

Nevada. 2nd November 1857

Or Charly

My Dearest Mother,

I have enough sense of my own
to bear (of necessity ^{not} waiting regularly) without the additional
ones caused by Steamboat accidents. You have probably
seen in the papers an account of the loss of the Steamer
Central America 1400 passengers. That ill fated vessel
(the same on which I came from New York to Astoria) was
carried down among the other mail matter a long letter
from me to Papa with a full account of my prospecting
tour in the mountains. I am not quite, but almost certain
that it was sent by that mail - if not you will have
got it and then will be a recapitulation of the principal
facts. On the 21st July I started with 3 others, Deep Colburn
and 2 prospecting miners, on foot with 2 pack mules, my white
coat and another less valuable one which we bought for the
trip, our own prospecting tools, into look for gold, or rather, according
to gold bearing strata. We went up & crossed the summit of
the Sierra Nevada in the same place as later you. Went
some distance down the other side of the Ridge among the
Sierran ~~is~~ what is not finding any likely ground there
we recrossed the Sierra some miles to the south and as we
was following an Indian trail part of the way & leaving it at the
summit where it was covered with snow. The passage of
the summit was difficult the snow being 15 to 20 feet deep
in some places & the sides of the snow banks were so
precipitous that after cutting steps in it (like Charly is
on the Mts de France) we could not get our smaller mule
over without unloading his baggage & carrying it back up

On our own backs. We crossed several branches & came down
along the middle Fork of the American River. One night while
camping on Hat River our mules strayed. The next morning we
followed them up & caught the Company men, but ~~although~~
my Charly was lost. I tracked him for several miles
& walked down the ridge 40 miles farther to the nearest
town, but could find no farther traces of him. He had
a long lead rope round his neck & he either got caught
by that in some brush or got caught by the Indians.
I did all in my power both then & since to find him
but have not seen or heard of him from that day to this
So much for Charly. We found indications of gold bearing
strata at great heights in the mountains but not sufficient
any place where denuded the rocks to advantage.
Lower down near a place called "Michigan Bluffs"
we took up some claims and think they are likely to
pay very well (if at all). We are co-partners and
we are running a tunnel into the hill to try it.
We are now 100 feet in and we expect to have to run
200 feet more before striking the gravel lead. It is an
expensive & tedious as well as uncertain process but
the indications are sufficiently good to induce
several other companies to "stake their all upon the
die & to abide the hazard of the cast." I am not very
 sanguine myself but think the chances in my favour
are sufficient to make it worth trying. I bought into
2 other sets of claims in the same neighborhood
but in both we are waiting & paying a small
sum to an adjoining Company for the benefit of
their former experience in this tunnel. This is of

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I have the great pleasure to hear of your
success in working on tunnel for nearly 1000
feet also done any share of work for me of course by being
paid for it. As you will know from my latest letters
I had settled here as I thought for the winter, but business
of every kind is so completely stagnant that there
is no chance of making a profit by doing so. That
I think of trying my luck elsewhere as soon as I can
raise the money to do it. I think of moving over to Michigan
Chiefs. It is a thriving little town ^{right} just burnt down it will
be a good one I hope to be able to combine a little business
with my business so get along at all events and not
know the result of my "ventures". At all events it
can not be worse than this. Last week I had my first
day's work - 3 days work which would probably have
been for some time. I think of going over to the
Chiefs tomorrow to "look round" it is 3 miles S. E. of here
on the Middle Fork of the American River.
On my return from my first trip I found Emily ill in bed she
had a long spell of fever and was confined to her room for
2 months. She is luck-would have it, the only medical man
whom we could have any confidence in killed himself accident-
ally while out shooting a few days before her illness
and we were actually afraid to call in any of the numerous
quacks whose whole pharmacopoeia consisted in Colomel
& gamgee, both in very large doses & very much adulterated.
Her sister who has had a great deal of experience nursed
her through it and we know think she is better off than
she would have been with such medical advice as
we could have procured. She is still very weak
I am afraid she will not have very good health for
some time.

winter. We have had a pretty hard time for the last
a year being determined not to buy anything we could not
pay for we have been without any furniture of our own
& often without knowing which way to turn for our next
meal. We have however got through it so far and I hope
it will soon be over. I have managed to get enough money
to support a boy for a short time. I have also managed
to keep us after them, at all events. I can only try my best
I hope for success. As long as poverty was at a distance
Emily felt very badly about it, but when it came to the point
she acted her part like a "Briton". You would have been
amused to see us living on cracked wheat & potatoes for more
than a week sometimes without meat. If it does not
come again, I shall not regret it as it certainly has taught
me the value of money though I do not think Emily at least
required such a lesson. Thank your mother for the 200 fr
and keep them for me for the present. I may be glad of them some day.

1891

I suppose you are in the sunny South again & again separated
from poor dear Charly. Of course she will read this &
forward it to you. We had a smart earthquake here a few
weeks ago, the most violent I have felt with freedom in the
mountains. It shook our house so that my first impression
from long living in Railway Stations was "There is the Express"
& Emily who was in bed in the next room, cried out to know
if what I had up to shake the house so, thinking I had
sent a part the wardrobe. We have now very pleasant weather
between having had enough rain to lay most of the dust.
Write to me to "New Ad" the same as letters to send in the
direction. Emily has had all what little time she has been
well enough to do anything or occupied but you must consider
this account from her as from me. Believe me I send mother with
best love to Papa, Charly, the Paris spend many of your affect. Children
Mare & Emily