

Occidental Hotel, San Francisco.

San Francisco

July 27/75



East to West.

Mrs. Dawson

Astle's Hotel

Little Metis

Canada

P. Q.

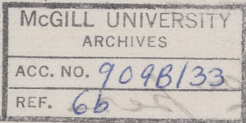
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Occidental Hotel San Francisco
July 27. 75.

My Dear Anna

While en route I have
written post cards to various
members of the family from time to
time, & hope that they have been duly
received. Now at San Francisco
I suppose something more like a
letter will be expected.

I arrived here yesterday evening
about 6 P.M. San Francisco time,
just as nearly as may be completing
my week's railway travel. After
making various enquiries on the
way I decided on coming to this
hotel, & it is a very good one,
as hotels go, & moderate for this

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expenses, being only \$300 per day.

It is quite impossible to begin to give you anything like a description of the journey, as there has been so much yet to describe. Beyond one or two points, chiefly geological, which I have noted down, I preserve in my mind only a dim outline of perpetually recurring railway stations &c. &c. As I have a guide book, however, of the route I can if necessary refer to it afterwards for what I did see, & there everything is described just as you find it, & much more so even.

I do not think the Scenery along
the railway all it is said to be,
though it would be difficult to
draw so long a line anywhere & not
see find something worth seeing on
it. Through Illinois & Iowa one
passes over a beautiful agricultural
country with quite the appearance
of old settlement, though so new.

On crossing the Missouri at
Omaha & passing into Nebraska
the undulating prairies of the two
former states, are exchanged for
the true western plains. There are
a few good looking young settlements,
but you soon get so far west
that the only settlements you see

are those which have grown up on
the railway itself. After a long long
stretch across the prairie you
attain the highest point on the
railway almost without noticing
it, though before reaching it some
snowy distant peaks are seen.

This highest point is known as
Sherman Sta & is at the Summit
of the first or Laramie Range. You
then descend again, passing across
the Laramie plains, & through a

very broken country, & next take
the ascent of the second range,
~~again~~ again almost without

realizing it, though up very heavy
grades toward the Summit. On
descending this range toward Salt Lake

Valley the first really grand scenery is
 met with. The line passes down the
 Echo & Weber Canions beneath huge cliffs
 of red sandstone & conglomerate. I should
 have mentioned that before reaching the
 first range Mining settlements are frequent,
 & that in proceeding some quite large towns
 are seen. Here in Salt Lake Valley
 the country is quite thickly settled by
 Mormons, who do not abide in Salt
 Lake City only as is frequently supposed,
 but cover an extensive area of country.
 They have taken immense trouble to irrigate
 the valleys, & irrigation ditches cross &
 across in all directions. You may see
 on one side of the fence dry sand with
 tufts of sage brush, & on the other a
 fine field of corn or grain. The houses
 are chiefly built of sun dried bricks
 are sheltered by plantations of trees &

horses, & have a general air of
thrift & prosperity about them. The
whole Salt Lake Valley surrounded by
Ranges of Mountains, some of them
with perpetual snow in their upper
vallies. We had a fine view of the
great Salt Lake by sunset, with
some magnificent display of colour
on the mountains behind it. Another
slight crest is passed west of Salt
Lake, & then a long stretch is made
across the dry-as-dust region
between the Rocky Mountains proper
& the Sierras. Down the valley gets
Humboldt & across a so called
desert which in reality is not
much worse than the rest of the
country hereabouts, not so called.

This is all a good mining region
however, & is probably only begun to
be really developed. Passing over the
Crest of the Sierra Nevada Range,
the character of the country changes
entirely & though still rather dry
the surface is nearly everywhere wooded,
generally with pines. I felt quite lost
here not knowing more than a very
few of the trees or plants by sight.

The descent of the Sierras is the best
part of the scenery of the road, others
are really some wonderful valleys
& cañons. The trail creeps along

down heavy grades round cliff
points & over long trestle bridges &
embankments ~~but~~ in a very alarming
manner. Past numerous gold mining

trains, down along the foot-hills,
& then across the great level plain
where the farming land of California lies.
The first crop is now harvested
& the whole country looks perfectly dry
& brown, with the exception of the
trees scattered here & there, & along
the rivers. We were fortunate in having a
cool day, for the day before at
Sacramento it had been 100° in the
shade, & thermobits frequently goes
up to unpleasant temperatures.
Over some were comparatively low
hills, past some sub-urban villages
of San Francisco & then out a long
bridge-like wharf into the bay, where
a ferry meets the trains & takes passengers

across to the city.

