

Florence. April 3^d 1866.

My dear Mamma,
Yours of 26th reached me on 31st and yours
of 29th to day. They always arrive at
the P.R. late at night so I get them the
day after they actually reach Florence.
Madame Barbensi says she has 50 people
writing for poems here this week - the
tide ebbing from Rome after the Holy
Week; 8 of our party leave this week so
there will be a fine supply of new faces.
The House holds about 20 when full.
Saturday there ^{was} a grand show in the
Piazza at the Duomo. A wire is stretch-
ed from the altar in the Duomo
through the nave and out of the door
into the Piazza where it is attached
to an ornamental stand, hung all over
with fireworks and bombs. An image
of a white dove is attached to the wire and
sent along it by means of a rocket from
the altar out into the Piazza, a fresh
rocket catches fire as soon as it reaches
the stand and drives it back into the
Duomo, then all the fireworks go off.

This takes place at noon. Mr Dick and I took charge of four ladies, Mrs Dick, Miss Brown and the two young Russian ladies, there was a dense crowd and it was no place for ladies to be on foot, however we did not find out that till we were well wedged into the crowd and had to make the best of it. If all goes right with the flight of the dove it is supposed to indicate a prosperous harvest; if the dove sticks or anything goes wrong, a bad harvest. I was not very close and so could not be quite sure that the above account is accurate in its details but that is what it seemed to be.

This month the railway is to be opened from Ancona to Foligno, thus giving a complete line of railway to Rome, and for those who go from Piedmont and Lombardy, is a tolerably direct route i.e. ^{via} Milan, Parma, Bologna, Ancona, Foligno, Terni and on to Rome. A fine viaduct over the Tiber near Perugia has just been washed down by the floods;

this line was soon to have been opened
but this will delay it. Among the
new comers here last week are a ~~Mr~~^{Mr}
Captain and M^{rs} Penny (Bombay R.E.) who
know Hew and Harry, also two Miss Nortons
and a clergyman and his wife who were
at Bellevue Hotel at Cannes in January.
A young lady left this yesterday for
Liverpool - going all the way alone, via
Leghorn Marseilles &c; though young and
rather nice looking she seems quite used
to travelling alone when necessary.
Seven people are expected here to day
and four on Saturday. Yesterday I had
a long walk out on the Bologna Road
and then down into a large valley
beyond Fiesole, very bare and wild;
it put me in mind of the country
about Ballyvalley Bridge at Kesteven.
They have started a great number of
one horsed omnibusses in Florence, they
run short distances and the fares are
only a halfpenny and a penny; they
seem always full. All the streets are

I should like some opinions as to various routes.

flagged and the busses not large, one horse is quite enough. I see plenty of wild tulips (red) and anemones in the fields about here but flowers in general are not plentiful. I hear that at New York they are going to have a 30 days Quarantine after the 1st of June; 1000 a day is the average of arrivals there so at the end of the first month they will have 30,000 people in Quarantine! This for Cholera.

My present idea of moving is to leave this - if nothing turns up, on or about April the 16th but I have not much thought of what route I am going to pursue. Mont Cenis is the most direct route for London but there are plenty of others available and I should rather like to return via South of France. All this is doubtful but if people ask for my address do not give Florence after April 12th.

Your affectionate son
Francis E. Prendergast.