

Dear Melle

Pictou April 1st / 61

It is some time since I wrote you, and as you no doubt feel an interest in the doings of your old home, I thought I would drop you these few lines. We have had a very fine winter, plenty snow & excellent travelling this causing our little town to assume quite a lively appearance. And particularly so on account of the demand for ship timber there being four vessels building here this season. Still business in general has been dull. We had only two or three very cold days and not a storm worth mentioning until March. And then we had one in earnest, a real old fashioned one, on account of it, no mails arrived for days from Halifax, a most unusual occurrence. The Harbour remained ice bound until the fourth of April and from that time until now. We have had cold easterly winds but now the weather has set in fine and warm, with a splendid

Shows from the South, thus drying
up our roads & taking all the frost out of
the ground. There is every prospect of a
good farming season. We are going
to have a Marine Railroad built here
for repairing & cleaning vessels, the
Company was formed last fall & the work
is to be commenced immediately, the whole
cost is \$16,000. dollars or \$4,000. & is to be
worked by steam, our Port has been long
in need of something of the kind & it is now
going to be supplied. We all think the
investment will be a good one, all ship
owners promise their countenance & numbers
of them are holders of stock, we have taken
\$1,000 stock, believing that we will benefit
by it & also that the work will do good to
the town. We think it will be the means of
bringing many vessels into the Port, particularly
ones in want of repair & wicks, also American
fishing vessels, the latter class of vessels have
now to clean their bottoms by running them ashore
which injures them & is also very troublesome,
compared with cleaning on a Railway. We are
about attempting a reform in our Poor System, as
it is now. We are fightfully imposed on,

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to give you some idea our Poor & Pump Lat
two years ago was £12. You know how difficult
that is from what it used to be, as it is now,
it is nothing more or less than offering a
bounty on Laziness. We are going to try the Poor
House System. We endeavored to get the County to
join us. but would not. This year we are going
to rent a house out of the town, as an experiment
& if successful will build a Poor House. We
are convinced we will gain by it & at the same
time the worthy poor will be better looked
after. We intend to make them work at light
labour, such as picking, Salom, Knitting &c &c.
We have now between twenty & thirty paupers on our
list & we expect, in fact, are sure that when
the Poor House is opened in May, there will only be
from ten to twelve who will go into it. it is thus
that we will benefit. We have had the old
Burying Ground Company Incorporated. Naming it
Lanell Hill Cemetery ^{company} our officers are all appointed
& it will from this time out, be kept in proper
order. We are going to have it all planted out,
round the walks with different kinds of trees,
principally native ones. it is even now a very
different place, to what it was, when you left,
all parties owning lots have to enter their names

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on the book & when a party owning a lot, but is
absent or residing elsewhere, an agent is required
to do it for him or her, if the party so wishes
it and as you requested me to look after
your lot, I intend to do so and will see
that the lot is always properly looked after
and kept in order. Not Diakon Joes is
very ill and is not expected to live long
He is a very old man, about 90,
Father has been very well for him, this winter
he was out every day walking about and amusing
himself. he also reads a great deal. We have
no trouble to speak of, with him. he is now
attending to the garden, clearing it up and
preparing it for sowing &c. Mother is real well
and looks as well as she did years ago.
Mimi is growing finely. She goes to school,
and reads very well & can write a little.
Lassie is very well, but she met with a
great loss lately, her little baby died a
few weeks ago. Very suddenly, she was sick
only 15 hours, & died of inflammation in the stomach.
She was a smart & pretty child & just beginning
to be very interesting, she was 7 months old, it
was a great loss to the young parents, and is
very much missed by all in the house.
We have not any mail from Margot
who now lives at Scattered's place, about 7
miles out of Bauff. Her husband was in very

Letters of A. Dawson
17 Apr 1861

bad health, he was nearly dead with the bleeding
Piles. & had to undergo an operation (Surgical),
a perfect cure. He believes has been effected and
he enjoys a good health now, as he ever did,
He has released the farm, his father occupied
for a term of 21 years, it is a splendid property
of about 300 acres, he intends, to ~~continue~~ ^{continue} the farm
but at the same time, he is going to attend to his
Commission business, which is a good one & pays
him well, his father is living & will attend to
the farm in his absence. We expect him out
shortly. Margaret is delighted with the country
& is going to make it her home. Anne is living
at Rock Ferry near Liverpool, she & all her
family (she has two children now, all very well
I suppose you heard of the death of Mrs. Morrison
of Loanhead also the only son, it is a great affliction
to the family, and a terrible loss, I saw the young
man when I was home, he was a good son & a stout
lad, Mrs. Mather Alchibald died very suddenly
last week, she had been complaining a little all
winter, she was troubled with the dropsy in her limbs,
but she was of very thing, better than usual, the night
before her death. So much so, that she intended to
have had a drive in the waggon the next day,
but that night the water or swelling left her legs