

Ravens
Feb 1885



Saturday
Feb. 18th

My dear Father,

I have several
communications to acknow-
ledge, but have as yet
heard nothing of a book
which Mother speaks of
having sent, I under-
stand, some time ago.
Many thanks for your
note, received yesterday,
written to await my
arrival, and giving
some account of the
indications you have

2, notices of a new
tide of prosperity, about to
set in, in Montreal.

I trust I can see that
they may be realized.
& that soon. I have
always been a great
believer in the benefits
likely to accrue from
the Sault-St-Marie Conne-
tion, and indeed eight
or ten years ago, when
Bray was editor of the
Canadian Spectator,
wrote for him a column
or two on the subject,
setting forth the immense
savings in distance from
St-Paul & Minneapolis,

3/ which even at that
time were recognized
as following rapidly
in Chicago's foot steps
as centres of western
commerce. Montreal
will doubtless have a
chance of stopping and
shipping some of this
outflow, although I fancy I
a great deal, perhaps
most of it, will pass on
to Boston & John-
If as the papers seem
to indicate, there is
a chance of the Govt at
last recognizing its respon-
sibility in reference to
the channel debt, &
future deepening & develop-

ment of the river, the
chance of "awaiting" (as the
Canadian papers are so
fond of saying) of the
new channels of western
outlet, will of course
be much better.

For myself, as you
will already have heard,
I intend to make one
more voyage, this time
a comparatively short one
to Bombay and back.

On my return the question
will doubtless have to
be settled, as to what I
can best devote my
energies to, to use a
somewhat metaphorical expression.

4) Last night - I spent
in the house of Commons,
and was fortunate in
hearing one of the most
interesting debates there
has been for some time,
certainly the best this
session, - Balfour was
closing the debate on Parnell's
amendment to the Queen's Speech,
revising & demolishing
the arguments, or rather
statements made in its sup-
port. He speaks singularly
well, very logically & never
loses sight of his point. Tho-
rough Scotsman he is & proud
of it - Mr Gladstone followed,
most eloquent & rhetorically
almost faultless, but without
any attempt to sift his

statements or establish
them by any proof -
I trusted entirely to rhetorical
effect which at the
moment he was quite
justified in doing -

Goschen answered well, but
not quite in his best form -
Sir W^m Harcourt closed -

The whole performance was
good & exceedingly enjoyable,
but had a markedly
false & insincere ring about
it. Anxiety to make party
capital & to influence voters,
more to understand the
question & settle it on its
merits. I dined in the
house with my friend
McArthur, & had a good

Chance of studying some
of the better known members
with an anatomical eye -
a more utterly ruffianly
looking crew than the 86
home reless from Ireland,
with one or two exceptions,
it would be difficult to
find - I doubt it being
possible to match them in
the House at Ottawa! Clothes
and manners are perhaps
comparatively superficial
distinctions between man &
man, although implying more
probably than they are generally
credited with: - but skulls
& faces. Of the former I
can imagine a low class
Indian overhauling dozens
before finding one fit to

Scaups - or worth making
into a drinking cup; & the
latter are in many cases
unmistakably criminal.
It is sickening to think that
the cry for the "rule of the best
men," has brought us these
"honourable gentlemen," who
pretend to make our laws,
while unable & unwilling to obey
those already made, either God's &
Man's -

Another interesting meeting
earlier in the week was one of
the R.C.I.'s, where Lord Brassey
read a Paper on his recent
trip to Australia. Large meeting
& good paper - followed by
usual discussion -

But I must close, with
all kind wishes & remembrances
Ever your affectionate Son
Franklin