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West Springfield
Shelby County
Missouri

Friday Morn. Sept 6th 1850

Dear Mother

The long and tiresome journey upon which I embarked on the Eleventh day of April is at length finished and I find myself after a period of nearly five months in the comfortable and hospitable Cabin of my old friend, Mr. Keay of Palmyra, in the possession of sound health and in the enjoyment of the luxury of rest from the exhausting toils of incessant travel.

So many thoughts rush into my mind claiming to be first recorded in my letter that I hardly know which to transcribe and which to withhold for a future opportunity. To know what would most interest you would be an instant removal of the difficulty; but this I cannot ascertain without judging of your present feelings by those of the Past; and in that case I am driven to the necessity of being so egotistical as to conclude that my own important self is the principal object of your love and fears in this part of the Continent. Taking this for granted then at the outset, I shall leave a description of the golden world and all "that in it is" which to every one but a mother would be far the most interesting part of my communications, till another opportunity for writing presents itself, and terribly bored sitting at length if any thing be worth a tolerably minute account of my adventures since leaving Mesquite Pass of the Rocky mountains about the 27th of June and if you recollect that letter (which I calculate would reach you about the first of August), you already have a portrait of the most interesting features of our journey - that is, if not it will be sufficient to state briefly that up to that point our journey resembled a pleasure trip more than anything else. Our admirable team of ponies was yet in good order, we ourselves were in fine spirits and the further promised as much as the past had already yielded. We were then according to the best estimate we could form, twenty five miles this side of the half way point between St. Joseph and Sacramento and only of one or two days out. At this rate the trip would be terminated in forty days more, or about the first or seventh of August. We descended the western slope of the Rocky mountains and in a short time entered a desert country almost entirely void of grass and frequently destitute of water. The roads were very sandy and our team began to fail under the accumulation of hardships. We reached the "Big Sandy", a beautiful rushing mountain stream but which takes its rise among the snows of the "Long Range", but between which and our first leg a desert of fifty three miles without a drop of water and but a very little dried up grass. Now we made a halt of two days to rest our team and to find if possible a lighter wagon than the one we started with. Not being able to procure one, and our pasture being at a rather inconvenient distance, five miles off - we cut up the body of our wagon, made it into a box four ft. square, mounted it on the wheels which we coupled as closely together as they would admit of and at sundown with a supply of provisions already cooked and a six gallon keg full of water, we entered the wastes. At two o'clock A.M. we stopped - unharmed our horses, laid ourselves down in our blankets, on the dry soft sand and slept soundly until sunrise. We had been told

Just the amount was only 50 miles across and we expected to reach
Gunn River in time for late breakfast. So we started off again
without stopping, soon to take a lunch, traveled till noon, then no
water. We gazed our horses the contents of our water cask, took
dinner, and rested an hour; then starting again traveled till sun
set, when we saw the waves of Gunn River, slightly glistening in
the bosom of a narrow valley 3 or 4 miles distant. By dark we were
in camp, resting from our protracted toil. Next morning at a
few six miles below us, we found a wagon which suited us;
and though the price was high for those times - \$75,00 - we thought
best to buy it and save our team from the heavy labor of dragging
our old one through the sand. We threw away our old one or rather sold
it for five dollars, light wagons only, being in demand, and
started once more, hoping to finish our journey in 25 or 30 days, as
the freeman told us we could do. He had frequently traveled it in
18 or 20 on a mule, - a physical impossibility, as I have since become
satisfied. With this pleasant expectation of terminating our journey, we soon
we deemed it unnecessary to keep all our provisions, and accordingly
threw away all that we did not absolutely need for just 4 weeks sup-
ply. Thirty pounds of flour we sold for fifteen dollars; nobody
wanted the bacon, coffee, beans, pickles, or the clothing, bedding, cooking
utensils and other articles which we left ~~at~~ lying on the ground
on the morning of the "Fourth" as we drove out from camp. In
the corner of a week, after traversing a difficult spur of the Rocky
Mountains, we stood on the brow of a precipitous descent at
the foot of which lay the beautiful and exceedingly fertile valley of
Bear River. We descended in safety, and driving down the valley
for 8 or 10 miles farther sought a spot among the luxuriant
meadows, about a mile from the river, where we called a halt, &
remained for 4 days, to rest our weary and travel worn
ponies. No meadow in Missouri could have afforded them better pas-
turage, and had we been able to regain two weeks, instead of
4 days, they would have regained all their former strength and activity.
But our allowance of provisions was calculated only to just take
us through and as the purchase of our wagon had been high drained
the purses of the company, we could not wait longer. To add to
our difficulties, my friend Bryant, who had been disabled by dis-
cussion for two or three weeks, continued to grow worse, until at length
his situation was strongly critical. No medicine that we had summed
to check in the least the progress of the disease, and to procure
any further ^{of the} emigrants was next to impossible. Only our wanted medi-
cine for future emergencies, and but few would part with it for
friendship or more. Contrary to my expectation however, in about
a week our patient began to improve, and by the most careful
treatment and close attention to diet, was soon able to resume
his duties. During the greater part of the time for nearly five
weeks, he was able to do nothing, and was only able to travel
a cot in the wagon. What sustained him I can hardly imagine

but he never showed ~~any~~ symptoms of despondency or a want of cheerfulness.

