

Montreal October 15th 1881.

My dear George

Days & weeks fly past while I wait for a favourable opportunity to write to you, & all the while a chronic inward reproaching of myself goes on for my delay, & now in desperation I determine to scribble anything rather than wait. We have been home from Mtis a little more than a month - for the first three weeks we were very much occupied housekeeping had to be started afresh, new errors to be hunted for, & we found a very difficult matter ^{they} are more scarce than ever before, so we had to be content to take untrained girls for two departments, we had given both Lou & me, up to the present, a good deal of care - thinking for & teaching them. Then a week after our return, Gertrude Allan & a cousin of hers - Miss Cook - of Beackville, who had been spending the summer together in New Brunswick, wrote to us

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offering a visit on this very home.
Had we been more settled, our family
is so small that it is ^{hardly} a house to have had
friends with us; as it felt it was rather
inconvenient, however Miss Cook was
so pleasant that after all we enjoyed
this short visit. The garden too added
its quota of work, for it has yielded an
abundant crop of apples, & my little tree
has borne nearly a barrel of lovely pears.
I, what with preserving - Curing for
& sending to friends has been a business -
not to speak of our fasting on the pears
at every meal for a month's past, our
only regret being that we could not share
them with you. Was it not this evening.
All this by way of excuse for my apparent
neglect. We have now a fair prospect
quiet & more regular routine, although
this too has its drawbacks as it makes
us feel our loneliness so much more.
Dear Eva tries to show the kindness of
the Combined family to me in her personal
devotion, but she pines about in a lonely
quiet way that makes me realize that she

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suffers from the change more than
either paper or Vd . We are experiencing
the most extraordinary sudden & extreme
changes of temperature this month - two
weeks ago, on a Tuesday, the ther: stood
between 71° & 80° & during the night it fell
to 25° - killing every bit of flowers & plants
& shrivelling the green leaves on the trees
as if they had been scathed with fire.
two days later we were pouring with
heat & so it goes on. Today a summer
wind is setting the dried leaves & our
windows are open to carry off the surplus
heat from the furnace. These changes
make us think often of you, exposed to
the "heat by day & the frosts by night" & make
us long with much longing to hear that
you are safely on your homeward
route, leaving high lands & early snows
far behind. Your last letter is dated 14th
August, a long time. . . . The Gov: General has
just returned from your region of
country, delighted with his journey & all
he has seen. We have heard this from
the Rev: Mr. Macgregor who accompanied
him

He lunched with us last Wednesday
 & the same day we dined with him
 at the Comphell's ^{with} whom he was staying,
 so that we had a somewhat lengthened
 opportunity for information. Dr Mac^r is
 a little, very earnest minded man, widely
 travelled, innocent of clerical manners,
 full of varied information & quite as
 eager to acquire more. He could hardly
 tear himself away from the attractions
 of our house. In your Reports, pamphlets,
 &c he found just what he wanted
 to fill up his knowledge of the W. W. as
 they had no who knew anything of geology
 or natural history with this party. He
 has been forwarding letters to the Edin:
 "Statesman" or "Courant" & probably these
 will ultimately assume the book
 form, but I trust he will prove a more
 honest as well as a higher style of writer
 than Mr Gordon. We are sorry that you
 had not met the party. Mr Macgregor is
 such a charming man fascinating all here
 who have met him & we have pleased you too

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Pape, by request of the Gov: Gen: is at Gov: House today, to Consider his scheme for establishing a "Royal Canadian Academy of Literature & Science". of wh: Pape is to be Pres: The Gov: sails for England & must stay to remain for two months. You will see by the newspapers that the financial affairs of Mr Pile have been laid before the public of Montreal, in the hope that they will come forward to sustain it.

These matters have added both work & worry to the poor Principal who, in addition, has tried to relieve his feelings through his pen, although the papers do not tell all that is to be known on that point, because besides the \$1000 to the Science School, he is giving the rest of his year's salary to aid the completion of things connected with the Museum. However that does not trouble one compared with the fact of the amount of work that lies before him. You may know that the American Pres: is to meet here at the end of August next & that

Papa is also President of this — a business in itself; but besides he has pledged himself to have the new Museum arranged & to have the formal opening of it at the time of this meeting. Just think of the worry that will come from the inevitable delays of the completion of the building alone! besides the work that lies between this & that time, the load though he overwhelms me! I am sure he will require the support of all his sons to bear him through & I do hope one or more will come to the rescue.

The lay of the Museum, which was to have been finished in August, is not yet completed. I ought to have said in connection with the College affairs that Papa was a good deal encouraged by the hearty shows at the meeting of the 13th, & altho' the practical part is still in the future he is now hopeful about it.

We have had a letter from William tonight — He writes cheerfully as is his wont. He likes his work altho' he would

prefer more settled employment. If Mr. Kennedy, of the Harbour Works, can keep the office he offered him during the summer open till Spring he will entertain the idea of accepting it, altho' the salary is only \$12.00, but he has never said whether it can.

