

Dufferin 174

Miss D...

Very interesting

letter

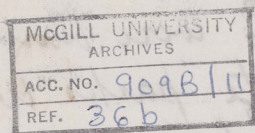
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Dufferin Manitoba
April 19. 1874.

My Dear Anna

It seems a long long time
since I left home & I believe I have
never yet written to you. At present one
would certainly need to follow the plan of
having a letter always ready, for the
bad state of the roads has so disorganized
the coaching that one never knows which
is mail day.

Well to begin with, we had a very pleasant
journey all the way from Montreal to
Winnipeg. The trains being on time nearly
all through. We had one day from
8.30 Am. to 10 P.M. to spend in Chicago
& walked about the streets & looked
at things till we were tired. The streets
& stops are very handsome, but all

the libraries museums &c were burned
up during "the fire" & as the parks were
not-given, there was nothing in particular
to see. The place is built on low flat ground
& has a foggy, smoky, heavy soil-y
atmosphere from its proximity to the
lake. Murchhead was reached on
Saturday evening & we had thought to
spend Sunday there as the regular
time for the stage to start is Monday
morning. The roads being bad however
the stage went out at 2 O'clock on
Sunday afternoon bound for Georgetown
the first station on the way North &
16 miles from Murchhead. The road
was quite impassible so we took
to the prairie sod & drove miles &
miles round the ends of flooded
coulees & through half frozen swamps.
The driver had not been on the road

for two years or so did not know the
position of the new bridge at Buffalo
Creek $3/4$ mile S. of ~~North~~ Georgetown.
As it began to grow dark he began to
be doubt-ful & finally steered toward
a light on the river edge & enquired.
After groping about some time we found
the place with a big half staved
drift accumulated in the valley of
the stream. Going down ~~to the~~ through this
to the bridge the coach got completely
stuck, so we walked on to Georgetown
through the most frightful wind &
stayed there all night. You cross the
Red R at Georgetown & go on to ferry on
the west bank. As the ice was too
rotten to take the stage over, in the
morning, we had to get across to
another stage on the other side, & this
was accomplished partly in a little
boat

& partly by walking on the ice. The
New stage was then found to be a very
old one & took the driver about two
hours to tinker it up. At last we
got away at 11 P.M. & got on to
Eller R. the next station. Here we
had expected to get dinner but found
none ready & so were obliged to go on
to the next stage Goose R. which was
reached about 7 P.M. & here we made
Supper & dinner combined.

Breakfast dinner & Supper are much
the same except in name on this line.
You find generally fried pork remarkable
fat, potatoes, & if you are remarkably
lucky eggs. You may always get
bread & generally dough-nuts.
The whole spread has a greasy
appearance, & the remains of the
eggs of two or three seasons may be

detected on close examination sticking
between the iron prongs of the forks.
The tea so far as my experience
goes is either absolutely tasteless, or
as bitter as gall.

We left Goose Lake at 7.30 & drove on
against a gale of wind from the
north & a storm of sleet & snow.
When it got quite dark it was
impossible to keep ^{near} the road & we
very soon lost it & wandered
about on the prairie. The driver then
tried to light the lanterns but found
one utterly smashed, & the other with
one pane out & not wind-tight.

After several attempts we managed
to stop the broken side with canvas &
light the candles inside the stage.

At last we came to a coule nearly
full of snow, & the driver judging

that he must have passed the
Station & seeing a light behind,
steered toward it & brought us at-
last all right to Drop Point.

The next morning we started at 8 A.M.
the morning cold & a light coating
of snow on the ground. Three miles
out the fore ~~team~~ stage got into a
water-hole in a Coulee & the fore
wheels pulling out, the driver flew
off the box after the horses. The stage
had to be unloaded entirely & after
a good deal of lifting & prying we got
the wheels put right again & went on.
The next Coulee was filled with a
great snow-drift so the stage had to
be unloaded again & drawn over
the snow by hand on blankets &
buffalo robes spread out for the purpose.

Soon we came to Coule Mountain
which was full of water with rotten ice
over it. The horses were lead across &
then the attempt was made to haul
the stage over the land, but the wheels
cut through the water coming upon
the ice rendered it necessary to take
off all the baggage again. Before we
could break away the ice & haul the
stage out two or three hours were spent.
Arrived at Grand Forks at 5 P.M.
& had dinner. Started out about
6 with a good team but the
drivers had been imbibing rather
freely. We got on through several bad
swamps pretty well but at last
got into a very liquid bog in which
the wheels on one side went down to
the hubs, & the coach was on the point
of turning over when we all scrambled

out up to our ankles in water.
At last the stage got out & soon a
light became discernible in the
distance. The driver was now however
hopelessly drunk & could not see the
light. At last we fortunately got on
the road & then the driver whipped
up the horses & we rushed along
fortunately without accident till the
station was reached. Here having had
supper we availed ourselves of the
accommodation of the place & lay down
on the floor in blankets for the night.
The driver excused himself in the morning
by saying that he did not "respect"
the man who would not get
drunk sometimes on such a road.
We made an early start & got
along pretty well crossing the Big
& Little Salt Rivers on the bridges

which were just on a level with
the water but not covered. One bad
hole was met with during the day
the fore bases fell in & then the
~~base~~ others on them & the stage
nearly on top of all. However
no serious injury occurred & we
reached Lemhina about 9 P.M. &
got on her before midnight.

Since my arrival I have been very
busy with one thing or another.
Captain Cameron had several
things to talk about & I am
engaged in answering some questions
on the County between here & the
Lake of the Woods.

I do not think it likely that
we will move from here before

the fifteenth of next month. Our
letters &c will probably go via
the Missouri, or by Union Pacific
RR or Stage, to Fort Benton
Montana. This fort is only
80 miles S. of the line & it is
supposed that at least occasional
communication will be kept up
with it.

I hope you are much better at this
time & that you will soon be
going out which will be a pleasant
change after having been in the
house so long.

With Love to All

Your affectionate brother
George.