

Montreal January 21st 1856

My dearest Rankine

My letter to England & travels abroad in 1853-4 opened up a large addition to my previous correspondence. It is at present a burden to me - time for writing seems so difficult to find & I become more & more stupid so that I cannot seize little scraps of time but want a luxurious quiet to help my sluggish brain. Today I had hoped for a whole uninterrupted morning, but my imagination had promised myself to get nearly a package of letters for "home" & instead I find myself with only short hours & I cannot resist your father's offer of a share of my filled envelope - he is sending to you & I must begin by again thanking you very

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exchange for the pleasure she could
give others. Mr. S. A. Wessman's second
son - Edgar, is seriously ill at present. he
has been operated upon for a large abscess
which formed close to the spine. It had
to be reached from the abdomen, which
was both difficult & dangerous but it has
been successfully performed but the discharge
& consequent weakness is so great that ultimate
recovery is doubtful. Julia's little boy grows nice-
ly - & also one in whom we have a little
more interest - Victor Elliott Wansor - who
is a darling little fellow - placidly smiling & grow-
ing - he & his pretty wee mother make a lovely
tableau. Our great sailing magnates have
just returned to Canada - the President & his
wife as, Sir George & Lady Stephen. Your father
is much disappointed that Mr. Smith's return to the
country, which he considers more important than
Stephen's, has not been acknowledged. This
& Sir John Macdonald's business in England has
been to try to induce the English Government to
further the P.P.C. as a great Empire & military road

& to subsidize Steamers to connect with British
Columbia & India. They wish to get Boats even
larger & better equipped than the P. & O. to outfit
them as a mail & passenger line. They acknowledge
that they have received no promise, but attribute
this to the unsettled state of public men & this opinion
exists at the present juncture. But here comes a pleasing
room to what you can get better from public print.

George has not visited us since Mrs. but I
understand that it is settled that he will not go
to England in connection with the Colonial exhibition.
He is going to act as Director in Mr. Selwyn's absence.
Mr. Selwyn will oblige him to give up field work for next
summer, but we hope may strengthen his claims
for that office in the future. I cannot imagine how
Mr. Bell will act, he so habitually assumes the first
place in all ways possible. I have not heard
whether he knows of these decisions, it was only
yesterday that S. wrote of them to his father.

The Anger's gave a ball last week & Mrs. called
last Monday & were so fortunate as to get admitted
to the mansion - the hall & drawing room of which
is beautiful - we talked a little about you & I
was so sorry to hear Miss Anger say that she thought

sincerely & you delightfully - Always, highly
 prized by each member of the family who
 receives an ^{of the}pleasurably shared in part
 by all of us hearing an outline of the news
 they may contain. I heretofore by a d. news
 of your personal welfare. Thinking of Melbourne
 & of you now probably being there abouts. Also
 of your admiration of it; ^{I am with you} when calling on
 Mrs. Reddy yesterday, she mentioned that she
 had just heard of the marriage of a Cousin of
 hers there, who had been a medical man or
 one of the R. & G. I. I had been so taken with
 Melbourne that he returned & settled there &
 now has partly bound himself to the place by
 marriage. She further tells me that Maggie
 Lucy - Herbert & Jack are all engaged, but it is
 to people with whom we are unacquainted so
 I don't suppose you will care to have their names.
 I doubtless Mrs. May has told you of Archie Reeky's
 engagement to a Miss Chatter. - A girl who is re-
 lated to Mrs. 'O' Mills'. She sings very well & comes
 here to try to get some substantial benefit in

you looking very thin - thus confirming
 the same testimony that Lin. Atigee gave
 in writing to me. I am so much disappointed
 to know this. Until you entered the service
 of the P. & O. you have mostly been so overworked
 or harassed that there seemed good reason
 for you looking jaded, but on the whole I
 have thought of you as having an easy luxurious
 life that would ^{not} round off all your angularities & give
 you added strength to face the anxious question
 of how & when you would settle to begin life-
 work. Darling Rankine for my sake & your own
 look carefully into causes that may produce
 such effects. It wou^{ld} give my heart to say a
 word that would keep or remove you, only he
 thoroughly honest to yourself & resolutely cut
 off my habit that tends to injure body or mind.
 You, I feel, think me are unduly prejudiced
 against a making but Mr. De Sola himself,
 who knows how Thacker is treated, says he
 would not use the rusty preparations. Lately
 a paper was read at the Natural History Rooms
 on Arsenical poisoning & it seems that a favorite

bundle of cigars is treated with arsenic &
being an accumulative poison the effects from them
is sometimes serious. - Further, dear boy, what may
be my over-zeal & utopianism by telling you that I
had a mixed pleasure in re-hanging your travelled
pictures. I found them in better order (as I hope I may
you) than I dared to hope for after such knocking
about. The room looks quite ready for occupation &
I must be allowed to deceive myself in imagining
your dear face & cheerful snatches again
making music in it which brightened my heart.
Inventive I need not conceal from myself
that if I mean to see you in the near future I
have to pluck up courage to launch forth upon
the Colic, stormy waters of the waters of the Atlantic
of which even I still talk of doing in a fitful uncertain
way. It seems so long beforehand to make plans
that ^{any} ~~any~~ kinds of accidents might prevent us
from carrying out: however time will unfold our
gate & we shall see - it may occur to you to tell us
what you can as to your intentions wh: wd. proba-
bly greatly influence our movements. A number of friends
& acquaintances intend to go to England next summer. Bage-
Walter's may: perhaps Mr. Bonacci's & I have again accept- my
remind being greet'g dearest Rankine from your Affectionate
Mother.