

Portobello House.

Oct. 12, 1881.

Dear Father,

I have thought over the import of the clippings you have sent me, as it again brings up the question of my preferences with regard to work. I would not be anxious to leave this Survey for General work; I mean that I would not think it worth while to make any special effort to secure a position on the General should it go on. I would of course take any offer into consideration; but as compared with this, I look upon Generaling as ~~in~~ a the proposed General as a less permanent employment, and also as one attended with greater risk. When I speak of risk, I refer to the exposure of one's health rather than any other. It is equally dangerous

to come out of a tunnel into the heat of big  
summer or the cold of winter, and the sh  
most careful precautions are not always me  
successful. My present work is at least un  
healthy. In looking forward to future we  
seasons, I do rather dread the idea of m  
camping out. This can be avoided for a h  
year or two yet, I think. To be in is  
camp from May till November in all ma  
kinds of weather, hot or cold, wet and the  
dry may perhaps involve a certain amount w  
of risk, although I cannot of course speak in  
from experience. This year I have chosen of  
my time; the best season & the most I  
settled weather; and to make shift for esc  
a day or two has been rather a variety res  
than a hardship. It is the weather ter  
that is the greatest obstacle in the way o  
of this work all through; almost every of  
kind is disadvantageous. These <sup>cloudless</sup> days of  
intense sunshine, often accompanied with so

of high wind, are nearly as bad as the broken  
the showery weather of summer. I find from  
my experience of this year that there is  
at an average of about two hours in the  
week in which the weather is not  
unfavorable, and this occurs usually in  
a half-hour intervals on different days. It  
is, as you have remarked yourself, often  
more difficult to overcome the obstacles in  
the way of our work, than to do the  
work itself. There is considerable art  
in taking advantage as far as possible  
of the weather there is — an art which  
I am gradually acquiring; and the intel-  
exercise of intelligence which the weather  
renders necessary, makes up to some ex-  
tent for the delay to the work which it  
occasions, provided that a suitable quantity  
of patience is thrown in.

This is an old home on old stage  
road which you have often travelled. It

is comfortable, although more like a Hotel than any place we have been in this summer. It consists apparently of a series of passages upstairs & downstairs, with a few bed-rooms crowded into the corners of the building. The walls are all plastered which we notice with satisfaction; as our Montagn quarters were built of sawn oak boards shingled on the outside. The rooms were large & high, but and sufficiently airy, especially now that the nights are beginning to be cold.

Your affectionate son,

William.

I continue to think as before respecting the position in the Harbour Office for the reasons I have already mentioned. I would be glad to know definitely about it before Christmas, as it will make some difference in my winter's plans.

I would like to put my season's work into a permanent form as early as possible if I had the prospect of returning to Montreal in the spring, & I would hardly think in that case of taking a holiday at the New Year to visit Montreal, unless it were of importance to my prospects.

I must also be able to take definite steps at the New Year toward providing myself with instruments for another season's work and seeing that everything is in order.

I cannot get any repairs done in Halifax, and even in Montreal it is very difficult.

I am opening up negotiations with the maker of the Coast Survey instruments in Washington to whom Prof. Hilgard recommended me. I will probably deal with him in future if they prove satisfactory; but I will require to be in good time about it.

William  
Oct 1871

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