss.

Your loving daughter,

Anna H. Foster

P.S. I had a letter from Mattee Hadley a little while ago and all were well.

We had a letter from Dr. Jackson and he spoke of meeting you at Whittier.

[typewritten at the bottom of the page]: The Dolls are bought and will soon be travelling, Mother says. Please send this to Whittier when thee reads it often enough.