I did not feel at all tired or arriving
or think I might have travelled on
for two or three months. In fact I only
began to settle down into habits, & learn
the necessary alidity at meals.

I must confess however that I have
felt rather stupid today, probably
from want of the necessary shaking up.

The Chinaman, extremely abundant here,
stretches far east along the railway,
appearing first as waiter (I a very
good waiter he makes) then in other

capacities, especially in the washing &
ironing capacity under such signs as

"Lo Chee washing & ironing" & also
working along the railroad with the
true celestial garb & hat a hat

3)
which you may remember is this



Shape & looks like an
inverted ornamental basket.

Here the Chinese is ubiquitous,
& except that some are a little older &
others a little younger, they ^{all} look as though
made in the same mould out of
the same colour of putty. You see
Chinese advertisements to shops,
Chinese down stairs washing linen,
Chinese walking about smoking cigars,
or trotting along with a big bundle
at each end of a long stick over their
shoulders -

The ladies met with en route
wear almost invariably travelling
suits of unbleached something, that looks
very unbleached indeed. Gentlemen ⁱⁿ ~~with~~

in unbleached coats like alsters, or
coats of the same pattern of alpaca
(am bright?) These latter are very
useful to keep the dust from the
Railway, & had I known in time

I should have had one.

Now for San Francisco. I have seen
little of the place yet, but there are a
good many things which strike one as
new & interesting. The rainy season,
or rather season of rains, for it
cannot be precisely wet when only
24 inches of rain fall in the year -
begins in October. During the summer
months no rain falls. The day is fine,
and the purchase is the best.

Mornings - generally moderately warm,
but every afternoon a sea breeze springs
up & makes it quite cool. Ladies &

others wear a little fur & in
glutinous light ~~or~~ overcoats sometimes.
I am also told that there is never a
night here when you cannot ^{hear} ~~wear~~
two blankets with comfort.

San Franciscans are not at all like
ordinary Eastern Yankees, & one of the first
things that struck me was the general
robust & healthy appearance of the people;
especially as compared with the sallow
punched up inhabitants of some of the
~~the~~ outlying Western States. They do
not talk unadorned Eastern Yankee
~~and~~ in manner of dress ~~or~~ seem
rather to lean to English than
American Customs. They are extremely
proud of their State & City & in every
day on the railway were fully
interested in showing & explaining everything

(4)

to strangers. Are they spread out
on arriving here, what I knew in a
sort of way but had not remembered.
viz. that California & Nevada have never
adopted the frontback system, but hold on
to specie payment, gold \$20 & \$2 pieces
with the usual silver money constitute the
currency; but they have a peculiar institution
in the bit. A bit is $12\frac{1}{2}$ Cents, I
don't know of them as any coin to
represent it, but it is about the lowest
payable fraction & equal to about a
penny elsewhere.

Fruit is extremely abundant here & is not
sent east in greater quantity only on
account of the heavy charges by the railway.
Quinces, galls, peaches, apples &
pears are in season, as well as
grapes of many varieties. All these
are pressed in gold in the streets &
presented three times a day.

unlimited quantity at the
Hotel table. Every thing delicious & new
seen in preparation. Large areas are
laid out in nurseries & in gardens
I see fuchsias forming large bushes,
Yuccas, Ivy, &c. &c. all growing together
most harmoniously.

I had intended writing you to others
but as your letter has grown so
long for I must put it off.

I daresay this letter is very compared
but I am not going to read it
over. There is such a ceaseless din
in this hotel that it is not conducive
to steady thought. Besides the
chattering of many feet the doors
are perpetually swinging, & that terrible

instituted the elevator makes
an endless burring & grunting.

I find I have to wait here till
Saturday noon for a steamer. But
I have today got out by passage
& secured a berth (\$25.00) to

Victoria. I have kept a lookout
for Mr Richardson where possible
on the road, but have not seen

him & cannot find him here.

I found a telegram waiting me here
in the past year, saying that all

necessary Camp equipment is at
Victoria. To this I have replied, hoping
that he may still be there.

This would have gone in a

letter to father had I split up

the correspondence as at
first intended.

I am writing a note to William
& Edinburgh, as have yet
meeting him there

Your long letter

is

I will send full particulars
as to manner of forwarding

plant list to Surgeon next time

I write, in a day or two. I did
not see him at Toronto after

all.

Love to all the family at Antis
& special kind regards to anyone else
who may value them of me.