



Souris River
June 5. 1874.

My Dear Anna

Here we are in the
leafy month of June almost
without knowing it so fast does
time run on. We hope to get
across the first crossing of the Souris
tomorrow & at the second crossing
which is about 50 miles west
from here anticipate no difficulty
in fording the stream. Then about
fifteen days should take us to
Woody Gut which is rather past
the end of last years work.

Capt Anderson got a copy
of ~~an~~ a U.S. officers track survey
made last year, before leaving
Dufferin. It runs northward
across the Northern part of Montana
as far as the line through an
unknown country. The officer
says in his notes that several times
they had to sit up all night fighting
the buffalo to keep them from going
into the pools ~~for~~ ^{on} which the camp
depended for water. The buffalo
had been hunted by Indians. It
would seem from this that we
should not want for fresh meat,
but that the country must be
amarkably dry.

I crossed the river yesterday with
Dr. Burgess & two men, using
the extemporaray boat-fitted up for
bridge making which consists of a
wagon body covered with a tarpaulin.
& investigated one of the old
mounds known to the half-breeds
as Mandan houses. We found portions
of three skeletons. One much broken
up. Another apparently that of a
woman or very small man, nearly
perfect, the third a very young child,
fragments. The most perfect skeleton
was placed in a sort of sitting
attitude, & the three seem to have been
covered by a sort of roof of sticks
& posts the wood of which in a
rotten state may still be seen.
The appearance did not seem to

pound - to a greater age than say
50 years, but the mode of burial is
quite different - from that of the Sioux
who inhabit this part of the country
at present. The only things we could
find with the bodies were, 1. a flat
smooth or rounded piece of bone like
a paper cutter. 2. A large union
shell from the river. The mound
was over 50 feet wide & 6 feet high
& must have taken some time to
pile up.

Our diet - is at present chiefly bread
& a sort of imperfectly smoked bacon
with some cheese & other condiments.

I enclose a copy of the entire list.
When we get out west some of the
steer will be sacrificed & replace
pork & fresh beef. I cannot write more
as I will exhaust my whole summer's stock
of paper. Your loving brother George.