

Defferin

Nov 5. 73.

My Dear Anna

Letters from home

received lately have all begun by excuses for not writing before. I think it might be right in me to begin in the same way as it seems to me very long since I wrote last.

You will see by the superscription that I have got back here to head quarters, having arrived just a week ago today. None too soon for comfort as we are now experiencing quite winter weather & I fear too late for any indian summer break.

I have been engaged here getting things put in order & packed up & had

hoped before this to be on my way
down to Montreal. Packing however
is rather an arduous operation, & besides
there is really great difficulty in getting
away from here at present - at all.

The winter has come on quite
unexpectedly early, & communication
by water stopped by the freezing in of
the boats on the river. The tri-weekly
stage is the only remaining chance, &
so many are seeking an exit by
its means from Garry & points to
the North that it is almost impossible
to get a place on it at all. Another
trouble is that as I shall have to
bring along several heavy boxes, the
expense by stage would be absurdly
great. However I hope to surmount
these difficulties within a day or two
in one way or another.

The quarters here have grown into quite a little town now by the erection of large stables, & stores & all is bustle & preparation for the winter.

I was much surprised by the advent of Mr Selwyn the other day. He was on his way to Montreal from the Saskatchewan region, but - having been frozen up in the Red R. Herd carts from some half-breed & gone on this far. He was here a couple of days before he could make arrangements to get on & I heard a good deal about his explorations on the Saskatchewan &c.

I should have liked very much to have gone on with him & had I had a day or two's warning I might have done so.

I have got so far behindhand in my chronicle of events that I cannot now begin to make up Cu-way but

Must-trust for that to oral
communication. We had a pretty
rough time of it for the last week on
the way in, the ground being covered
with snow several inches deep & the
weather very cold with almost constant
snowstorms & high winds. Nearly all
the prairie along the line is burned
& for a picture of desolation I don't
think ~~prairie~~ prairie partially covered
with snow can well be surpassed.
There was of course no grass for
the horses & what with little hay &
very little oats, many of them
"played out" & several carts &
animals were left behind.

When camped in one place with plenty
wood close at hand & a stove in
the tent one may be moderately

Comfortable even in such weather, but
on the move every day & all day
long, with neither of these advantages
& often obliged to camp after dark,
things become mixed. Bread & beef
& milk & everything freezable being frozen
is not conducive to comfort, & getting
up in the morning before daybreak
with the thermometer far below the freezing
point is unpleasant. One night
the temperature fell well below zero,
& since our return here, the minimum
has once been -18° . However all
went well & the whole of the men
are now back here without accident
of any kind.

Parties coming in would have given
good opportunity to some carcartunist-
fund of north groups. All sorts of

make shifts & rig-ups being the
order of the day. Some men with
torn clothes, others with gapping boots,
Some with blanket-uits & some with
none at all. Mackintoshes below coats,
& lead pieces that had seen a
summer's wear. Stopping for lunch
every man with a chunk of bread
thawing it slice by slice at the
fire.

You say my letters merely relate
to facts & don't say anything as to
what I am thinking about &c.
I suppose this is a true bill, but
really I think travelling about
over these plains does not conduce
to much thought. One's chief idea
is to get warm & something to
eat, which having been accomplished

you feel sleepy & so wrap
yourself up in your blankets & go to
sleep. Subjects for reflection being few
but often repeated become monotonous.
Having once worked out a train
of thought about a buffalo skull,
a burnt-prairie, an unburnt-prairie,
a tuft of grass, a prairie chicken;
one has just to begin & go over
the list again & again, & therefore
one has either to ponder on some
abstract question not at all
connected with the place, or just
content to go along without thinking
at all.

Please tell William that I shall
be very glad to subscribe to the
Annals Gazette to be sent to my
address here. The specimen copy

Sent by him never reached
me. Henry probably lost its
address or been mislaid in the
post office somewhere.

With love to all & hoping soon
to follow

Your affectionate brother

George

McGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
ACC. NO. 909B/11
REF. 406

Daffin

Inventory letter 73



Miss Dawson

McGill College

Montreal.



WINDSOR
NO 14
3
2

McGILL UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES

ACC. NO. 9098/11

REF. 400