

An Interesting Find

Mr Sabine Dickinson, great grandson of SBG, has sent photocopies of a very intriguing pair of letters, found bound into a copy of *The Vicar of Morwenstow*. The first letter is from John Lane, the publisher, on headed notepaper, addressed to Mrs Dickinson, Sabine's eldest daughter Mary. The text of the letter runs as follows:

November 14th 1905. Dear Mrs Dickinson, I am sure you must think me very negligent not to have returned your book before; I am not surprised that you are growing impatient. The fact is, however, that I have had a serious eye trouble for two months. All the illustrations of the three Hawker books have been looked out in triplicate, as I am illustrating your copy, Lord Rosebety's and my own, but my eye affliction has prevented me from placing them in the volumes. I am, however, writing to Mr Byles for his assistance, so that the whole thing may be done, and the book returned to you by Christmas.

With my kind regards to you all, Yours very truly, John Lane.

(We must assume that the book was eventually returned and the letter kept inside it. It has 86 illustrations!)

Secondly, a letter from Hawker, vicar of Morwenstow, to his sister Caroline Dunham, which runs:

March 10th 1872.

My dear Caroline, I send you some potatoes. I want you to do something for me and answer by Bensor. Send for Beer or some other joiner and give him the inclosed questions about a chest of drawers and get the answers to each on the same paper. We want them if at all by the 21 of April. No time to lose. If you like to ask C. about it without mentioning my name you may do so. You promised the children dolls. They make me mazed with inquiries. Pauline asks if you have not got them where they can be had. She thinks you said Holsworthy. We will send. You must be quick about getting Beer's answers, or any other you like. Or two if you think best.

Where or how could we get a good Beefsteak or a few lbs of Sirloin (not Scawens) now and then. Money, no bill. Is Charlotte down. If so where is the parcel. What news in Bude. I got f1-5-0 in Offertory for Exeter Cathedral. Our schoolmaster rather better. We had a Committee here last night. Thynne, Jacques, Capt Warren are going to build the House for the Master at once. Pauline is gone to bed knocked up.

Her love and mine, Yrs affectionately, R.J.Hawker.

(Apologies for any errors in transcribing this Victorian handwriting and many thanks to Mr Dickinson for letting us see these truly fascinating documents -Ed.)