

**Letter by Hester Fraser to her father, Edward RE: Queen Victoria's funeral, 7th
February, 1901**

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21 Hanover Square,

London

Feb 7th 1901

My dearest Father,

It seems ages since I wrote to you. On Saturday morning we had breakfast at 8 & started at 9. I went down the back streets to a Mr Seymour's house next door on the west (Neil had come up on Friday night). We were in a room on the ground floor, which had 4 big windows & as there were only 9 other people in the room Mother, Neil and I had one to ourselves. Mr Romer Williams' sister Mrs Delaware was there, & her girl & an Australian who had been out in S Africa & was going back there on the 11th Feb but was first going round Scotland to see it. He had never seen snow so said he would like it being winter (I am writing this in the train on my way to Guildford Feb 8th).

The road was lined each side with one row of soldiers, each touching the other, just 24 inches was allowed for each man, & behind them was a row of policemen, leaving a narrow passage in between, up which we often saw the ambulance men. The crowd was all as black as it could be just now, but when the procession came & they took off hats it looked all white faces so closely were they packed. You will have seen probably the order in which the procession went. The first few that came looked very nice because they went very slowly, though it was horrible seeing all their arms reversed, made everything seem upside down. The colonials especially looked splendid, nearly all in a different uniform & hardly two coats of the same khaki. Doesn't sound nice but it was. They were just longing to cheers 'Bobs', began waving hats but just then the gun-carriage came in view & at once all was silent. The Duke of Norfolk was by himself a little in front on a very fidgety horse, then came the 8 creams, their gold and red harnesses tied with purple ribbons but we did not look long at them for behind them on a khaki coloured & covered with a white satin pall, with the crown etc. at the head on the Union Jack. I could not in the least connect it with the little lady in black smiling to everyone. Then came the King & the Kaiser & all the other Royalties, but I only made out the little Duke of Saxe Coburg, the Kings of Portugal & Greece & the Crown Prince of Germany. Then the closed carriages of the Princesses & the King of the Belgians & at the very end an enormous number of the different suites. We thought it was never going to end. The

procession began to pass us at 11:30 & the end disappeared soon after 12:30. We waited a few minutes & then walked along Piccadilly to see the decorations which were all in white or purple. Every lamp post had a huge laurel wreath hung on it, but when we got opposite Devonshire House we had to go in to St James' Park as the crush was so great, & cross the road again & then home. Neil went back about 8pm.

On Sunday we went again to St Paul's by the 2nd tube, it was just as full as the time before. Then we went to tea at Mrs Bruce's. Mr & Mrs Baillie & Evan were staying there on Tuesday 8th, the day after the Queen was buried at Frogmore. There was deep snow in London & all over the country too. Mother & I went to the park at 12 & stood near the Marble Arch to see the Kaiser & King come from Paddington to Marlborough House. We stood there over half an hour & when the carriage came round the corner from Victoria Gate everybody rushed forward right up to within a yard of the carriage! It was so funny we had all been standing on the curbstone so good & the police were about 15 yards away from each other so could do nothing. We were in the front so saw beautifully. Mrs Menzies came to lunch.

The day before (Thursday) Mother & I dined with Clare Dennison, Alby was away, the baby is ill. I can't remember anything of what we did on Wednesday except that I had my hair washed and tugged very hard by Janet! Yesterday, Thursday 7th, in the afternoon Janet and I went to the Hippodrome hoping to see some cinematograph but there were not any. There were 2 cowboys who lassoed each other, one used to put rope round all four of the horses' legs & some nice shiny sea lions & seals who played football with their noses, caught hats on their heads & blew trumpets etc., and ate heaps of fish! At Guildford this morning I met Dorothy at the station. She had come by a train a few minutes before. There is 2 or 3 inches of snow here & more at Tadworth but none in S of Scotland. Don't know about home. Lily is here, Milly & Uncle Simon both look well. She says we all three (Dorothy, Lily & me) look so funny in black. I am going to stay here till [W...] is well.

Heaps of love. Have not seen Flight yet but she's very well.

With love & kisses from me

Your loving little Hester

Writing this in Molly's own little room over the studio