For nearly three hundred miles we coasted along the Northern rim of the Great Interior Basin, which lies between the Rocky Mountains and the California Range. Grass was good, water abundant, and our horses kept in tolerably good order. They did not improve any how now, and when at length we reached the head waters of the Humboldt or St. Mary's River, five hundred miles from Sacramento, and were approaching the "Sink" and the famed Desert of which so much has been said, we found that at the rate at which we were then travelling our provisions would be exhausted long before we could get through. We accordingly resolved to pack our provisions and clothing upon our animals, leave our wagon, and push forward as rapidly as possible. Upon examination it was found that our stock of provision consisted of 31 pints of flour, lightly measured, 9 pints of dried apples, 3 pints of rice, 4 pounds of bacon, 3 pounds of sugar, 1 lb of coffee, about 2 oz tea with a little pepper, salt, spices, Salivatus &c, for each man. Our clothing was reduced to the smallest amount imaginable, as also was our bedding. Our tent was left as a luxury which we could not afford to carry farther; henceforth the blue canopy of heaven, bespangled with glittering stars was to be our only shelter. We set out, by no means dejected, but rather rejoiced in the hope of the snow speedily bringing our travels to a close. Let me portray myself to you, more minutely, so that you may form a better idea of the appearance of your wandering Son. And now, I will remind you dear mother that you are by no means to think that I am writing this in the spirit of complaint, or in a dejected mood; ~~but~~ I am doing it for your own amusement alone, and although this sketch would cause you to suppose, that what I have encountered on the route has had the effect of discouraging me in the least, or caused a moment's regret that I ever set out upon the journey, I should now tell you a word about it. Be assured therefore, that such is not the case. I am inclined slightly to suspect that I have seen some part, at least, of the animal called the "Elephant" but so far from being intimidated by the sight, I may I think without boasting say that each glimpse has served me to meet each succeeding view, with more boldness and less dread. To commence that portrait with my unskillful pencil. Outside of a round, well built mustard colored long whiskered face, ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~subject~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~sketch~~. By a stranger to the scene on the road to California, he would be pronounced from his complexion to be one of the aborigines that range the trackless wilderness where the neglected growth of whiskers and moustaches that hide the lower part of his features would assign a home for him among the native Mexicans. A low-crowned, broad-brimmed wool hat which once claimed to be white but which may now, with equal propriety, claim any other color, surmounts his dusky cranium and complements the head piece. His arms are encased in the sleeves of of flannel shirts of a brilliant red, the body of which is

concealed beneath the tattered and profusely fringed skirts
of a satin robe. Cotton was the original material, and drab, the
original color of his nether garments; but with unskillful
patchings, and labyrinthine darnings, involuntary and
promiscuous dyeings, half completed and very partial
washings, they now present such a very dubious appearance
that the most skilful dealer in garments could scarcely tell
whether the animal or vegetable Kingdom had had the honor of pro-
ducing them or whether they were the result of the skill of
tailors, ante or post diluvian. Low topped shoes, dusty, sun-
faded, and slightly inclining to a reddish color, protect the
extremities and complete the attire. By way of convenience a
leather strap around the waist supports on one side a tin cup
for drinking and on the other a heavy revolving pistol.
His saddle is surmounted and ornamented with various
adjuncts. First is a sack containing a small quantity of flour
thrown across it making the seat more comfortable. From the
pommel, on the right hand side, depends a tin vessel resembling
a tea canister, answering the purpose of a water canteen. By its
side is a small bag of sassafras tea. On the left is a bag con-
taining a days supply of biscuits and a few vegetables. Behind
the rider on the right, is a very greasy looking object which
from the odor which escapes therefrom, is strongly suspected
of being a sack of bacon, of several pounds weight; while the
opposite side is striking set off by the shining surface
of a black copper pot and bright tin plate, which, occasion-
ally ~~striking~~ ^{jangling} together, make music for the million. Just behind
the saddle, on the top of the horse's back is a dubious looking bundle
which is finally pronounced to be perfectly O.K. - de rose. By the
side of his elegant Rocinante he leads another animal of a little
little larger size, but of a bay color and remarkably void of flesh
or activity. A bid quilt spread upon his back answers the pur-
pose of a pad for the pack saddle which surmounts him.
Upon this pack saddle appears on one side, a calico
carpet bag stuffed with clothing provisions &c, duly balanced
by a pack which is undoubtedly a bundle of books of
some kind or other.