We have a letter weekly from Rankine, he perseveres in attending lectures in London keeping us anxious as to his power to stand the strain of so much study, however I hope this month will see him through them & then I trust he will indulge himself in some recreation. Several of our friends here written to me expressing their earnest wish that he shd visit them. I daresay that he will be still able to give about six weeks to his friends & if all goes well get out before Christmas. At that season I hope we may have you all once more together again.

Willie Reaputh's death has been only the first of a long list of sorrowful events. How other young men — sons of people we know, have suddenly passed

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away. Mr. Fair, second son of yours also
teacher, leaving wife & three children - &
Mr. Frase & Mr. Stewart - I don't say not
personally known to you, were drowned.
The youngest son of the late Hon. Johnson
& his mother's great comfort, died sud-
denly. Kate Hamilton of Quebec has lost
the youngest of his three boys - a lovely
child of three & three months. Mr. Perry,
of the "Herald". old Mrs. Herries, old Miss
Way, Capt. Hurnford, Mrs. Whit & Mrs. Carey
are all numbers with the dead. The
last named saddest perhaps of all. She
returned a little earlier than we did,
apparently in health of body & mind.
The third day after her return she
showed occasional excitement of mind
& merriment. She was paying visits & laid
out of the usual things. On the 4th day she was completely out of
her mind. She continued in a most
wretched state for fourteen days, talking in-
cessantly & sleeping only ten hours during
that whole period. She then sunk into
an unconscious lethargy from which she never

roused, dying on the eighteenth day
 (the 25 of Apr. I think). Pove Herbert
 returned from England a week
 after the funeral, not having heard
 even a hint of her illness until he
 entered the house & found himself
 mortuero. Hattie hears his trial very
 quietly but is as pale as a lily. Lawrence,
 who staid with us throughout
 her illness & death, is more excitable
 & felt it bitterly - He is a nice boy
 but will sadly miss a mother's care
 in his training. Herbert has been
 somewhat wild while absent &
 came very near being drowned in
 the Lake of Geneva. Mr. Wary has
 brooded over this much & she was
 at an eye, somewhat critical, when
 Mary is apt to excite the system, this
 is the only explanation given to account
 for her illness. Herbert has certainly assumed
 the air & talk of an English College swell,
 but I decessary he will come out of it. He
 has gone to Philadelphia to live with a

Aunt to study Medicine as a profession.
 There is a great deal of typhoid
 here. Bab Lunge & Mr. Purgans are
 both on the recovery side of the disease.
 The former having had a very severe
 attack. Mr. Cassils is in a very
 precarious state, from a tumour
 near the stomach which has been
 operated upon successfully, but
 left him doubtful of ultimate
 recovery. But really I must stop
 this harrowing list. & before I finish
 the year of one wedding. Mrs.
 Mr. Lean & his daughter, from
 Halifax, passed through here last
 Thursday & they told us that Annie
 Primrose was engaged to Prof.
 Bain of Kingston. He is a son of the
 late Rev. Mr. Bain of Pictou. It seems they
 have been trying to get engaged for
 eight years. The marriage will be
 about 4 mos.

Notwithstanding that ^{some of} the rumours
 I have mentioned have fallen on

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members of the Library. The Club is
again on the tapis. Mr. Moyer &
Miss Lums came up last night
to confer about it, & I have little doubt
that it will be resumed this winter.
Mr. Bates are anxious to have it & Mrs
Malson called & voluntarily offered
her support & counsel, indeed all who
are not in deep mourning wish to
have it commenced. Mr. Moyer
proposes to take up three authors of
the Elizabethan period & one modern
one, suggesting: "In Memoriam" as person-
ally he wishes to make it a study. Essays
are to be insisted upon. The last years
are now ready to be distributed to mem-
bers. It has taken Mr. M. all the summer
to correct proofs of the same. He read the
proofs seven times.

We are in daily expectation of a
visit from Arthur Cross who is
returning from Japan via San Francisco.
Anna & her flock are well. She like myself
has found great difficulty in writing

12/ husely with comments. She succeeded
I believe in getting a nurse yesterday.

We are tempted to think it hard that
when you do return for the winter
that still you will be absent from
home. I wish you could settle
at something in Montreal.

But I must bring this long letter
to a close. I fear it will bore you
reading it. I may furnish by telling you
of the Patts. They are now settled in
their own old house. Sir Alex. returns
to England next Sat. by New York line
Katie is paying a visit to Johnnie in
Chicago. She may go as far as St. Pauls to
stay with Angus's. Johnnie has decided
to go into partnership with one of Judge
Patt's sons as wholesale grocer in Winnipeg.
Amy is here looking as blooming as ever
She talks of going to New York after James
with much love, dearest George,
Believe me ever to be your affectionate

Mother