

To Victoria  
by train + coach -  
through Oregon  
Nevada etc -

very interesting Mrs 1.

14 % Principal Dawson 1877

day  
trip

McGill College

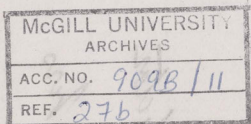
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Victoria B.C. May 13. 1877

My dear Anna,

As already announced in  
a short note to Mother, I arrived here  
on Thursday Evening last, my previous  
movements should also have been pretty  
well defined if the Post-cards dropped  
from time to time have all reached

Safely.

I suppose you will expect to receive some  
short account of my journey, which occupied  
sixteen days, & so will try to give you  
a few notes. — The time occupied  
would have been just 14 days but for  
two days of forced rest, one at Porebury  
on a Sunday, the second at Seattle on  
"the Sound" waiting for the steamer, which  
only makes two trips a week each way.

At Port Huron I got safely through the  
 hands of the Customs Officers, without any  
 particular trouble, & proceeded on to  
 Chicago in the regular course. There changing  
 Cars, <sup>after</sup> & waiting about an hour onward  
 to Omaha, arriving there in a great storm  
 of wind & rain - by no means pleasant  
 as two changes were to be made, the first  
 into the Bridge transfer Cars, & then after  
 crossing again into the Pullman on the  
 U. P. Ry. In the western States, & at Omaha  
 everything was green, somewhat in advance  
 of Montreal, willows being in flower &c, but  
 on going a few miles further west, vegetation  
 being at about the same stage, we got  
 into a snow storm, which continued with little  
 intermission till we reached the Summit at  
 Sherman. Several miles before Sherman we  
 got into quite deep dry drifted snow-banks

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& had some difficulty in getting through with three engines & a  
snow plough. On leaving Omaha people know that they are bound  
to spend a few days together as on a short sea voyage, & in  
consequence at once became more conversational & friendly. There  
were two Pullmans on the train & some very pleasant people  
most of whom I forget already. I had a seat with a Mr Wise,  
connected with the Reg. Office at Ogden Utah who proved intelligent.  
Near at hand was an Americanized Dutchman appointed as  
Portmaster to some remote district, & travelling with his daughter a  
not-too-ugly girl but too modest to speak. There was a Mrs  
Lawrence from Washington going out to join her husband, a doctor  
in Arizona also another lady who soon became a chum of hers

but got off to go to Gold Hill in Nevada, where her husband is  
something in mines - also a number of other people, including  
several young ladies all of whom with the exception of one  
were sufficiently plain looking & commonplace in every respect.  
The one I was returning to Oakland in California from a  
visit to her mother & other members of the family - she  
was extremely good looking to say the least of it - & clever also -  
but as I can just imagine you running your eye along the  
red line to see all about it - I shall pull up here without  
telling you her name or anything else. We had a small  
Cabinet organ on one of the Pullmans, & the musical portion of the  
community continued to culminate the journey with songs till we lost the  
music box in changing cars at Ogden. About the only time everybody  
seemed to know was Hold the Fort, so this & some others of Mrs S's.

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series were favorites. Disgusted with the loss of our instrument - we solaced ourselves by sitting out on the platform & steps waiting for Sunrises, sunsets, meridian passages & other astronomical phenomena - watching them, & then going back indoors to shake buckets of dirt out of our clothes, & wash pebbles out of our eyes. One sunset over the Great Salt Lake was very satisfactorily observed, we also observed antelope which appeared to reciprocate in our cases, & from time to time several people would dash themselves violently against a window to see a Jack rabbit - which never could be seen. In the Salt Lake Valley we found apples, peaches &c in full bloom & everything like early summer, but soon ran into the wastes of the Humboldt Valley, & thence crept up to the summit of the Sierra Nevada where the appearance was that of very early spring with plenty snow lying about. From the summit <sup>which</sup> you attain in the very early morning, you run down to San

Francisco in one day, arriving there in  
 the evening. As we slid along, the only care  
 of the engine now being to keep the train  
 from running too fast — we passed down  
 through the foot-hills now green & beautiful  
 with flowers to the wide Sacramento Valley,  
 & found ourselves in summer, Roxing going  
 on strawberries ripe & all the trees in full  
 foliage. At Roseville junction near  
 Sacramento I reluctantly left the comforts  
 of the Pullman, & in five minutes found  
 myself alone & forlorn kicking my heels  
 in as dull a little country waiting room  
 as you ever saw. I had several hours to  
 do it in & so did not hurry, but tried  
 reading & walking & having some dinner  
 & at last four o'clock came & went in the  
 train for Maryville, surcharged with hot  
 local passengers interspersed with babies.  
 At Maryville I had to get a new ticket,  
 telegraph for a place on the Stage, get luggage  
 rechecked & supper within 20 or 25  
 minutes — which being fulfilled we

