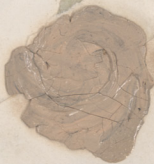


Jan 22 / 47

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NO. 1377
15-B-16

Miss M. A. G. Mercer,
11 Armiton Place,
Newington,
Edinburgh.

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1847



REC. NO. 1377

RES. 15-B-16

Friday

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16A

Dear Margaret,

"A few days" are, in some circumstances, a very long time, and I already feel it to be long since I heard anything of you. Another week has nearly expired, and so far as I know, everything is just as it was, and what is worse I know of nothing that in present circumstances I can do to make it better. You must therefore excuse me for again writing to you; especially as there are many things which it is right that I should tell you, and which may be as well written as spoken, perhaps better, since when written you can cor-
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consider them at your leisure

The just is an idea which never occurred to me, but which I have heard hinted since I came here. That there might be between you and me some feeling of mutual obligation; that is, that though there was no actual engagement, we might feel in some way pledged to each other, and thus be induced to act in a manner different from our present inclination. Any thing of this kind would plainly be only mutual injustice, however good the motive might be. I mention it merely for the purpose of saying to you, as I have already said to your father, that I can plead no claim upon you, no encouragement received

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from you in all our correspondence. There has been nothing on which I could rationally found such a pretension, and if there had, I should have no wish to insist upon it. Whatever your decision with respect to me, it must be a free one, the dictate of your heart as well as of your judgment. In my own part I know too well for my present comfort, that my greatest earthly happiness would be in remembering all my freedom, and permanently engaging to love you.

Our climate seems to be a great bugbear to persons here, and certainly with no good reason. I can give you a sufficient idea of it in a few words. The spring is drier than yours, severe

usually very clear and sunny,
but with occasional cold &
raw weather. The early spring
is considered the worst time for
invalids, chiefly because the melt-
ing of the snow then causes the
air to be more loaded with
moisture than usual. The summer
is drier than that of Scotland,
and for about a month some-
what warmer, its summer
beauty cannot be exaggerated.
The autumn is generally
very fine and agreeable. The be-
ginning of winter is often very
like that of this country, but
so soon as the frost has fairly
set in, it is very agreeable
and healthy. There is occasion-
ally, for a week at a time,

Weather disagreeably cold,
to those who^{are} obliged to be
much exposed, and there
are a few wet than days,
but the greater part is such
that I believe there is more
driving and jaunting about
among our ladies in winter
than in summer. In clear
weather, ladies drive about
in sleighs with perfect com-
fort, when the air is at
least 20 degrees colder than
you ever have it here. You
may be assured that our
climate is much more
agreeable, and quite as
healthy as this; and I may
add that I never found

any one who had experience
of both, to have a different
opinion.

With respect to Pictou it-
self, though a small place it
is not to be judged of by small
places here. It has a large
proportion of good and com-
fortable houses. It has also
a large proportion of very
respectable and intelligent
society, and many christian
people, though I confess that
there, as in most other places,
they are the smaller number.
There are literary, benevolent &
religious institutions of many
kinds, some of them as well
managed as any here, though

of course on a smaller scale. In the manners of the people there is little that is different from what is seen here; Except that all are more on a level, as we have no persons of great rank or wealth, and few who are in want; and intelligence and a desire for knowledge are more universally diffused than even here.

Another important matter is my present means & prospects. It would of course be a very imprudent, not to say unprincipled, thing to ask you to go when you would be exposed to want, without at least warning you beforehand. In

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This respect, I have no reason
to fear. Our business which,
though in my father's name,
may be in mine whenever I
wish it, has been more than
sufficient to maintain us
in a position as respectable
as that of any in our country,
and as comfortable as that
of any in the middle ranks
here. We have also a con-
siderable amount of property
in land and houses, beside
that which we ourselves occupy;
and our trade has been in-
creasing, and I hope to do
something towards rendering it
while here now. On this sub-
ject I shall however obtain

more full and precise test-
imony from home, if I find
it likely to be of any service.

