



Pictou Oct 28, 1843

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Dear Margaret

Though I have at present no letter from you to answer, I can fill a sheet with a few thoughts and incidents which may perhaps interest you, and I have the prospect of having so much writing of other kinds to do in the early part of winter, that I may have fewer opportunities to hold such imperfect converse with you as my present distance permits. I mentioned in my last, that I had just returned from a short journey to the Eastward of Pictou, I travelled with the mail courier in his "Wagon", a light four-wheeled carriage mounted on wooden and leather springs; he drove two vicious horses tandem, the shaft-horse requiring a perfect storm of lashes and curses before mounting a hill or leaving a starting place, and the leader taking every opportunity to turn and run back, the whole being a rather bad specimen of the bad travelling accommodations on the bye-roads in this country. Travelling in this fashion, with however some better horses in the latter stages of the journey, we drove along a beautiful road, affording many glimpses of the East river, with its fine farms, its mines and railway bridges; then crossing a hilly ridge, commanding a fine prospect of woody hills, and cultivated shores and rivers valleys; and ascending to Merigomish harbour, a beautiful sheet of water, with wooded islands and bold

projecting headlands; then skirting the shores of the Gulf, on that day as smooth as a mirror; and finally passing through a wooded country as far as the village of Arzigonist, which is situated in a wide level valley at the junction of several small rivers.

Much of my time at Arzigonist was occupied by business; I had however a very pleasant excursion along the shore, examining the rocks, which in one place consisted of cliffs of white and red gypsum, undermined and cut into fantastic shapes by the waves. In returning to Pictou I determined to travel part of the way on foot, so with hammer in hand, and basket on shoulder, I commenced my journey, by walking five miles along the bed of Wright's River, a stream about as large as the Esk, in some parts of its course confined by rocky banks and in others margined by low intervals covered with trees, and fringed with patches of shrubs and flowering plants; one of the most beautiful of which was the Solomon's Seal, a relative of the Lily of the Valley though of much larger size.

In leaving the river, I walked, partly on the road and partly along the shore, twelve miles farther to a place called Arisaig where I passed the night. In the morning I set off along the shore, on which I walked, admiring and examining the rocky cliffs, till near noon, when I returned to the highway, and waited

The coming up of a friend who was to take me  
 in his gig to New Glasgow, from which a short  
 journey by railway and Steamboat took  
 me home. Notwithstanding the meagre-  
 ness of my description, I am assured you  
 that the scenery of this part of our Province  
 might afford materials for a volume "with  
 numerous illustrations."

I have lately read a very interesting book,  
 rather out of my usual course of reading,  
 'The Daughters of England' by Mrs Ellis. It  
 was lent me by a lady with a request, in-  
 tended I suppose as a tribute to my vanity,  
 to tell her my opinion of it. The trouble of read-  
 ing it was however well repaid, for I found it  
 one of the most philosophical books, on the  
 duties and pleasures of life, that I have seen.  
 I would advise you to read it - I know it  
 would give you great pleasure. Some of  
 her opinions might require a few additions  
 rather than alterations to make them quite  
 accurate. For example, in speaking of  
 friendship she says, that of that which may  
 exist between <sup>young</sup> persons of different sexes she will  
 say nothing, since it is so very apt to degenerate  
 into love on the one hand or flirtation on  
 the other; now it is true <sup>that</sup> it is very liable to  
 be mixed up with these things, yet it is still  
 different. With us at least it is so, for

on the former subject, we have arrived, for the present at least, at a very fair understanding; and the latter is just now quite impracticable, yet we are still friends; and of this I have one strong evidence, namely that I never yet found any other person to whom I could communicate so many of my feelings and thoughts with so little reserve, whom consequently I felt so much disposed to trust, and this remains the same as ever. Such a feeling furnishes perhaps one of the very best proofs of that kind of mental adaptation which is so necessary to real friendship.

In my last I mentioned the changes which time and circumstances are gradually affecting in my character. One of them just now occurs to me. When I went to Britain I had a great deal of diffidence and want of self-confidence. This began to be rubbed off in Edinburgh and it has been leaving me ever since, so that now I am almost beginning to fear that I shall not have enough modesty left, but shall become too self-confident that people will think me too arrogant. I must endeavour however to stop short at that point which Addison expressively calls a "modest assurance."

Mr Crevan and his brother James arrived here a few days ago, the latter with all his good looks and dandyism. I have only seen him once or twice, but hear that he has a little more to say, than when I saw him in Edin.

I thank you for the illustrated papers sent by late packets—they are quite curious here, as none of them are taken regularly in Pictou. The seal on one of them had the welcome announcement "all right" and from the Galashiel, Portsmouth on the cover, I infer that you have been sojourning on the banks of Gala. I have not heard anything, for the last two years, of the two ladies from Galashiel, whom I saw when in Edin. One of them—I have actually forgotten her name, the one who washed with us one day on the ice of Studdingson Loch, when we gathered the tops of a kind of grass, and one of you told me that I was a great flirt, which surely was a great mistake.—

Though I have forgotten the name, I have not the owner of it, who appeared to be a fine sensible girl; and should like to know how time and chance have been dealing with her.