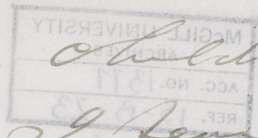


Pictou Dec 25, 1845 23A

Dear Margaret,

In accordance with the usual custom of visiting and bestowing good wishes upon our friends on Christmas, I have usually employed a part of the day in writing to you, and do not now intend to abandon the custom. It seems rather awkward to wish you a merry Christmas, in a letter which you cannot receive till some time in next year, you may however be assured by it that I did wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year also.

You have probably received a small parcel and a hastily scrawled note sent by Mr Crevar. I did not suppose that he would have sailed so soon as he did, and consequently when one day he looked into the shop & say that his ship would be under way in ten minutes, I was unprepared, and had time only to wrap up a few.



little Yankee books for the children, and to write a note which I fear you will scarcely be able to read, and scarcely think worth the trouble, after you have done so. Though I had nothing at hand which I judged suitable for a Christmas gift to you, I consoled myself with the hope that perhaps before another year had passed, I might be able to present you with one in person instead of sending it.

For two months past my father and mother have been confined to the house by sickness, and I have had everything to manage and of course was kept pretty hard at work. Within the last few days however father has been able to go about, and mother is also quite well, though she has not yet been out of the house.

Last evening, I gave a lecture to our Literary Society on the Scenery of Nova Scotia, a good subject, since our little despised province has much variety and beauty of appearance, though from its being a "new country" we have few persons who have leisure or taste to pay much at

center to its beauties. I had, by way of illustration, a few large ink drawings of particular views, prepared at the rate of one in two or three hours, and which you would have thought to be at least bold enough in execution, since they were suited to be viewed across a large room, without much loss of effect. Here you have an account of my mode of spending Christmas Eve, and also several <sup>previous</sup> evenings, after shop-shutting time.

I thank you for the newspapers you have often sent of late, they are always welcome especially as coming from you; though not quite so good as a letter, which I hope to receive early in the New Year. You would need to be careful in the choice of the wafers you put on the envelopes, since one a paper sent last week put somebody connected with the post office to a little trouble. The poor man probably thought that the motto "look within" was a hint of some unlaful correspondence.

being enclosed, and in consequence  
 tore open the cover and, after examining  
 the contents, tied it up again with a  
 piece of twine, probably disappointed that  
 he had been unable to impose letter  
 postage. I must ~~suppose~~ say however  
 that I am sometimes almost at a loss  
 to divine the meaning of some of these same  
 mottoes, and sometimes wonder if they are  
 selected by chance. Some of them at all  
 events contain very good advice, which I  
 wish I were able to follow and that without  
 delay.

Thus far my letter has been made  
 up chiefly of small gossip, you know  
 however that my letters are very variable  
 in this respect, the writer nevertheless re-  
 maining pretty much the same. During  
 the past year indeed I think that I have  
 been more seriously engaged, more involved  
 in the actual business of life, than in any  
 previous one; and for that very reason was  
 disposed to look seriously and thoughtfully on everything  
 on everything around me.

I sometimes feel disposed to ask myself to what purpose is all my thought and study, my dearest hours of leisure & serious pursuits instead of the idle pleasures, and really to give a conclusive & satisfactory answer I am unable. Yet I am firmly convinced that such measure of power and knowledge as God has given us, we are bound to use for the benefit of all, and that in this must consist much of the highest kind of happiness. Thus I can be earnest without being gloomy, and can believe that, after all, I am as happy as the gayest.

In these respects however I am nearly as I used to be in other years, except that I can feel my mind gradually settling more firmly into a matured and fixed form, and while I have less fear of the world, and consequently more confidence in my own powers in reference

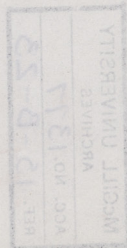
Of the duties of life and contact with  
my fellow man, I feel more and more  
disposed to humble myself before God, and  
find in ~~fact~~ ~~of~~ his presence all my know-  
ledge - diligence & confidence become folly and  
even something worse. For now when I look  
back even on the past ~~year~~ or much of  
reflect, suspicion and portmanteau ail rises be-  
fore me, that I feel no place at all left  
for that self-righteousness which is wont  
to creep into these deceitful hearts of ours  
But enough of this - why do I write these  
to you at all; some people think me  
a very strange sort of a person, some a  
very wise man, and some a very  
good one, and I take no pains to cor-  
rect their impressions; but you I seem  
to make my confessor, while at the same  
time there is no one in whose opinion  
I would more wish to stand high,

An odd contradiction and you must  
solve it when we meet again

You must give me such good wishes  
as are suited to the season, to your father  
and mother, to your sisters and all their  
families, down to the latest bairn among  
them; I wish all good and happiness to  
them all, and as much as to all put to-  
gether to you dear Margaret.

J Dawson

I enclose a small note for  
your father from Mr A Dawson



December 25<sup>th</sup> / 45

*Mrs. M. J. [unclear]*

Mrs. Margaret A. J. Mercery  
6 Windmill St.  
Edinburgh L.

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