



37A

Pictou Aug. 5, 1844.

Dear Margaret,

So you are not satisfied with my method of crossing the Atlantic on the wings of imagination. I must confess that in some respects it is very unsatisfactory, being somewhat like satisfying present hunger by thinking of past feasts. There are however other modes of conveyance, very commonly used by matter-of-fact people; for instance the Royal Mail Steamers and Timber Ships of various descriptions. I am afraid there will be no other way, until the Aerial Machine shall take flight, or until Mesmerism, to which you perhaps daily allude in the expression 'Lay your brains asleep,' shall, among its other wonders, discover some method for establishing an intercourse between distant minds. Perhaps what they call 'Clairvoyance' includes something of this kind; so that if you had applied to Dr. Elliotson, he could have sent your intellectual powers on a trip across the Atlantic, while your corporeal frame remained snugly asleep in an arm chair in London. I am not however

Insufficiently versed in this new science,
 to speak very confidently of its powers;
 and at present it is not in my power
 to avail myself of the old-fashioned means
 of transit, farther than to send this piece
 of paper, inscribed with a few thoughts
 such as I dare commit to bare and
 unexplained written words; but not such
 as I should say if I saw you face to
 face, as I intend sometime or other
 to do; but the only way to secure this
 is to act well in present circumstances,
 to perform carefully the duties which
 at present press on me; that I may as
 soon as possible, without any serious
 loss or dereliction of duty, gratify myself
 by a visit, not imaginary but real and
 personal, to Aunt Reenie. You may
 be sure that I look forward to this
 as a most desirable object to be attained,
 so soon as the state of my business
 and my duty to my parents shall permit.

I thank you sincerely for your ad-
 vice in the matter which I mentioned.
 Your picture of the utility of a good ear

ample, and of the good that can
be done amidst business avocations, is
a beautiful one; and I too see much
good that I ~~would~~ can try to do, even
with the cares and anxieties of business,
as well as my own errors and back-
slidings to contend with. Yet might not
more good be done, (and surely the need
of it is great) if I could devote myself altogether
to the spiritual welfare of my fellow men. At
present the question to be decided is, whether
~~or not~~ I shall begin to avail myself of the
means of preparatory ~~and~~ study within my reach.
This would not involve any abandonment
of my present business for 3 or 4 years, and
then I might be better able to decide whether
it could really be a useful minister. I must
however consult my parents on the subject,
and consider the bearing of it will respect
to them as well as myself. In the meantime,
I join in your prayer that Gods spirit may
direct both you and me in this and in
all other matters which we may be required
to decide, and may deliver us from all the
dangers and temptations to which we may
be exposed.

I send with this, by Master Howard Primrose, a few little trifles of Indian workmanship. One of them is ornamented by our Pictou Squaws with porcupine quills; the others are worked with hair of the Moose deer, by the Indian women of Canada.

The first is intended to have strings attached to it, and to be used as a bag or reticule — one of the others was originally intended for a play-marker or something of that kind, you will perhaps be able to find some less questionable use for it. These and the larger pin-cushion, you will accept for yourself; the four remaining articles I wish you to distribute among your friends, not forgetting the two nipes Bell.

I have no tale of journeys by sea or land to tell. My travels, this summer, have been all within the county of Pictou. I can, however easily imagine the amount of pleasure and the number of new ideas, which your late travels must have afforded you. My time has been chiefly occupied by the ordinary routine of business. I have found spare time only to make a few geological observations — gather and dry some plants — and take a few sketches, besides reading some useful books. In this way time passes swiftly and smoothly, ruffled only

by a few minor cases and troubles; and on the whole, when I consider the health and comfort that I and my parents enjoy, that we have had comparative safety and prosperity in times of much distress and embarrassment to many around us, I feel that we have very much cause for gratitude and contentment. When I look forward however to the knowledge which I wish to acquire, and to the good which I might do, and consider how slow my present progress, I am always dissatisfied with myself. Perhaps however in some things I may have too much eagerness, and I know that I have by far too little patience.

I had noticed in the papers some of the changes among our mutual acquaintances which you mention. Some of them have been setting us an example, good or bad, which you and I may, some of these days follow. It is a standing saying of Mother's; when I bring in a new load of Minerals or fossils; "Wait till you get a wife, and you will soon see all these things flying out at the window, or turned into playthings for the children." What a fearful prospect. I think however that my cabinet is still quite safe for a few years.

Aug 2^d

37C

I am pleased by learning that your relations are all well; tell them that I continue to regard them all with affection and gratitude

Having now written a pretty long letter, and having little else to say, I must conclude. For some reason, to me not very plain, I who to every one else am reserved, speak or write to you, like a catholic to his confessor, revealing all my thoughts and plans; You must however excuse my egotism in consideration of the confidence which it displays.

May all peace and happiness be yours.

Yours most affectionately
J. W. Dawson

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