

McGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
ACC. NO. 909B 15
REF. 216

London April 21. 72

My Dear Anna

I sit down to write without
the faintest idea what I am going to
write about. The last letter from home
gives accounts of a very heavy thaw. No
doubt most of the snow will have
vanished before this time, & perhaps
when you receive this it will be quite
spring. Here every thing is well advanced.
The trees quite covered with foliage &
the Lilacs in full flower. The weather
has been very fine indeed for the last
two days or so but seems now to
have broken & become cold & wet again
— For how long who can tell.

Dr Beply has asked me to go to
dine with him & then to the Geological
Soc. meeting tomorrow. The thing itself
is very pleasant, but really I grieve the
evening very much. I have both applied
Mechanics & Natural History long ago,
& worse luck the Nat. Hist. extends quarter
of an hour into the mechanics.

The worst feature of the case is that I
seem rather to like going out for an
evening this year, & to be on the lookout
for an excuse to waste some time.

I had meant to write to Rankin by
this mail but fear neither to have time
or news. Please tell him that I remarked
a very great improvement in the writing
of his last letter.

I don't know how it is but I always
seem to think of all the things which
I want to tell mamma, when I sit
down to

write to you & vice versa. For instance.
If any things in the Soft-foods line are to
be added in Edinburgh I think it would
be better to have them sent on to Liverpool
to meet me there. For I will have to
send to carry which will be a bother
to take by Rail. e.g. my great chair.
With regard to it, it is almost a question
whether it would be better to ship it by the
London line of steamers as freight, & leave
the land transit.

Apr 25th
The Geographical Socy meeting was a very good
one. First there were two letters from Dr Kirk
about Dr Livingstone, containing however nothing
very definite as to his safety or position.
Then a paper of Sherard Osburne on Arctic
exploration. The Geographical Socy are doing
all they can to make the Government fit-
out another polar expedition. It would have
been done some years ago but Dr Petermann the
German geographer contended hotly against the
Route by Smith's Sound proposed by the English

Geographers, & so the Admiralty people excused themselves by saying that they thought they must wait till some unanimity about the route had been arrived at. Now several German & other expeditions have tried Dr Petermanns Spitzbergen route & found it impassible & so the Soey think the time come when Smith's Sound can be decided on. The idea being to penetrate as far up Smith Sound as possible, winter there, & in the Spring set out for the pole itself by dog sledges, to the North of Greenland. Several people spoke in favour of the plan. Dr Hooker because of knowledge of recent & fossil plants likely to be obtained. Dr Carpenter was supposed to speak in a zoological light, but really gave a long harangue about his own discoveries & so till people got quite tired, & he sat down among abundant signs of dissatisfaction. Sir L. MacLinton advocated it as a preliminary to the antarctic expeditions to be undertaken for the transit of Venus.

Everybody was of opinion that no other nation was to be allowed to carry off the prize which we had shown them how to win. With all this unanimity I don't say something will be done.

Your Loving Brother
George