The companions of this apparition though differing
somewhat in the minutiae of their dress and accoutrements
and decidedly of the same flock, and as the group moved

off from their camping grounds and followed. The Enchanting
stream called in honor of the "Nator of Scientific Travellers" the "Humboldt"
boldly they presented a scene which in a civilized country would
doubtless have been looked upon with considerable astonishment.
For a few days we rolled; - not at any "feast of
reason or flow of the soul," but in the delight which we felt in
seeing our horses luxuriate amidst the finest natural meadow
that the route had presented. Then the novelty of spreading our
blankets down in the rich waving grass, close by the bright
rippling waters of the beautiful river, with nought above us to
hide the splendor of a cloudless night, was amply sufficient
to compensate us for the loss of a few worldly comforts and
conveniences. When the morning came and the tops of the Rocky moun-
tains were gorgeously gilded by the approach of the sun, the
familiar sound of cackling sage hens, gabbling geese, quacking
ducks, gave token that we were leaving the high barren interior
country and approaching the waters of the Pacific. It gave us
new life and vigor and we pushed forward with accelerated speed
and buoyant spirits, - hoping in ten days to accomplish the
journey down the Humboldt, (three hundred miles) rapidly
traverse the desert at the sink of the river, and in the course of a
week more cross the Sierra Nevada, enter the valley of the Sacra-
mento, and reach the end of our journey. We separated from
the mass of the emigration, took a right hand road, while everyone
else took the left and for three days were entirely alone, - four
of us, rather poorly mounted, but partially armed, (for we
had sold and thrown away our rifles) and in the heart of
an Indian tribe, decidedly inferior to the whites. But we
instructed our sentinels at night to be vigilant and alert, armed
them as well as we could and finally fell again into the
road among acquaintances, and friends. Then we were told
that fifty miles farther would bring us to the desert.
We had supposed it to be a hundred and rejoiced ac-
cordingly. That night for the first time on the whole route our
animals had absolutely nothing to eat, & we ourselves were too
tired to cook our own supper. The nature of the country
began to change. Instead of a rich, beautiful valley, with em-
erald mountains on either hand, and a vision of the per-
petual waters coursing through its bosom, we found a desolate
barren vale, producing near the river among the unapproach-
able slopes which ran into it, considerable grass, but in gen-
eral nothing but the wild sage; a shrub which never grows
except on miserable alkalin lands, or on deserts as barren
as those of Arabia. The mountains were no longer clothed
in their native of velvet green; they looked far more like huge
piles of ashes and clay, and perfectly destitute of everything
that could hide their ugliness. Even the pure, sweet waters of

The Humboldt became polluted by their passage through this volcanic
region, and was so strongly impregnated with alkali, (pral salisatus)
as to be unfit for use. But there was no other. We must drink or thirst.
Day after day this continued. Grass became more scarce, water became
more poisonous, our horses became more weak, we became more
discouraged and anxious. At length grass was ending, gone.
It had been obtained by swimming the river, cutting it in very
small quantities, with butcher knives and dragging it through
the water with long ropes. But even now this was denied us and
our starving animals had nothing to sustain life but the
browned and scanty twigs of willow which at intervals fringed
the bank of the river. Travelling was rendered very disagreeable
by the dense clouds of dust raised by those preceding us, and
which would have constantly surrounded us had we not
often left the road entirely. No such dust was ever seen or
imagined of in the States. Finer and lighter than superfine
flour, the least disturbance was sufficient to fill the air; and
it absolutely covered everything that was exposed to its influence.
Its alkaline properties rendered it ~~even more~~ highly injurious
to our animals, and ~~the more~~ noxious to ourselves, whose eyes
~~and~~ nostrils and throats were constantly clogged with it. It
filled our clothing, and rotted our garments in a short time.

I can furnish you a receipt for making it, as without you now
can enjoy the privilege of seeing it. Take equal parts of fine sifted
ashes or perfectly dry, white clay, and common Saltratus, Rance
them to an impalpable powder and mingle them intimately
together. Stir your ^{hickory} ~~hickory~~ with this mixture till it is
from two to twenty inches deep. Then take fifty heavy
waggons, with from four to six yoke of oxen attached to
each, and a moderate sprinkling of horses and mules, come
and calves and individuals of the genus homo; put all these
in motion at the rate of 3 or 4 miles per hour, and then at any
spot, drop yourself in among them. Recollect that with a team you
cannot leave the road, - you are bound to follow on. Let a gun
the breeze ^{arise} ~~arise~~, so that when the dust rolls up in dense
opaque masses, it will be wafted with unerring certainty,
directly against your person. Hat, hair and head, eyebrows, eyelashes
and eyes, nostril, mouth, throat and lungs &c &c, from the crown
to the sole, all is dust, dust, dust; miserably filthy, disgusting,
poisonous, intolerable, endless, alkaline dust. "One day," you
say, "would finish a person." Not quite so easily rid of it as that.
Count our neck after another, with a few blessed intermissions
till you have counted 7, 8, or 10 ^{weeks} and then you can probably
say, "it is finished."

