



# FACTsheet 13

Louisa Kempson (1834 – 1903)

*My dear Aunt Emma*

*Will you please to tell Uncle Charles, that I have been making enquiries in my nursery about the tears, but I can only give him hearsay evidence as I cannot see so small a thing as a tear. My nurse says that tears begin to stand in a baby's eyes when they are a few weeks old, and that they begin to run down the cheeks at about six weeks.*

*My baby is just four months and the tears run down her cheeks in a piteous manner when she cries, which I am happy to say is very seldom. Of course I need not say that there never was such a baby since the world began! But I have never seen such a happy, good-tempered little soul...*



# Louisa Kempson (1834 – 1903)

"Uncle Charles" refers to Charles Darwin. The author of the letter was Louisa Frances Wedgwood and it was written to Emma, Charles Darwin's wife, in 1867 from Plas Mawr in Penmaenmawr. Louisa was the granddaughter of Josiah Wedgwood II, MP, and great-granddaughter of Josiah Wedgwood – the founder of the famous pottery which still bears his name.

Josiah Wedgwood was a friend of Erasmus Darwin and their families became intertwined by marriage. Erasmus' son, Robert married Josiah's daughter, Susannah Wedgwood. Their son, Charles Darwin married his cousin, Emma Wedgwood.

Charles Darwin was therefore both Uncle and Cousin to Louisa.

Louisa's letter makes observations about her baby that Darwin had asked her to record, perhaps for his research on 'expression' that he was working on at this time:

The Wedgwood family may have been frequent visitors to Penmaenmawr, because further correspondence to Emma from her brother mentions a party in Pendyffryn Hall, and the family name appears on a number of the visitor lists in contemporary newspapers.

