



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Cambria Wis. Nov. 3rd 1866.

Dear Brother J. Charles,

I suppose you are all anxiously looking out for this letter. I must ask pardon for delaying so many days in writing home. My excuse is that I was waiting until I would first hear from Bro. Sandy, who promised to write to me as soon as he arrived at Burlington. As I have not yet heard from him since I parted from him at Cairo I feel uneasy about him, but hope he is all right and perhaps home by the time you receive this.

Since I posted my last letter at Cairo on the 23rd ult. I have met with no misfortune. Left Cairo at 4:00 A. M. Oct 24th on the Ill. C. R.R. for Chicago, where I arrived the same day at 9 P. M. a distance of 365 miles. The day was cool but clear and I enjoyed my trip very much. The road passes through some beautiful Country and some large and thriving towns, and numerous villages. The Car I rode in was splendidly fitted out. I made no delay in Chicago but started at 11:45 P. M. for Milwaukee. I went to bed on a sleeping Car and was waked up in Milwaukee next morning at 6, ^{having travelled} a distance of about ⁸⁵ ~~100~~ miles.

I was astonished on leaving the comfortable Car to find the ground covered with a heavy hoar frost, and the morning raw and cold. As I had only light clothing on. I suffered not a little at the change of climate. Soon it began to rain, and sleet. so I bought an overcoat and felt more comfortable. I had to wait until 2:30 for the express train going west, and also for my trunk from Chicago. This gave me ample time to walk about the city. Milwaukee is a large and enterprising city. Situated much like Chicago on Lake Michigan. Part of the city is on a hill. A great many Germans live there.

Having received my baggage and being well prepared I left for Cambria my destination on the 2:30 ^{P.M.} train arriving here at 7:15 P.M. a distance of 78 miles. The day having been wet I found the streets here muddy, but I was not long in finding my friends.

I went first to Mr Patuello's store, where I found his son Charles aged about 16, who knew me at once and accompanied me to their residence, where I was most cordially received by Mr & Mrs. Parnell and family, with whom as you are perhaps aware I got acquainted ~~with~~ in South Bend, while stationed there in the Spring of 1863. I could not forget the family, they were so kind to me, who was a total stranger to them at that time.

While I was writing this letter Mrs. Burnell presented my wife a beautiful Bible mark
on which was inscribed the words "Watch and pray," worked with yellow silk & the edges
ornamented with the same. She told me to accept it as from a friend. She is an excellent knitter,
I had often known before, & a beautiful pair of slippers from Sarah. As Sarah can inform you,
little "digger" only 1 1/2 years of age is very pet, affording great amusement and pleasure.
They are English people, from London. Their family
consists of three sons and two daughters, a son and
daughter having been born in England.
Miss Sarah A. Burnell, was a lovely girl, when
I saw her in South Bend, and is now an accomplished
lady. I have been corresponding with her since
last March, with a view to matrimony ultimately.
I knew enough of her before, to satisfy me, that
she was such a one as I would choose for a life
partner, and I have no reason yet to change my
opinion, for I am happy to inform you that I
am now her affianced lover. She has been
engaged to me since the day after my arrival.
She was only 15, when I saw her in South Bend.
She will be 19 next Monday the 5th inst.
She is nearly as tall as I am being 5 feet 6 in. high.
Of course she is well educated, and is possessed
of many accomplishments. The house is full of her
handywork with the needle &c. I never saw a young
lady yet that had such a refined taste for embroidery,
crocheting, sampler work & lady's work of all kinds.
She is an excellent singer and can also play
on the piano. Her father is going to procure her one
this winter. There are three Welsh and one Presby-
terian Churches in this place. Her Parents are members
of the latter. Miss Burnell occupies a place in the choir
and has a class in the Sunday School. They are all
religious people, having family prayer every day.

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Mr & Mrs. Parnell are excellent people. Mr Parnell has a large hardware store in town, and has in connection therewith a tin shop, being by trade a tinsmith. He deals heavily in stores, farming implements &c. Mrs. P. is a smart woman, and has not failed to bring up her children properly. Sarah is a smart, industrious girl, very lady-like, beautiful, and excellent company. We had agreed at one time to get married at once. She to accompany me south, but on reflection we have changed our minds, as her mother wants to go to England next spring, and would prefer us to wait until her return. I shall therefore return alone about next Friday. I think and God willing, will as soon as I get out of the army settle on what course to pursue in future.

I shall prefer to go into business somewhere, instead of farming, but not unless I have fair inducements. Mr. Parnell I think would be glad to assist me all he could in getting into business. However there is no use in speculating until my return from the South. I am having a very pleasant and happy time here, as you may be sure. I feel as if I was at home, as far as staying here is concerned. I feel to be entirely welcome. I have rode out into the country several times, attended some parties &c. I purpose visiting Portage city and Fox Lake, next week with Mr. Parnell & family. Mr. P. has a brother in business in Portage city. This is a fine business point. There are some excellent farms about here. Land is worth \$30 to \$40. People mostly Welsh. Mr. P. is doing good business here. He don't know yet whether he will settle here for good or not. He came here from South Bend in April 1865. I spend most of my time here in the house, amidst flowers, canary birds, &c. Miss Parnell has specimens collections of all kinds of flowers, minerals, shells &c. and has them beautifully arranged in the parlor, and other parts of the house. The weather the first few days I was here, was very disagreeable. Several inches of snow fell. ^{some weather now} I had a bad cold, but have got over it. I have given you much information in this letter, that I don't want known outside of the family. I let you know these facts, to keep you from being uneasy, and as a reason for my visit here. I will write again before I leave here, if all be well. I hope to hear from Bro Sandy soon. Direct your letters to Baton Rouge as before. I will have a number there I suppose when I return. I hope this will find you all well and doing well at home. I will close for the present, by sending kindest love to you & your family. I will say to the friends I remain your affectionate Bro. Thomas.