Late on Friday night, the 9th of August we reached "The Meadows"
when the Humboldt overflows a level of several miles in width and
10 or 12 miles in length, and carries an abundant growth of excellent
but swamp grass. This is the last chance for the emigrants to
save and remit his stock before placing his foot upon the
confines of that desert which more than all others is the terror

of Californians. A hundred tents during the day, a hundred
camp fires at night, with thousands of human beings preparing
feed for their animals undressed, the scene one of grossity, and in-
trust. But no one noticed or mentioned it; - all were thinking of self
alone and preparing for the Anadul future. By add to the distress
of the masses, provisions, now began to fail. The majority had expect-
ed to make the trip in a much shorter time than it was made last
year and to lighten their waggons had taken a short supply of food
Now it was daily rapidly disappearing, while they were yet 280 miles,
from Sacramento, with a formidable desert and the still more
formidable "Sierra Nevada" (Snowy Mountains) intervening. Across the
desert were many trading posts where Coles he had flour at
one dollar, fifty cents, per pound, & bacon at two dollars per pound.
Very encouraging to those who had paid the last cent of their Cash
to procure an outfit, or had been compelled to use it by the way. To this
strain my Comrades were now reduced and I was so nearly in the
same fix that I could not assist them. Mr Bryant, by an ac-
cident the most trivial and which seemed fortuitous, met
his brother whom he had not before seen - on the journey his brother
was bringing out his family, - had an abundance of provis-
ions to last him, and his brother joined him. Mr Low found
at the same time and place, an Uncle, who though he had no
extra supplies, took him in. Thus I was left alone with my two
horses, my baggage and a mighty few dollars. I knowed
no relations on the route & did not stop to hunt up any. I staid at
the meadow till Monday morning, ^{Meantime} crossed the slough on a waggon
body turned bottom up and supported by 4 empty water Casks lashed
to its Corners, as the only ferry boat, waded 400 yards through water
a foot deep, cut a sufficient quantity of grass, partly with my
pocket knife, partly with a scythe, carried it dripping, on my back
across the slough to my camp, and thoroughly cured enough of
it to make 100 lbs of hay. Packing this on my riding horse,
forth other was not all to carry it. I started on Monday morning
to reach the "Sink of the Humboldt", twenty five miles distant.
I was per necessity obliged to walk and lead my horse, to span
them. My horse for the sixty five miles which was now to be traversed
without a patch of grass, the hay which I had cut was to be his
only sustenance till I reached the valley of Carson River on the
West side of the desert. I arrived at the "Sink" at sundown
weat and exhausted, but in good spirits. I had baked at the
"meadow", what flour I had into hard biscuits, that I need not
be delayed for want of bread and in a few moments had eaten
my supper, given my ponies their quantum of hay and was
slept asleep on the alkaline sand by their side. The quilt which
you gave me, mother, was my bed & bedding, and it made
me exceedingly comfortable. Early in the morning I arose, and moved
a mile farther down, to the last watering point, before entering the
desert. Then I fed my horse, and lay till 4 o'clock P. M. as it is
customary to cross the desert in the night to avoid as far as possi-

866, the danger of suffering from thirst. But as you may wish a farther explanation of the "Lye" I will tell you what it is. The beautiful river Humboldt, which rises among the snows of a range which I cannot ~~name~~, designate, has passed over a soil of a decidedly volcanic nature, Ashes, alkali salt and its principal constituents, and in passing through this medley of scorious substances, the river entirely loses its original character, becoming a foetid, disgusting, poisonous slough, a real, "bona fide", "River Styx" totally unworthy to bear the distinguished name by which it is known, and finally after sneaking slyly along for some distance among heaps of ashes, coal, burnt stones and clay, as if trying to hide itself, it comes to a sandy plain, spreads out its noxious waters upon its bosom, and then disappears, - actually and literally runs into the ground and totally, utterly ~~disappears~~. No traces of it therafter, have ever been found. From this point to Carson River is a distance of 40 miles without a drop of water or a spin of grass. To disguise the nauseous taste of the "Lye" which we dipped from the river, and which was to be our only drink a month's water, I made my coffee pot full of strong coffee, and at 4 P.M. in company with hundreds of others, saddled my horse and on foot, coffee pot in hand, set out. At sundown I stopped a few moments to rest my horse at a biscuit and then moved on again. The scenery around was indescribably desolate, by the light of the moon, I could easily discern on either hand the low ranges of ~~barren~~ scorched and barren mountains which hemmed in the plain but not a spin of grass, a leaf or the most insignificant shrub appeared to relieve the oppressive monotony of the barren waste. Around me was an undulating plain of sand, dust, salt and alkali. Clouds of dust rolled up from beneath the wheels and the horse's hoofs and filled the atmosphere. With their now, began to appear another interesting feature of the scene. Numerous dead carcasses of oxen, horses & mules whose strength had been exhausted on the Humboldt, lay on either side of the road, impregnating the air with an odor by no means very delicious. I pushed on until midnight, the moon was then two hours ^{high} and I resolved