My parents and I, as you
know, inhabit one house,
which however is large
and well furnished, and till
late^{was} occupied by another
family besides our own. We
have two other large houses
which are rented, and a
little cottage on the farm
~~to~~ which my father is desirous
to furnish and occupy, as
he would like to spend all
or nearly all his time on his
farm.

Our establishment consists

of two women servants
and a man servants
two horses, two cows
a riding sleigh and fly,
The latter purchased last
Summer, for the purpose of
driving about with my mother
after her recovery from erysipelas,
and for carrying father to and
from his farm.

With very respect to myself,
I am aware that
my fondness for scientific
pursuits, not directly con-
nected with my business,
may give persons here un-
favourable unprejudiced res-
pecting my attention to

happier when at home.

I believe however that I
have occupied less time in
this way, than most young
men do in other amusements;
And I am able and willing
to give these things up if
necessary. I have indeed
promised, when I return next
Spring, to do all in my power
to relieve my father altogether
of the labour of business.

A more important point
than any of these, is the
circumstance of our being
connected with different
religious denominations.

at least I know it weighs
 much with your mother.
 This is a matter however
 for which we alone are
 responsible, and with which
 no other person has a right
 to intermeddle. On that very
 account, however, it is one
 which should be rightly un-
 derstood. I may say for my-
 self, that to me it is no
 difficulty, since I am firmly
 persuaded that the real dis-
 tinction is between Christ's
 people and the world and
 not between one sect and an-
 other. It is far better to have
 a common faith than a
 common creed, and disregard
 of this truth produces as much

mischiefs in the world
as any one thing I know.

In writing of these things,
I do not suppose them to
be important elements in
your decision; but I know
that, if we would be thought
by others to act wisely, such things
must not be neglected. There is

a kind of small wisdom which
looks at little difficulties
appearing on the surface,
and sees nothing of serious
or infinitely greater weight,
in reference to the happiness
of those concerned in any such
course of conduct; and it is
by this kind of wisdom that
we must expect at least in

mails leave this, I believe on the 16th of February,

Ms. Portland, of a fine clay, to go to Woburn to Mr. Colburn & see the
back about 1 or 2 o'clock

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a great measure to be judged.

I may mention how I am here spending my time here. I had hoped to have spent much of it with you, but since at present I cannot do that, and it would neither be any compliment to you nor service to myself to waste it, I am endeavoring to turn it to as good account as possible. In the morning, at half past 8, I go over to Elder St to get a lesson in the law. At 10, I attend the chemistry class, and work in the laboratory at analysis of soils till 1 or 2. The afternoon I have for all sorts of miscellaneous business, and the evening usually for study. When I receive my letters from home by the February packet, I shall have for a time

at least, to occupy most of
the day in selecting & buying stock,
here and in Glasgow. The information
I am obtaining in the meantime,
I know I can turn to good account
at home,

On Sabbath, I have generally
attended some of the Secession
churches, and have made ar-
rangements for joining in commu-
nion with Mr Johnston's church. I
would like sometimes to attend the
meetings of your church, but can-
not appear there in present cir-
cumstances.

I have made few new acquaint-
ances. The principal are, Mr Brown,
Rev Mr Johnston, Mr Johnstone the
bookseller and Pefferoy. I have
seen some of the old ones, par-
ticularly Mr A Bryson, whose wife
seems to be, as I think you men-
tioned to me, a very amiable person.

I have always felt, in relation to you, that I was hoping for more than I deserved & had a right to expect, and I never felt this more than when I asked you to meet me, that we might have some conversation on the present state of affairs. I am now however still more desirous to see you, because if you can at all regard my proposal with favour I know that by writing home by the February mail, I can obtain much that will enable me better to meet the objections of your relatives, in so far as these are to be removed by facts. If then you can point out any way, time or place (my whole time is at your disposal) where I could see you, or if you can tell me anything which will enable me to write home with greater certainty, I will be most grateful

William (of the Feb),
 I do
 he
 you
 that
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 your
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as
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shall be
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 2 weeks

to
 write
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 Mr
 &
 call
 on
 the
 10th
 of
 the
 month