

Vol vos Nevada

2nd August 1856-

My Dear Sir -

Since my last letter I have had a good deal of change and of excitement, so much so as to have taken away even some of the charm of variety. I am now writing in the house where Emily lives, a short distance out of town, where I have found a temporary refuge. But let us begin at the beginning: We started as arranged on the 14th. We were a large and pleasant party. 11 ladies, 11 gentlemen, 1 man (an English distinction) to look after the pack animals & 2 pack mules - of course all on horses or mules, each man carrying his blankets behind him. We went in easy days, riding varying from 20 to 25 miles, over the summit of the Sierra Nevada and about 40 miles the other side to the Lake Taylor. We stayed there 3 days, enjoying ourselves very much fishing without success, getting wet on a raft in the day and sentimental round the fire in the evening. It is a beautiful sheet of water, ^{but very wet} as near as we could guess about 20 miles long and 6 to 8 wide. It is ~~scarcely~~ ^{between 9 and 6000} 10,000 feet above the sea and surrounded

by the peaks of the Sierra to the height of 2000
feet more. It abounds in splendid fish (Salmon
& speckled trout) and though we could not
catch any we traded with some Indians
who could, and exchanged several old flannel
shirts for sundry days work spearing trout
and fish as much as we cared for. The Indians
on that side of the range, in the Utah territory
are a fine, tall, handsome race, from all
accounts very much like the Chippewas & other
Northern tribes. Those round us were the Sioua
or Canon Valley tribes. They came round in
such numbers as to be troublesome and we
had to keep good watch on everything and to
mount guard on our cattle at night,
as they only wanted the opportunity to help
themselves to anything from horses downward.
They made themselves so perfectly at home round our
fire, to the exclusion of our party, that we considered
them wanting in courtesy to their visitors to the
Utah territory and taking the law into our
own alien hands, made them camose (angl.
muzzle) which from the number of rifle &
revolvers lying about, they judged prudent
to do, though with ill grace. We were out 12 days
travelling along slowly in the day, sometimes
laying by while 2 or 3 went out to explore

the ladies sleeping in a tent & the men anywhere -
the days were pleasant but the nights cold & frosty -
On getting back to Nevada on the 25th we found that
on the 19th the whole town with the exception of
4 buildings had been destroyed by fire in a couple
of hours. There were over 500 buildings, 30 of
which were brick & supposed to be fireproof. I lived
in one of them and lost everything. Books, clothes
instruments & papers. ~~At~~ Mr. Young & Mr. Anderson
whom I lived with ~~were~~ both fearfully burnt, but
I live were lost. 3 friends of mine
are getting on slowly - After looking at the
heap of ruins for an hour I got a message from
a friend of mine dying 22 miles off. I immediately
got a fresh horse and ~~went~~ ^{got} down there in time
to see him but ~~was~~ ^{too} late to be recognized.
I stayed with him till he died, had him buried,
arranged his affairs as well as I could and
am now going to let his friends in Hull know
all about it, and in due course have what
money he had saved sent to them - I got back
here on the 28th and have spent all my time
since then helping to nurse my poor burnt friends.
They require a great deal of attention but
they have many friends who do all they can for
them. It is almost worth while to be burnt once
once to see what generosity there is in the
world. Every house & every purse are open
to the sufferers, who in many cases are almost

as well ~~as for~~ ^{hardly} the fire - There is ~~no~~ such a
thing in the place as ~~a~~ low spirits except with
the friends of the wounded, though they bear it
wonderfully well. I am very thankful I was
away as I should certainly have stayed as long
as they in the house, and probably should the same
~~if it were~~ ^{if it were} safe - Though it is rather awkward
to have no clothes, I am in luck having found ⁴
shirts and a suit of ~~both~~ ^{out of town} ~~at my~~ washerwomen's
My instruments, books and papers are difficult to
replace, especially the latter as all the County
records are destroyed and nothing is left to prove
my mortgages - I have however \$1500 due to me
if I leave the Co. and \$1000 that I can depend
upon (one of 2 mortgages) and perhaps the other ¹⁰⁰⁰ if
I am lucky, so I am well enough off after
all - If I leave the Co I shall not have to replace
my instruments, if I do not, I can afford to -
My memorial arrangements are put off for
some time of course - I just got your & Charles
letters of the 3rd & 10th June - I am sorry Mame was
hurt at not being written to - I thought she and
all of you understood that any letters were meant
for all, whoever they happen to be addressed to -
If it would make her any happier, I could address
all to her - I am in a great hurry, having snatched
a little time from my nursing duties - I will
write again by next mail. With best love to all
Believe me ^{very} affectionate
I send you a paper
W. H. Mayhew