

Jefferson Aug 31 - 73.

Abroad - returns  
home in winter  
cannot speak  
definitely till I hear  
what the general  
winter proposition is  
to be. However I do  
not think there will be  
much snow on here  
this winter!

My Dear Anna

On my arrival here Thursday

last I received such a budget of  
letters that I am at a loss to know to  
whom I owe the first reply.

First to answer your questions. The  
mosquito oil is so far good that if you  
smear yourself with it no mosquitos  
will bite for about half an hour. At  
the end of this time it loses its effect &  
you have to repeat the dose from a  
small bottle carried in the pocket.

The remedy at best is worse than the disease  
& its frequent application destructive of  
comfort & clothes.

I feel quite well or rather better & when  
I read your groanfull letters began to think  
I had better not alarm you by any more  
accounts of my going on. So far I have  
never ceased to enjoy myself.

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N.B. I am going to look over your letters before closing & if I find any more questions will answer in a P.S.

When I wrote last I was just leaving the N.W. Angle for Rat Portage. I took only one Canoe with Begg the half, or rather  $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>th</sup> breed who had been round the lake with me before, & an indian who unfortunately could talk hardly any English. The trip took 7 days & nothing very remarkable occurred. The first few days were beautifully fine & warm, then came four days of broken weather with wind & rain during which time we were dodging along behind islands & lee coasts to make any progress at all. One evening after a heavy afternoon of rain camped in a dripping wood with spongy moss & rotten leaves saturated with water which is not the essence of Comfort. An indian appeared in his canoe & on being asked for fish said he had some dry sturgeon. He set off for his camp & returned in about half an hour with the fish, for which we gave him some flour, & also let him



Have a cup of tea &c. The next  
morning I awakened by 5 to hear a great  
jubilant & found my indian conversing  
with three others, including our friend of  
the night before, & no doubt induced to  
come by his good report. One of them  
had some fresh sturgeon for which he  
got some pork & the rest had what  
remained in the teapot &c when breakfast  
was over. A day or two after my return  
to the Angle I inquired the man from whom  
we had got the dried sturgeon & found that  
he had come in in great alarm to report the  
breaking out of some infectious disease among  
the indians on the lake, & as it turned out,  
at the camp near which we had been, &  
from which our indian visitors had  
come. A woman, he said, had taken it  
first & broken out in spots & died. This  
was a day or two before our visit, &  
thinking the disease infectious they had burned  
her body completely up. A few days afterward  
the woman's three children took the same  
disease & broke out over the head & legs.  
This had alarmed the indians who thought it



Must be small-pox & come in to report.  
Very probably however it may only be measles  
which is a very fatal disease among them.  
I have not heard since how it has  
turned out.

Left the Angle finally to come here on the  
18<sup>th</sup> taking only a single canoe with Beag &  
Spearman for crew, having sent Duckworth  
back here by road in charge of heavier baggage  
belonging to my party & some to Mr East's  
which is going up White Mouth R.

Hearing that the Jay was going out for Hungry  
Hall the same morning I made arrangements  
for a lift & got the canoe & stuff put into  
a boat in tow & carried down to Flag led  
which is at the mouth of the Angle Lulet  
& quite half a days paddling from it.

(By the way, I must put in a parenthesis  
to tell you that quite a grand side wheel  
steamer like one of the market boats at  
Montreal is now almost ready to ply  
on the Lake of Woods. She has been building  
several years at Fort Francis & arrived  
on her first trip to the angle a day or  
two before I left)



Well, leaving Fley Island we coasted South & as the day was very fine made a long journey & camped after dark just inside Buffalo Bay.

The next morning was broken & windy & with our Canoe heavily laden we struggled across the bay to the mouth of the Reed R. which we reached just as it was becoming too rough to go further. That river turned & twisted in a remarkable way & had also a pretty strong current, & altogether we had a pretty good days paddling before reaching a part where it was only about a Canoe length wide, where we camped.

The next day though we started early it took till about 9 o'clock to reach the source. The river got smaller & smaller & would lose itself for a time among the rushes of the swamps. I had anticipated some difficulty in finding the beginning of the Portage but just as we came to where the river ended there was a sort of track through the reeds by which Canoes had evidently gone. Entering here it soon became too shallow for the canoe to run & so knowing it was



the commencement of the portage all jumped out & began to drag the canoe along. There was a regular little rut where canoes had been dragged before & water running down it like a brook.

Soon however the swamp became too shallow for the canoe & it was necessary to take half the stuff out & carry it a few hundred yards. Then the swamp became deeper again & all the stuff was put in once more. The hard bottomed shallow piece

formed as it were the edge of the swamp basin. Then began the tug of war. Spearman & Beeg tackled themselves by ropes to the

sterns of the canoe & pulled manfully. I pushed behind whenever it came to a tough place. I had a pair of Cory beef Mocusus but

I soon found they would not do as at each step I had to lift about 1 imp 2lb of water, so taking them off I tied a pair of stockings round the ankles with string & in this way got along capitally.

This was a regular muskeg covered with very green moss with small groves of Lamerac here & there. In general I should say the water was about knee deep, but every now & then you got into



a waist deep spot. In some places the bottom moved for about 10ft all round when stepped on, & often in these places a patch would appear like dry ground but would sink under your weight giving out copious streams of sulphuric acid hydrogen. In some spots for a few paces there appeared to be bottomless swamp muck, & then one had to rest most of weight on the canoe & haul over. There were fish too poking about among the grass, but I could not catch any they seemed to be young pike.

About 12.30 it was considered dinner time, so choosing a tussock of grass raised above the rest we made a fire of dead tamarac sticks & boiled the kettle for tea standing knee deep in water all the while. Then we went on again & on & on till I thought the swamp was never going to cease. It was like walking through very deep snow but additionally uncomfortable. At last we got out on a great open grassy swamp & saw the main woods on the W. side at what appeared a great distance. However by the aid of numerous rests, we got over it at last, & just as dusk found a little rivulet rushing out of the swamp Westward! This was the beginning of the Rouen R.



It got dark before a good camp could be found & so we were obliged to sleep in a poplar grove where the soil was rather squashy, & where there was no place for a tent. The night was however fortunately fine. They call the Muskeg Portage 8 miles long but I am mistaken if it is not much nearer 10. At any rate it took us from 9 Am. to 6 P.M. to "do" it.

I had meant to give you a description of the rest of this trip which was rather more eventful than usual but find it is getting very late & must close with a short summary.

Next day occupied cutting windfalls across the river breaking up beaver dams & putting up jams in trees which the beaver had cut down & which nearly stopped the R. in places. Had to make two portages past impassible jams. Next day got past Roseau & out into a great treeless swamp where had to carry wood in canoe to cook. Slept on a mud bank in same where no place to put up tent. Rain & wind before morning. Got through ducking. Slept under canoe.

To start to launch canoe till 10 Am. Then got off & by 2 P.M. got to place where plenty wood. Made big fire & got things dry. Millions of ducks &c. Next day got into rapids small, but next two days occupied in getting the canoe down about 20 miles almost continuous rapid full of boulders. Wading in water most of time letting the canoe down along the shore & then running such pieces as were practicable & had calm water at the bottom. Next day peddled about 28 miles & got on our way about 9 miles. Next day in Rankin letter.

Your loving brother  
George

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