to stop and rest until about the time of her setting. How I gave
my horse the last of my hay, and having with some difficulty swallow-
ed a pint of my alkaline coffee, I stretched myself on the dry sand
wrapped in my quilt, and for two hours slept sweetly, when I awoke
the moon had disappeared but the stars gave light enough to travel by. After
travelling a number of miles I found myself entirely alone - I had
passed a great number of emigrants who had gone into Camp forest
a number of the night and now could neither see nor hear anything
of teams on the road. Thinking I might have travelled faster
than I had supposed and was approaching the confines of the desert,
and finding that my meat was now growing tired I called a
halt & remained until daybreak. When I started again I discovered
that the number of dead animals was rapidly increasing by the road side
and with their bones left in many cases, the wayfords to which they had
belonged. At sunrise I met a man who told me that it was 14 miles
to the further edge of the desert, my horse almost sunk with an
effort that I could not accomplish until the heat of the day and
that my horse would become exhausted before that time. But I
pushed on. Abandoned waggons and dead animals became thicker at
every step, and the air was filled with a disgusting odor. I became
very thirsty but my alkaline coffee was insufficient to quench my
thirst. It was monstrous about as pleasant to take, as ipeacachuan. Six
miles farther a crowd around a waggon attracted my attention, I went
to it and found Casson River water for sale, at a dollar per gallon. I bought
half a gallon and drank the most of it immediately. How delicious &
refreshing it was, you cannot imagine unless you mix saleratus with
your beverages for about two weeks. The water dealer told us it was 14 miles
yet, and of waste, and 12 of them, heavy sand. This was quite distress-
ing, but I pushed on again. Shortly after reaching the sandy portion of
the road the dead animals and broken waggons began to accumulate
rapidly. Several times during the morning I had passed spots where prop-
erty to the value of \$2,000 was strewed within the space of 200 yards, but what I
now behold far exceeded anything that I had before witnessed. The route
of the emigrants could have been discovered for miles and miles with a
spy glass, by the abandoned waggons, which were literally strewed on each
side of the road. Hundreds of them had been burned for fuel, and others were broken,
disassembled and stripped: but there were numbers of them that stood
there as perfect and complete as when they passed out of the hands of their
builders. Wheels, axles and open lay to them and around them in the precise po-
sition when they fell. Often they dropped in the road: but no one thought of
removing them and the trains which followed, if it was not common to
turn out down directly over the dead bodies, crushing and mangleing the
bones and flesh beneath their heavy wheels and trampling hoofs. The
sun was now high in the heavens and poured down a scorching tide of his
rays. A gentle breeze swept fitfully across the plain and brought a refresh-
ing coolness - but the stench which it brought to our nostrils was almost
insufferable. When it lulled for a moment the plain seemed to be the
situation of some vast oven, glowing with oppressive heat. Fire, iron, timber
slowly came and slowly passed, - still I was toiling through the sand
rivers from the edge of the desert. I could not rest, for my horse was

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Suffering with thirst, & the scant supply of water for myself was almost gone. Teams around me began to fail. - more than one poor brute dropped helpless on the sand to die of thirst, and men were disengaging their oxen and horses from their waggon, and driving them forward to water, intending when night should come to return and finish the journey. Others who had no animals to ride took buckets in their hands or cast them upon their shoulders and started for a supply of water for thirsting women & children. This, through miles of deep sand under a scorching sun was no pastime.

But all things earthly have an end; and at about half past one, as I reached the summit of a sand hill I saw the beautiful green tops of the trees which line the banks of the Carson River; a mile or two in the distance it gave me more life & vigor; my horses also seemed to know that they were approaching a place of refreshment were inspired with unwonted energy. In half an hour more they had quenched their thirst in the pure cooling waters of the stream, and stopped of their saddles ~~under~~ were grazing at the leisure along the banks; while I was stretched at full length beneath the branches of an aspen tree and enjoying the luxury of a shade for the first time since leaving St. Joseph. My passage across the desert was easy compared with that of many. Some suffered dreadfully and I have heard of a few who found a grave among its scorching sands.

One hundred thousand dollars worth of property encumbered the ground on the last ten miles of the waste besides what had been previously destroyed & had disappeared. The Emigration behind will swell the amount to more than double that value. I now shall complain of what I underwent in crossing it.

