

Gym raed Yffac

I hsiw uoy a yppah wen raey.

Ruoy xis snisuoc emac erek yadretsey, dna
dah hcae a seeip fo ekac. Lihit si otttil
Yffac's yadhtrib, dna ehs si eekht sraey
dlo. Knarf sah nugeb gminrael Nital.
Ew deef eht Nitor yreve gminrom. Yllas
netfo seriugne retfa uoy. Yllas.

Mahub sah tog 2 wen neery nuog. Teirrah
Thgink. semoc yreve yad ot daer ot Inua
Ardnafac. — Doog eyb gym raed Yffac. —
Inua Ardnafac sdnes reh tseb eool, dna
os ew od lla.

Ruoy Etanoitceffa Inua
Enae Netsua.

Not-wahc, Naj: 8.

LETTER NO. 136, 1817

People do exist who denigrate Jane Austen and declare that, among other things, she hated children. Surprising, if this is the case, that she should go to so much trouble as to write this charming New Year's letter backwards to a little niece. It is to Cassy, daughter of Captain Charles Austen. Cassy had just turned eight years old at the time.

The text, for those who do not wish to puzzle it out:

My dear Cassy

I wish you a happy new year. Your six cousins came here yesterday, and had each a piece of cake. This is Cassy's¹ birthday, and she is three years old. Frank² has begun learning Latin. We feed the Robin every morning—Sally often enquires after you. Sally Benham has got a new green gown. Harriet Knight³ comes every day to read to Aunt Cassandra—Good bye my dear Cassy—Aunt Cassandra sends her best love, and so we do all.

Your Affectionate Aunt
Jane Austen

Chawton, Jan. 8.

1. Daughter of Francis Austen. 2. Eldest son of Francis Austen, aged eight. 3. Identified by Chapman as possibly a village child.