

Nevada. 3rd October 1853.

My dearest Charly.

Vive la Californie! and the Californians! to which title I consider I have full claim, as you would think if you saw me in my working costume. I had the high compliment paid me, that one hour completed the transformation thoroughly, which consists in looking as rough and dirty as possible. A fortnight ago we made a 3 days excursion into the mountains to look at the Country we have to go through. We were 13, all on horseback, and formed a very merry cavalcade galloping for 30 miles up & down hill ^{all the way} through forests of most beautiful large trees. We had a good look at the Country, and it is well worth it. Although there are no such high mountains, the detail of the scenery is as grand, or more so than the Swiss scenery. All the Country is cut up by rivers, each running in ^{steep rocky} ravines from 1 to 2000 feet deep. All the hills are wooded with tremendous pine & cedar trees from 1 to 300 feet high, and the ravines are steep, rocky, slippery & all together most uncomfortable places to stroll about on. The sun is very hot, but up in the mountains 3000 feet above the sea there is plenty of air, so as to make it very pleasant, and the nights are very cool and beautiful. We came back to Nevada for

a few days, and I then started back again with Darcy
to commence surveying the line. We stayed up there, 30
miles off for a week and had tough work of it, having
almost to hang on by our eyelids in some places, and
often to climb up 8 or 900 feet to get round impassable
points. The climbing was hard work for the wind at first
but I am already getting used to it, and shall probably soon
be able to do it without much fatigue. We slept at
a Rancho or farm in a place called Bear Valley, having
to sleep in our own blankets, and live on salt pork, which
diet had the advantage of making us appreciate the ^{fine} water
of the country (especially when we could not get any).

As having to walk or climb 6 or 7 miles before & after our days
work, although very fine exercise, is no variety, as we are
doing it all day, and as we do not consider salt pork
and hard board a sufficient inducement for such exercise,
we are going henceforth to camp out, and start tomorrow
with our own fireirons, and turn in to our blankets under
the canopy of the heavens, whenever we happen to be
at sun set. We rode down here yesterday for the mail
and go up again tomorrow. We all have horses coming up from
San Francisco. I have left Lane to buy mine as he is a good
judge of horse flesh. He thinks we have hired them, and I have
had the good luck to have mine go down with me 3 times already
once while going very fast. As it ploughed the virgin soil
or road with my proboscis, but taking William the Conqueror as a
precedent (as I was not hurt) I could but consider it as a
good omen, and a fashionable way of taking possession.
Coming down yesterday I was on a brute that commenced
the days work by going down on his knees, and seeming to
like it, went on stumbling about every 2 minutes. After about

20 miles I began to get tired of holding him up, so I thought I would let him have his own way for once. The first time he stumbled I let him go on his head and stuck in the saddle. It took him some time to get the dirt out of his nose, and after that, finding that I would not hold him up any longer he thought he had better do it himself. We got on better afterward. We have taken a house together here for when we come down, and in the fullness of our hearts thought that was sufficient; but when we got home last night, tired and dirty, as I had to go with 2 pack to draw water from a well 2 or 300 yard off and after supper to lay my blankets on the floor and lay like a warrior taking his rest with my martial blanket around me. I had no idea how soft the floor is before. I beg leave to observe that our "maison de ville" is to be furnished, but that part of the arrangement, excepting some chairs and a table is looming in the future. Up in the mountains we have seen plenty of game, and killed 3 rattlesnakes already. We have seen fresh Bear tracks every day but have not yet seen any, though we hope to do so before long. The 2nd night, one came down into our valley and sent the mules and Cattle running about our cabin like fun. As it was dark, we thought we were very comfortable inside, and left him to his sport outside. Man is a creature of habit! Hem! ~~the~~ For the first day or two I was continually looking out for snakes and other unpleasant things but I have already become quite indifferent to them, and shall probably soon delight in them. In the morning it seems as natural to put on my revolver, as my boots and it has the advantage of being cleaned periodically, which the latter have not. On Monday night we left off at some set and

took a short (?) cut across hill and dale to get back to our
hospitable roof. It soon got dark and we got into a
dry ditch that we knew to run in the right direction; after
1 or 2 miles however, we found the ditch changed into a wet
one, and as it was too dark to be able to walk on the steep
slopes on either side of it, we had to go along in the water
over our boots for more than a mile. The journey after
a hard tramp of 6 miles, and as our travelling luggage
consisted of a comb & tooth brush, a luxurious Britisher
might think it barely possible under the circumstances, that
we might catch cold. We rose superior to the circumstances,
kept our wet things on - and didn't - This Country is a
fine school for a proud man, and is indeed a land of
equality. You shake hands with almost every man you meet
and eat and live with your men, who are even dirtier
than yourselves, though many of them are tolerably well
sweated men. Tell Papa that from what I have seen
this concern is likely to be a very profitable one, but
everything is not yet quite square, as another Company
have ~~to~~ commenced works on our ground and are in
possession of our rights. I however think that they
will soon be disposed of and, if so satisfactorily, I shall
take some more shares. I will ~~write~~ ^{let him know} as soon as everything
is safely settled. I have got no letters yet. I heard
of one, I suppose from Mr. Nicholson that has got lost
between New York & here. I am looking forward to getting
some with great anxiety. Be sure and write often
and tell me all you are doing, how Mat is, and anything
you can think of to fill a sheet. With lots of love
to Papa, Mama, Grandmama when you write to her. Mat
says Believe me, Dearest, Charles
Your ever affectionate brother

W. Stanroose

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