From the desert to Sacramento City was 210 miles. For several days I traveled very slowly to renew my horses; but grass was scanty and they just had strength to creep along. I walked and led them as much as I could but the long use of alkaline water with indifferent food had somewhat reduced my own strength and I could not walk all day. But now I found trading posts every day or two, where with other articles of food they generally kept the finest beef. I now saw in every market California against the world for good beef.

This you may suppose was a delicious luxury to one who had been for four months almost exclusively confined to salt bacon, & together with the pure water of the mountain streams, contributed much to restore my usual strength. I will not dwell on my journey up Carson river, but state briefly that my progress was slow on account of the exhausted state of my horses. At length the towing peats of the "Sierra Nevada", beautifully clothed in forests of maple, pine and hemlock, asserted their power. For three or four days we traveled through a beautiful portion of the Carson valley alongside a lofty spur of the mountains till we reached the "Cañon" (Proc. Canyon) when we turn suddenly to the right and enter the pass which leads over the range. Now was the last good grazing that I would find till I reached the valley of the Sacramento, 100 miles distant, and I came to the conclusion to team my horses for six or eight weeks to regain their flesh before attempting to cross, pack my baggage on my back and for the remainder of the distance take it on foot. A trader took my horses in his care and after throwing away my coat, and india rubber overcoat, my quilt, my coffee pot & canteen, my saddle blankets and ~~blankets~~ ^{chairs} and selling my saddle for two dollars, I had my provisions, a

of flannels, and my books. After bringing them so far, these latter I was resolved should come through, if it cost me a good deal of even labor, to accomplish that purpose. My books weighed just 24 lbs the rest of my baggage about 10; so that I had a comfortable load of things from this to carry over the Sierra Nevada and down the valley of the Sacramento to the city - a distance of one hundred and forty miles; - at least, this was my delightful anticipation when I set out. At one o'clock P.M. I started, traversed 4 miles to the Cañon, which I must tell you is the Mexican term for a defile or gorge with hills. How wasteful my beautiful dream, I had witnessed for a long time but I must pass by & get through the Cañon before dark. It is six miles long is a deep cut through a high spur of the mountain, with perpendicular sides of granite which had been shattered by some great power into millions of huge fragments which have thundered headlong down from the heights above and strewed in tremendous masses over the whole bottom of the ravine. The fragments are too heavy to be rolled away or even moved by mortal power, and too thick strewed to admit the passage of a team between them. The only manner that is to go over them; and over the angle sixous go in tens of thousands, with heavy waggons, with their wives and children, and with all their earthly treasures. You would think could you see them a moment, that oxen, mules, horses and waggons, must all be crushed or dashed in a thousand fragments before they could get through. Some are killed outright and many waggons splintered in shivers; but the rest get through safely. It was slow and tedious work for me to climb for eight huge rocks, and after I was disposed to sit or lie down and rest, but at dark I had made my exit from ~~among~~ the gorge and was reposing by my campfire, ten miles from where I had started this afternoon. I was quite tired, but I soon dispatched my supper, laid a good supply of pine logs with fire, cut a few aspen bushes to stretch out from the night air, and then without coat, vest, or blanket laid me down on the ground with my feet to the fire, and was soon asleep. Next morning I was up at aurora, however, and on my way to cross the first ridge of the Sierra. It was 12 or 15 miles across, but I expected to sleep on the west side of it at night. Passing near some towns in camp, some one called my name. I stopped aside and recognized a Tennesseean from Fader Co. Mo. with whom we had become acquainted on the route & with whom we had exchanged some trivial favors, hundreds of miles back. We chatted a few moments and he invited me to put my pack into his waggon and travel along with him as he was going direct to Sacramento. I assure you I did not need a second invitation. I was soon at the margin of our climbing the 1st and 2nd ridges of the "Sierra Nevada" - of the snow banks that we travelled over, of the disconcerts of magnetic pins that snub me back in imagination to the hills of New England, ~~around~~ of our fine arrival on bright morning at the flourishing village of Kingsgold, 50 miles from Sacramento, of the mines which I passed through and of the pleasure which I felt at being once more in a land of civilization, I need not particularly speak. Sufficient to say that at Kingsgold by some accident I became separated from the train of my friend, - he taking one road & I taking another, - both however leading to Sacramento. I walked ten miles but could hear nothing of him. It was then dark and far want of better accommodations, I turned aside a few yards from the road - found a branching oak bush which furnished a pretty good

Shut, and empty under it full asleep without blanket or fire. At three or four o'clock A.M. it being rather uncomfortably cold I awoke and started, expecting to reach the city - 40 miles distant - the day. Half a pound of Conchos was my supper the night before, and the same constituted my breakfast this morning. At noon I had just 30 cents left, - with which I bought a biscuit 12 1/2 - a small piece of beef steak 12 1/2 and a smoked herring, 5 cts. Of these I made a sumptuous dinner.