jogged on to Reading, stopping at all sorts of little stations by the way, but finally pulling up at the terminus at about 1 A.M. After going to bed we got up at half past four to breakfast for the stage starting at five. The first view of the stage was not very reassuring as the inside was half filled with mail matter, & a miscellany strapped all over the back top. For passengers we had a stout Great-grandfather & his wife going up to Oregon to see their children, an American-German Jew buying skins & furs, an attorney to something & a non-descript man also with a wife. We gradually settled as the stage wore on, those at front occupying the honourable but uncomfortable position of keystones, finding themselves on the seat in the course of half an hour. The Great-grandmother would have kept plenty of room in her

corner had she been strong enough, but fortunately years had done their work & she was not. Various kaleidoscopic changes occurred as we went along which even to remember would be tedious. We lost some passengers & gained others, till finally the horses preponderating I found myself alone with the driver on arriving at Roseburg. From Reading we drove on for three days & two nights, the longest stop we made being at Greka for two hours. The roads were execrable being first hardened after the winter rains, & then composed of ruts & hard intervening ridges, in worst places so narrow that it is with the greatest difficulty a place can be selected for two coaches to pass. Though not passing along sheer cliffs as on the Frazer River, this road cut out for long distances like a shelf on steep grassy hill sides & with almost impossible steep hills to ascend & descend, is really far more dangerous. At one place



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Near the north line of California you ascend the Siskiyou Mountain - a sort of pass - over 2000 feet high by means of a system of most involved doubling too & fro. On the top, you at once begin to descend again by a road very like the ascent I suppose though I don't know much about it - as it was pitch dark. I only heard the brake shrieking against the wheels as we went ~~to~~ bumping along, & saw the horses (six of them) apparently dancing on the edge of an abyss as we flew round the curves. However we reached the bottom at last - & I don't particularly want ever to see that hill again. One begins to get sleepy too about the third day. You are admiring the scenery - paying the greatest possible attention to it - when all at once you ~~relax~~ relapse into a state of temporary insanity with the most absurd dreams rushing through your head till all <sup>suddenly</sup> at once you wake just on the point of jolting forward.

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among the horses. When at Curt we stopped I found myself all covered with contusions & tender spots, hands brightly polished with holding on to the iron rails, & head nearly sawn off by the edges of my collar, but still in a capital condition for a good night's sleep. Next day we went on again in the stage till about 3 P.M. when we reached Roseburg. Hence to Portland Oreg. by rail, thence on the Willamette & Columbia by steamer to Kalama, thence by rail to Tacoma, thence by steamer to Seattle & finally thence by steamer Vire. On reaching, about the Pacific at the lower end of the Sound they presented us among other delicacies with Clams. I proposed to eat some of them in honor of the occasion & began on one, but finally concluded I would try something else as we had only half an hour for supper. I cannot enter into detail however with the various gastronomic struggles experienced

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during the journey, or the varying consequent forms of indigestion. It would be too sad a subject to close with. I find too I have not said anything about the scenery which was the chief object of the letter at the outset, also that my record of the weather has been prematurely brought to a close about page 2. Both of which circumstances you will no doubt deeply regret. Some of the country is really very pretty, & it is all well worth seeing once. You pass in Western California within a few miles of the base of Mt Shasta a wonderful snow clad volcanic mountain over 14,000 feet in height, & almost isolated. Then the Valley of the Rogue River, & those of the Shasta, Klamath & Umpqua are remarkably beautiful. The country is generally mountainous but with little rock showing, bare grassy slopes rising steeply from the valleys to heights of 1000 or at least

several hundred feet, scattered clumps & groves of fine well grown & rounded oaks, maples, & tall firs. The whole from the effect of a perfectly kept park, with wide fertile fields in the flat bottom-lands of the valleys, all at this season beautifully green. The climate too is probably as fine as any in the world, with scarcely anything that we would call winter, less rain than on the actual coast, & an Italian summer admitting of the easy cultivation of grapes on the large scale. It being Sunday I may be allowed to characterize it in the words of the psalmist as a region "where every prospect pleases, but only man is vile" for really I never heard so much concentrated bad language before as during the last ten days.

The steamer from San Francisco is expected in hourly & I hope to hear from home & to know that your convalescence has been complete. I feel already as if I had been journeying forty years in the wilderness since leaving Montreal, but hope to enter into the promised land via New Westminster about next Friday. I fear I have written a great deal of nonsense, & so shall read it over to see. I address to Mr. Gile as I have forgotten your name please send it to me on a slip. Your affectionate brother George