

Acc. 976

Sydney

June 1

1874.

Dear Anna

I would like to tell you about ~~my~~ the Gisbournes. When I came in here on Friday evening I went over after tea to see the great dignitary as he had just come to town & I did not know when he might leave again or whether I would be here any longer myself. I felt like Esther venturing into the presence of Abazernus. I rang the bell & asked if Mr Gisbourne was in. It struck me that the

Visiting the Gisbournes.  
delightful letter.

Young man that came to  
the door had a very surly  
voice. There was a low  
growl & he answered "Yes"  
& immediately walked off  
As the growls continued,  
I at length discovered that  
they came from a large  
Newfoundland in the hall  
Presently a little girl  
emerged from the drawing  
room & began to quiet the  
animal who seemed about  
to spring upon me; assuring  
me at the same time that  
he was a capital watch-  
dog & generally bit any  
strangers who made their  
appearance. Mr. Gibson  
presently made his ap-  
pearance somewhat to my  
relief & after reading my

letter of introduction, asked  
me to walk in. He is a  
quiet in manner & speaks  
as if he had a cold in his  
head, or a plum in his  
mouth, or perhaps something  
between the two. His eyes  
shut up when he laughs  
giving him a somewhat  
sheepish appearance. I found  
in the drawing-room two young  
fellows one about my age  
& the other younger. Mrs.  
Gisbourne was also there.  
She has quite a queenly  
bearing & is evidently the  
ruler at home, & thinks  
nothing of setting down Mr  
Gisbourne in the most decided  
manner. There is also a  
Miss Gisbourne, & a little  
boy about 12. He might

be a very nice little fellow  
if he had the chance. Mr.  
Fisbourne seems to make  
a point of not talking  
business at home, & never  
~~spoke of~~  
~~mentioned the subject of~~  
what I had better do, or  
anything relating to it, even  
when I tried to introduce  
the subject by mentioning  
what Mr. Hill had said.  
He asked me to come &  
take dinner there the next  
day (Saturday) if I remained  
in town. I accepted with  
thanks, hoping however that  
I might not be in town  
as I did not know  
what I was to wear, as  
I merely had in my valise  
~~these~~ things I wanted for  
camping. However I managed

better than I could have  
anticipated, as I had been  
fortunate enough to leave  
a washing here before I  
left on Friday morning  
& so got some of my  
things done up in time.

They have a very complicated  
system of bells there. It  
seems so far as I can  
make out, that the first  
is a kind of warning bell  
the second announces that  
dinner is ready & that  
the younger members of the  
family are expected to  
take their seats. On the  
third bell sounding Mr.  
& Mrs. J., all things being  
now ready, come in with  
the dignity due to their standing.  
Mr. J. sits at one end

of the table with Mrs. G. on his right, while Miss G. occupies the seat at the other end of the table.

They are very stylish in their manner & all speak with a strong London accent.

After dinner Frank (the eldest) & I went out for a ride. Frank rode on a pony who has several neat tricks; among others he has been known to canter along furiously when first taken out, & then turn suddenly round sending the rider spinning, & canter back again before he can recover himself. My horse was said to have a habit of shying

to a dangerous extent, but I did not find him troublesome in that respect. We rode round the head of this Arm & then across to the other Arm of Sydney harbour. The distance across is about 9 miles. & there are some rather extensive views from points on the road near the N.W. Arm. It is very pretty on getting there. The mountains on the other side of Bras d'Or are quite distinct with another range of hills between them & the opposite shore. And then N. Sydney or the Bar is but a short distance down on the other side, enlivened by its shipping.

To Anna 74

I was pleased to find on returning that I was able to walk about quite comfortably, although I had ridden 18 miles, ~~without~~ after not having been on horseback for 8 mths. <sup>Frank</sup> ~~He~~ seemed to sell it more than I did.

We intended to go out boating in the evening, but were disappointed as one of the oars was missing.

I hope your hair is getting on nicely; by the time I return I expect to see wondrous things. I suppose Anna will be out before this reaches you. Please remember me to her.

I remain your affectionate  
brother

William.