

Pictou Apr 13, 1844. 40A  
April.

Dear Margaret—

You wish for some more  
expeditious way of exchanging thoughts  
than by letters; and write of it as if  
it were something hard to be discovered.  
Yet it is the simplest thing in the  
world, and can be done any day;  
and if you have not found it out,  
it is only because your affection  
for your 'ocean-devised friends' is  
not sufficiently strong to support you  
in those airy regions through which  
you might dart, swifter than lightning,  
to the most distant regions of the earth.

I have only to abstract my thoughts,  
for an instant, from my common  
occupations; and, in the twinkling of  
an eye, I can find myself clambering  
on Arthur's Seat, or conversing with  
some of my dear friends, at your  
mother's fireside; or, better still talk-  
ing philosophical nonsense, or it may  
be something wiser, with your own lens.

Self in Lover's Lane, or some equally well-remembered place. Or, when I am viewing anything beautiful in the scenery of my own country, I can have you there also, that I may think what you would feel or say. So that you the only thing necessary to realize your wish, is to think of me as I often do of you. I would not however, by any means, have you to discontinue the usual mode of communication by letters.

Since I last wrote I have visited Halifax, our Provincial seat of government. It is a wooden city of 25000 inhabitants, with a parliament, said by Dickens to resemble that of Britain seen through the wrong end of a telescope, a petty aristocracy of government officials, little scientific or literary taste — plenty, or rather more than enough, of politics — a great quantity of foppery and its accompaniments among the young men. Yet a number of very pleasing and intelligent people — I gave them three

lectures at the Mechanics Institute, had large audiences, and I believe pleased them very well. In other respects I have been passing the time in the same way that I usually do. My Mother was rather unwell in March but she has now quite recovered.

The paper mentioned in my last, was ~~not~~ sent to the London Geological Society. Your compliment about modesty is unnecessary, for notices of these papers do not usually give any opinion of their merits. All that I know of that is, that Mr Lyell wrote to me that it excited some discussion, and that <sup>his opinion</sup> some of the facts contained in it, were important to the explanation of some of our rocks. I state this to free myself from the accusation of being modest, a sin for which my conscience does not often check me.

I agree with your opinion of Allcotts book. He intended it, I suppose, for plain common people, and his writings are usually distinguished rather by a minute detail of particulars than by enlightened general views. Mrs Ellis is a

Much more agreeable writer.

You are quite right about politics. They are stormy and dangerous affairs, full of the bad passions and crafty designs of the worst men. They furnish however a good field of action for those who have sufficient nerve and talent to "ride the whirlwind and direct the storm"; either for their own good or that of their country.

I am well aware that this is not where my strength lies; and I have long been seriously thinking of turning my attention to a quite different sphere of action — the ministry of religion — My reasons are that in this way I might do more good, and it is my duty to turn whatever ability, natural or acquired, I possess, to the best possible account, for the good of others as well as of myself. This is not a new notion, but is one which I could not carry into effect without thought of the responsibility involved; and I cannot altogether leave my father's business as long as my attention to it may be necessary. If I do decide on this, however, I must soon take some steps towards it; I write of it now, that when you have returned from London and are at leisure, you may tell me what your good sense and friendly regard say of it.

With sincere wishes for your continued health and happiness, and that of your relatives, my dear friends,  
yours affectionately  
W. Dawson