Ten miles more to the city - ten to Col. H. W. Medrow's ferry. Sun about an hour high I walked into his public house in the guise - Ragged, dirty & shapless, broad brimmed white hat, red flannel shirt, without coat or vest, blanket or overcoat, ragged and dirty cotton pants with used-up suspender, - worn out shoes and my dirty stockings, whiskers & mustache & hair, uncombed, unbrushed, ragged and full of dust, No one recognised me though there were a number of old acquaintances around, and I doubt not in that dress I could easily have passed my inquiries till the present moment.

Having improved my appearance somewhat, this morning I walked into the city - and was thunderstruck at the sight before me. Instead of a large town, one half of whose business is of cotton cloth I found myself in a great city with occasionally a cloth house towards the suburbs doing nearly as much business as St. Louis, at least far more than any town about here on either shore of the Mississippi. By her side sweeps a deep and noble river, whose banks present a scene of life and activity, which no one in Mo. ever sees out of St. Louis. Seventy four ships and Schooners lie at anchor and a splendid line of Steamers communicates daily with the waters of the Pacific. The wharf or levee is crowded with Merchants from every nation of the world and every language almost, beneath the sun pour its joys to swell the multiplied sounds which strike your ear. The European, the South American, the Islanders of the South Seas, the Asian, & the African here mingle together as though it were the Common home of humanity. And Sacramento is one year old!!

My companions are safely in Mr. God's arms a day or two before me and Mr. Bryant a day or two after me. Mr. God has taken a situation as clerk in an establishment six or seven miles from town and receives a salary of one hundred dollars per month. Mr. Bryant is with his brother's family, but has not yet decided what to do. I have not fully determined what I shall do this winter, as yet. Had I a few hundred to start on, I would immediately go into the practice of my profession. There is an immense amount of litigation in the city with every prospect of its steady increase. Every man who ever heard of Mr. Anderson says if he was here he could make from fifty to one hundred ^{thousand} dollars per annum!!

A great difficulty lies in the way of my going into Practice, Board with city
at the first hotels is one dollar per meal - 20 dollars per week; at
the lowest houses, 10.00 per week, Office rent, from 75 to 100 dollars
per month, Fuel high and Books & Clothing about twice what they
cost in the States, I cannot in all probability do much for some
time, and my expenses sometime much, be considered, I could
borrow money of my friends here but this I do not wish to do,
I had a situation as an clerk in an auction store in the
city, offered me a short time ago with a salary of 100 dolls per month
and if I cannot do better I shall take it for a month or two, Mr. Ketch
talks of setting up a store with mine, about 80 miles from the city, I
wishes me to take charge of it, but I do not know what he would
be willing to give. Most of the emigrants are disappointed in the
mine and many are seeking employment elsewhere, which ac-
counts for the great reduction in wages.

For myself I cannot say that I am much disappointed in California.
I think that the mines do not produce so much in proportion to the labor
engaged in them as they did last year, but I was prepared to expect this. There is
no probability that the mines will be exhausted for years to come, and so long
as they hold out, this country must rapidly increase in population and
wealth. If a person does not make "an ounce" a day, I see no reason for
faching out, giving up all and going back home. This however is the
case with a good many. Numbers go on very badly, ready to swear whomever
they hear that California is all a humbug. For my part I am by no means
discouraged, I did not decide to come out here hastily, or without
some consideration, and I do not think that I have footed it among
the plains, deserts and mountains for nothing. So long as I can do
better here than in the States I shall remain, i.e., for a reasonable length
of time. My year is the shortest time that I can now fix upon, and it
may be I shall stay longer, but if I am blessed with success I think
that two years from this fall will see me again among that circle whom
I often think of with deep, unquented interest.

Mr. Ketch and Henry have made a good deal of money
in the short time that they have been here, but were so very unfortunate as to
lose the larger portion of it four or five weeks ago by some rascal
who broke open their trunk at night and took out nearly all of their
hard earnings, - about \$4000.00. They lost last spring a share in
4000 dolls. in the same manner and their suspicions have fastened
upon a couple of men who were in partnership with them and who
slept in the room where the trunk was on the night of the robbery.
There is no evidence which would be available in account of jus-
tice, but it is sufficient to satisfy their own minds. They have since
dissolved partnership with these men and will henceforth work on their
own hook. They have yet about \$1500.00 each, which will give
them a fair start for another year.

