

G's opinion re  
Father's biography

THE RIDEAU CLUB,  
OTTAWA.

Dec. 31. 1899.

Dear Ranking,

When in Montreal for  
Christmas, I had some talk with  
Mother & Anna about Father's  
biography & what is to be done about  
it, but no very definite conclusions  
were arrived at. I had previously  
looked over the MS. & it would not  
be a very difficult matter to edit this  
as an autobiography. It would not  
make a very large book, but I fear it  
would not be a generally interesting  
one as it is largely matter of  
fact & includes long extracts from

addresses, lectures &c from on  
various occasions. Father's own life  
was not replete with incident or adventures  
of any striking kind. Writing it himself  
he might have made it more of a point of  
outlook on events in which he always  
took the greatest interest & conditions  
with which he was familiar, that were  
interesting & he now pursued were or  
less into history.

When father went away after his  
recovery from pneumonia in 1892,  
I suggested to him the compilation of an  
autobiography & pointed the character it  
might be given as an outlook upon him,  
but he evidently felt more interest  
in the matters which had chiefly  
occupied him & thought it necessary  
to present these in an orderly way.  
The question now arises whether his



autobiography should be edited & printed or whether a biography should be written, drawing upon other sources. In the latter case, his addresses & papers on educational & other subjects might very well be published separately. His scientific achievements & more particularly his great work in Acadia would find mention in the biography.

The writing of a biography would be a literary task & it would be interesting exactly in proportion to the amount of literary skill bestowed upon it. With far less material, an interesting volume might be produced by a talented author, but the question arises whether we should, or could, attempt any such work.

My own feeling at present is in favour of taking some compromise plan such as the lives of Playfair's life

about which I wrote lately, utilizing  
for this a large part of the auto-biographical  
material.

You are perhaps best situated to form  
an outside view of the question & I  
shall be glad to know what you  
think about it.

I do not know what your plans may  
be & to what extent you may feel  
able to assist in the task, whatever  
form it may take. For myself, it  
seems very difficult to get the time to  
do anything in the winter of winter,  
unless I should cut my connection  
with Fort. Wash, which might arise  
either voluntarily or in consequence of the  
present Fort. rendering my position  
here intolerable.

Many thanks for the numerous papers  
received lately — I think some one  
might look into the sources of the



Associated Press dispatches  
 that furnish war news to the  
 United States & to Canada. These  
~~the~~ dispatches set out & which serve  
 to inform public opinion on this  
 side of the Atlantic, while not absolutely  
 erroneous, are such as might  
 commend themselves to a conscientious  
 Journalist, if there be such an object.  
 It seems almost worth while for the  
 English Government to take the  
 necessary steps to influence the  
 people in the U.S. — we are quite  
 sound in Canada. It should not  
 be lost sight of that the daily press  
 & its telegrams really directs this  
 opinion & that the man who holds  
 the wires would do it. Britain  
 certainly owns the wires but with her

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usual Carelessness she seems  
to facilitate their employment  
by agents of her foes.

My very kind regards to Mr.  
& with best wishes

Believe me  
Yours truly

Genl M. Dawson

