

William 56 Rue de Port Royal  
Paris 1777 Monday March 5, '77.

My dear Mother,

I received your most welcome letter on Saturday <sup>evening</sup> ~~morning~~. It was very late in arriving, and you may suppose that it was with impatience that I awaited its arrival as I was expecting the news it contains.

I do not wonder at the answer you have received from Nannie; in fact I had half anticipated it. The reflections which you make had already crossed my own mind, and the matter having appeared to me very much in the same light. I do hope that you may at least see her. There is nothing that I can

more anxious to have than your opinion  
and advice. There is also another ray of  
hope in this, even as it stands at present.

She could not then have received any letter  
which I mailed with yours on the 16<sup>th</sup> of  
February. Perhaps if she had known that  
I still care for her, she might not have  
had so much hesitation in committing  
herself. You will know when she receives  
it as I mentioned it to you at the time.

It will be likely to <sup>have its</sup> influence either for  
or against, so I must wait for further  
news.

Perhaps I write too much about  
upon this subject, but I cannot help it.  
I am truly thankful that I told you  
all about it from the first, and that I  
have had your sympathy and advice  
all along.

I want to speak of my plans for  
the summer that is now so near.

I had been intending to go upon a "mission" in the "Canal de l'Est", a very important piece of work which is now going on; & during the rest of the time to obtain employment with some iron-firm here, (probably in Paris) to acquire a ~~few~~ more practical knowledge of the subject than I have yet had the opportunity of doing. I am beginning to think this seriously, however, of coming over to Canada this summer although it had not been my intention when I left. In going over last spring, I reckoned it as the termination of my travels & put the expense down to that score. Returning here in the autumn had to be considered as a part of the expense of my studies here. But this trip which I now propose is an exceptional one, & independent of both these others. If I come at all, it will be at my own expense. I have still something over two hundred dollars of my own, and I am sure

Father would not have any objections to my spending part of it in this way. I know about most of the lines between this & America, & I think the Allan to be the cheapest as well as the most convenient for my purpose. I would probably take an Intermediate passage; for a fellow at my age has the privilege of travelling as he pleases; and I could count at that rate on being able to get back here for about \$100. It would probably be in the autumn, as I would never have the courage to leave unless there was a fixed date for my return.

I know you will feel inclined to say that if I come at all I ought to do so in a first class style; but you must leave this to me as a project of my own. It is natural for me to wish that it should be so; but before entering into any details & while my idea is still in the rough, I want to ask you a question or two respecting it. You must not think that in answering them you are either ~~persuading~~ inducing me to come or dissuading me from doing so; but simply that you are giving me advice, & helping me to decide.

for myself. First then; -

Would you, or any sensible person think that it was simply a sign of impatience on my part? You know we are both young & have time to wait; but as you did not seem to think last summer, that I was too precocious in my ideas I hardly suppose you would now. But then as I am expecting to return at any rate next spring it might be better to wait. This "at any rate" is just what I dislike; as it makes it seem as if I simply made my visits depend on my own convenience.

I need not say more at present as you are now acquainted with my ideas as to what the result might be, that is of course is impossible for you to see as for myself; but the further question arises of whether it will be possible for me to pass the summer or face another winter without having seen Fennie again. I do so long to see her sometimes, & to hear her voice again.

My decision will depend mostly on the news that I may hear during the

next few weeks,

The Lord's way is the best; and my wish is to follow his guidance and trust the direction that he has promised to those that look to him.

Prof. Hirsch is to lecture again Friday. They have suppressed his examination that was to have been on the 16<sup>th</sup> & give us a week more to work at our bridge which is an immense desideratum. We will have only one more "Partial" with Collyer on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are to have a holiday on Thursday, but I do not suppose any of us will pay any attention to it.

I enclose a clipping for Rankine, which will show him the present state of the law in regard to Conferences here. It is also a good example of official correspondence, from which I might have profited myself last year in addressing the Minister of Public Works.

Of course you will not mention my plans & projects, unless it be in confidence to Father or Anna. Please give Anna my best love, and believe me to remain,

Yours affectionately

See Ps. 32, 7, 89.

William.