

Verdun, Saturday evening.  
June 16<sup>th</sup> 1877.

Please let Father see the letter I enclose  
for George.

William

MCGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES	
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My dear Anna,

It is some time since  
I have written to you, but you see  
I count on your hearing news of me  
at home. I have just been making  
a round to try to ascertain the news  
of to-day as this is the celebrated 16<sup>th</sup>  
June when the Assembly is to meet.

I found an evening paper at the  
restaurant I went to, and was shocked  
to find that it was a rabid reaction-  
ist; ~~and~~ I thought at first it must  
be adopting the ironical style as many  
of the papers do now that the penalties  
are so severely enforced; but I was forced  
to admit that it actually approves of  
the Marshall & the 16<sup>th</sup> May. I dare  
say it may have caught some of the  
contagion from Bordeaux as it is only about  
18 miles from here. It is near one of the

stations that I passed in coming here from Commercy. The railway follows the left bank of the Meuse, and ~~at~~ on stopping at one of the stations the passengers in the carriage pointed out the top of a steeple which could be seen over the trees in a little valley running to the left and which they said was the church at Lourdes.

This evening after dinner, I went to the telegraph office to ask if they had any news. The paper here does not pay for any telegrams, but contents itself with copying the Paris papers when they arrive by post. I am not quite sure that they had no news but at any rate they were not authorized in giving it. I was told that the only place would be the Sous-Prefecture but every-one had left by that time. There are 10 000 people here, ~~but~~ and it is strange they care so little about the news. If they think as their journal does it is not perhaps so surprising.

I will not receive any letters this week, as I have directed them to be sent to Charleville, & I will not be there till towards the end of next week.

I left Nancy on Tuesday morning. But before leaving I called on Monday at the books. Mr. C. is a Wesleyan minister, & the only one at Nancy, unless the ministers of the <sup>National</sup> Reformed church are counted, but they are not much better than infidels as is often the case. He is very pleasant indeed & was very kind to me. There are two married sons in the family, one at Belfort & the other at Calais; and among those still at home there is a youth of 11 who rejoices in the name of Johnnie. He says he likes French better than English, and no wonder as his mother is French, & very pleasant she is too. He has a real English accent, which I like very much. I found he had gone to bathe in the Rhense, when I called; and as I had been wishing to have a bath, I immediately seized the opportunity. The bathing establishment (for of course even this has to be duly arranged & regulated) consisted of a rough wooden sled of new boards. It was refreshing to find anything in a half-finished primitive condition, & there was a real gravel beach to the river. It generally runs through meadows, with rushes growing along the edge.

I spent two or three days at Commercy a little village near the Meuse. There are a few streets with shops, & beyond these there are innumerable lanes running out in all directions like a heap of spellicans. They all have high walls built along them, & it is a regular maze as it is impossible to tell which way one is going, & the lanes are two crooked to see more than a few yards ahead. I was in a hotel only a few steps from the station.

On Thursday I had the distinguished honour of making a round with the Engineer in Chief, M. Frérot, accompanied by two other Engineers from Nancy. I met them at the station above Commercy & we walked back to it along the line of the Canal, about 6 miles altogether. With this & the walks I made myself, I saw a length of about 13 miles while at Commercy. They returned to Nancy the same afternoon. Before leaving, M. Frérot invested in a box of "Madelines", a kind of cake for which Commercy is celebrated, which he asked me to give to M. l'Ingénieur Holtz here who is his son-in-law, the cakes being destined for ~~the~~ his grandchildren.

Believe me, your affectionate brother  
William.