

Hardwick Vicarage, Hay, 2 March 1874.

1560

My dearest Arthur,

(85)

I do not think I have written to you since an event which, though long expected, has caused, in its accessories, no small ferment in the neighbourhood - the decease of our old friend Mrs. Napleton Penoyre. This took place last Saturday week. She had for some time previously been rather improving in bodily health - & her doctor so changed his opinion as to think she might even live a twelvemonth - but with this had come a great deal of oddity - & she was certainly in some respects hardly of sound mind towards the last: then some kind of fit came on, followed by unconsciousness, & it pleased God at length to release her after a life of great helplessness & misery for 16 years. What a lesson as to the vanity of all earthly possessions! - - And then came intense curiosity as to the will, which had been kept a profound secret - not on our part, as regarded ourselves - we had been told long ago by Mr. Oswald that her executors would do nothing more for this living - & I rather expected the withdrawing of some allowances on the Farm &c. - about £23 p. ann. - which I could certainly afford to lose, but would much rather have kept. But the great point so debated through all the neighbourhood was, who would succeed at The Moor? There was good reason to believe that ultimately it would go (and rightfully by inheritance, tho' Mr. N. had entire power over it) to the grandchildren of a 1st cousin on the male side - Mr. Raymond, still living, who has always expected his life interest in it. But who would be there during the minority? Mr. Raymond, on the 1st cousin's maternal,