



Acton May 13/43
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Dear Margaret,

I received your letter by Mr Perry, a few days since, and also the parcel of seeds, which arrived in good time and good order, I thank you for both letter and parcel, and am indeed disposed to feel particularly grateful when I consider that you are involved in all the horrors of Clearing up. I too have of late been busy. In winter I had plenty of spare time for reading, writing and other scientific amusements, but of late I have had no time for anything of the kind. In relating the memorable events of my career since last letter, I must not forget the most surprising - I have in that time been at one evening party, the very first I believe since I returned from Britain! I went because I was asked in a manner which I could not refuse, and the bad effects

of breaking over my will, have since appeared in my being obliged to decline other invitations. However, I must at present either abandon my good friends Geology and the other 'ologies', or be content with a very small portion of social gratification.

Spring is now with us, and we, who scarcely see a green thing (except pines and firs) for six months, know how to appreciate it. Our pretty little national emblem, the mayflower, has been more than usually abundant this season; and I ~~will~~ have been several times in the burnt barrels, and other places where they grow, gathering them. How I wish that I could show you a bed of them covered with their green leaves, and the little pinky blossoms peeping out from under their ^{edges}, or that I could send you a bunch of them rich with their delicate perfume. I have given plenty of them to ladies whom I do not care half so much for. I must be content with sending, if postage permit, a little dried one.

I think you greatly undervalue the

importance of the duties of women. You speak of professors; but is not the business of ministers and teachers to reform and civilize minds that have grown wild, because the duties of mothers were careless or unwisely performed; are not physicians employed in cobbling shattered constitutions, whose ruin is often due to mothers and nurses. Are we not lawyers and legislators, always busy in restraining and punishing criminals, who are so poor want of training in childhood. The profession of being a good mother or sister or female relative of any kind, is of more importance than the whole of them and requires, though this is yet too little thought of, a more careful education. Estimating occupations by the amount of happiness or misery depending on them, one good mother or maiden aunt ("Saint Margaret" not excepted) is worth a whole host of professional men. I know however that you were thinking only of the more insignificant occupations of ladies; yet more depends on trifles of that kind, than upon many other things, which we are ac-

customed to think great; and I am sure
that you are too observant ~~not~~ to be con-
vinced of this.

I thank Marion for her kind letter, though
it was a very short one. I shall answer
it as soon as I possibly can.

Give my sincere good wishes to all your
relatives— My father and mother send
theirs. And now my dearest friend, I shall
conclude as usual with wishing you, from
my heart, all prosperity and happiness

Yours affectionately

J. M. Dawson

This time two years I was about leaving Britain,
now I am standing at a little desk, in our shop,
looking out upon a dusty street of little Pictary,
with books and paper all round about me—
Last evening I wrote for three or four hours— and
two evenings ago ran away for an hour and took
a little sketch— On Saturday evening last I went
away at 6 o'clock with a party gathering mayflowers,
and returned by moonlight, had an interesting conversation
with a clever young lady, about planets— nebulae & stars,
also on the question whether any young ladies are as
pretty as mayflowers, I said not— all the rest of the
time, for last two weeks, spent in unpacking books, sending
away parcels, and selling seeds— with a little gardening—
Here is a medley for you to fill up a corner— I wish you
would sometimes, send something of the same sort, telling
whether you wash, or draw now, where the piano stands,
what songs you sing, and who comes to hear them. This is
certainly an odd letter, but may serve as a variety.