"Rancho Del Paso" is a tract of land about 9 miles square
lying on the north bank of the American Fork of the Sacramento, three
miles from the city, and belongs to a gentleman by the name of

He has been in the County a number of years and is now in
Mindy's hands. His "ranch" (or farm) is let out to a number of tenants
among whom is Mr. Keely. A rich strip of land on the bank of the
river is surrounded by a ditch which serves as a fence and
is in a state of good cultivation. Corn, potatoes, pumpkins, squashes,
melons of all kinds, Cabbages, turnips & radishes of mammoth size
sweet potatoes and ~~all~~ vegetables that grow in this climate grow
in abundance. Every morning hundreds of them to town
Potatoes 12 cts per lb. Tomatoes, 25 do, Pumpkins 6 do, &c &c. Every thing
can raise, readily bring money.

His house which is partly of cloth & partly of wood stands close by
the side of the beautiful American Fork, and has annexed to it a
smaller garden, a "corral" or yard for his cows, stack yards &c &c.
His cows are as fine looking as any I ever saw, and give a good
supply of milk.

The American Fork is a delightful stream, its clear
pure water are always cool and furnish a refreshing beverage
while in their crystal depths sport myriads of the finest fish.
Every morning his sales of fresh fish caught with a seine &
four run in a short time, amounts to \$5.00 or \$3.00. Salmon
bring 50 cents per pound, and bass, perch &c &c 25 cts.

I must bring my endless communication to an end. I fear you
think, as the Irishman did about the rope he was hauling on board
a ship, that somebody has cut the end of this letter off - it is so long
in making its appearance. But I expect to bow you with another
soon, though I promise you, it shall not be so trying to your patience
or to your eyes. When I arrived I found a solitary letter with office
from Kins. dated July, May 24th and day before yesterday I got
another dated Glenfield July 17th. For each of these I am greatly in-
debted to him and hope he will accept my sincerest thanks; not
forgetting to keep up the practice which he has commenced. I shall
reply as soon as possible, - meantime will be consider some part of
this as an answer pro tem. I am glad that it difficultly in his theory is likely
to yield to careful treatment. Think Homer's prospects are very flattering. On
the banks of the golden Sacramento I hear, by "one who knows", of his ex-
traordinary success in teaching. High compliments are passed upon his skill.
We need not suppose I hear by letters - it comes "viva voce", from a "proprius persona".
And Dav is to be a painter! Good! it was Franklin & so was & is Horace Gulley,
who despite some of his peculiar views is an honor & an ornament to his County.
I hope that it will not be many years and missed our little "Dodo"
(he won't be offended now, I guess, at the name) standing at the head

of one of those moral machines that scatter, living intellectual
light over our land and disseminating with skill and power,
those influences which do now, ^{and} yet to sustain and beautify
our political fabric, and protect, strengthen and improve all
our institutions, whether social, political or religious. When that con-
summation is reached, amidst the long columns of essays dissertations
&c I wish to have opened a little nook of sufficient extent to attract
notice, and over the head of it in respectable Capital, I have placed the word
"The Weekly Sun-Bundle". This will be the ~~birth~~ provoking department of the
paper and will supply the place of that twinkling little luminary, which arose
so brilliantly years ago, but which had destined to a long eclipse by the
force of circumstances. I wish the young printer all imaginable success
and hope that nothing may occur to discourage him in the path he
has chosen.

By the way now that I think of it I dreamed last night that I
was at home, and noticed reading that I was amid familiar scenes
once more. I noticed all the improvements about the house and gar-
den and noted particularly the accuracy with which Rens had
descended to me the new walk with garden south of the house.
Both vision was short and fleeting and I awoke to find myself
maritime shores of the Pacific.

I am expecting by the next steamer from Panama a
box of letters, I have the promise of Homer, Sam & Fanny, safely
treasured up and shall not speakly forget them, I warn them
not to disappoint me. I fear more from Fanny than I do from
the others as she has less leisure to write than most anyone else, how
often I think of her kindness to me, I need not say, that I can ever forget
it is impossible. That I may live to repay her, or at least to show
her by my actions that I am not ungrateful, is my dearest wish.

Rens says that he & Father think of taking the Contract to carry
the mail from Memphis to Gal, I hope that it will turn a good
reward if they do so, though I should think Father's time was already
so completely occupied that he could have no leisure for attending to
new business. I hope his agencies are not growing less profitable.

I am really glad to hear that my old head up horse is able to pay for
his board, I hope he may live and do much good for a long time
to come.

Now, dear Mother, I have tried you completely out. It seems as
though I could write for a week, but I know it would be a nuisance
to continue farther. I shall expect to hear from you occasionally, though
I am aware you cannot write very often, I would give much to see
and talk with you a short time but wishing I could not afford that
pleasure. Time however will roll away rapidly and it will
not be a very long period before I am in Mo. again, I think, mean-
time I shall exercise patience knowing that to be a great comfort.

Give my love to all and my respects &c. to all who inquire

Yours, very affectionately
Eliza C. Hitchcock