

Pictou Dec 26/1842

Dear Margaret,

I take the first opportunity of replying to your letter of Dec 2. I thank you for the promptitude and decision of your answer, which is so complimentary that I cannot be offended, and so just and candid that it makes me only esteem you more highly.

When viewed in the manner in which you regard the subject, it is certainly the most rational answer which you could have given. I did not however expect a decisively favourable reply. Considering the nature of my declaration, and the circumstances in which it was made, it would have been ridiculous to have supposed that you would say, "at your service sir", and be ready

To wander "over land and sea,"
at a moment's notice; I am there-
fore not so much disappointed, as
if I had entertained extravagant
expectations; and am indeed well
pleased that you have stated so explicitly
your own views on the subject, and
thus enabled me clearly to understand
both my position and yours; a kindness
for which I cannot be sufficiently grateful.

I shall not therefore at present say
anything more on this subject, but shall
accept the honorable title which you
have given me, of 'one of your dearest friends,'
which I value too much to be dis-
posed to relinquish it, because I cannot
at present attain any more endearing
one.

I have lately enjoyed a very good
opportunity of studying some points in
the character of our Indians. The
Government annually sends them

Some Soldier's great-coats and Blankets,
which were, this winter, sent to my
father for distribution. There were
not enough, however, for all the
families, and two young ladies were
kind enough to go round, and so-
licit contributions of clothes from the
people of the town; a considerable
quantity was soon collected, and
we have been distributing to the
applicants, who, though they do not
like to beg, are very willing to accept
a "Present from the Queen" as they
call it.

I hope that before you receive
this, Mrs Bells children will all be
well, and that Matthew will soon
be as strong and active as the rest.
If he were old enough to travel, I
would advise that he should be

transported to America; so great a change of climate would give him new life.

Give my kindest good wishes to them all.

By the Frontier, my mother sent a few jars of preserves for your mother, I hope that they, as well as my little parcel, by Mr. Curran, will be accepted as tokens of friendship and gratitude.

I wrote the first part of this letter soon after receiving yours, and when I feel disposed to throw it away and write it over, you will however interpret it charitably. We sometimes fix our affections on persons for whom, if unbiased, we could have but little friendship; it is not so with me; for the good qualities which I know you possess, I cannot cease to esteem you, and they are associated with too many recollections of pleasure and instruction, to let them be forgotten. If then I have given you the highest place in my affections, with good reason, I cannot wish to displace you, especially as I know no worthy substitute; so that if I must be content to call you only a friend, it must be the very dearest and best friend that I have ever found, or perhaps ever will. As my paper is done, I must conclude with wishing you the good old wish, that you may have had a happy new year, and many have many more of them.

Yours affectionately
J. Dawson