Feb 23rd/98

Angel Hotel
Victoria
B. C.

Dear father

I expect to leave here for the north on Saturday, on the C. P. N. Co. "Princess Louise". I wrote to our Will just before leaving Quesnelle, but I hardly know what I did write, for I was in such a hurry I missed seeing Tommie Fletcher and Jack Holt, although I started on foot from Barkerville two days ahead of the stage on purpose to spend one day in Quesnelle to bid goodbye to all our Lancashire people. When I got to Quesnelle, the Fraser river was full of floating ice and beginning to get jammed, which rendered it impossible

to cross by boat or any way, and as Tommie and Jack were on the other I had to come away without seeing them. I failed to see Jimmie Shepherd too, for we passed Bohannons ranche where he is staying, about midnight on the stage. It was a rough trip all the way down the Carlos Rd. I was on foot from Barkerville to Stanley, then to Quesnelle by freight team, in a big snowstorm, only just in time to miss it at the worst part of the road. The stage which I waited for at Quesnelle, got blocked by snowslides in the Devils Canyon, and was delayed more than a day. A big gang of men were set to work shoveling out the snow. As soon as the stage arrived in Quesnelle the superintendent of the Co who was aboard, decided to go right on, after

changing horses and getting something to eat; there was four passengers, all men and all bound for Klondike, and we were quite willing to travel night and day to make up for lost time, so left Quesnelle about 11 o'clock on Sunday and reached Ashcroft Tuesday evening about 6 o'clock, without stopping except for meals and changing horses. Sunday night it was 15 below zero and Monday night 20 below, so you can imagine whether it was a pleasure trip, travelling in open sleigh too. I was almost frozen stiff. Both nights were bright, the moon nearly at full, the stars twinkling, the trees and everything else covered with frost and sparkling in the moonlight. On Monday, snow fell heavily again. Other passengers joined us at different places on the

made the quickest trip on record

way down, and before we reached Ashcroft, there was 10 passengers, one a woman, all bound for Klondike; besides other 5 men who came down on a special stage just at the same time; everybody seems to be making for the new goldfields. The train we came on to Vancouver with, was like a big excursion train, just crowded with Klondikers, some from different parts of the British Isles. Across ~~the~~ in the opposite bunks to mine, there was 3 young men, one from Blackburn and two from Luddenden-foot; one of our party from Cariboo, hails originally from Rippondan, so we got quite chumming with the newcomers; but it did sound so strange to hear the old lingo. We all came on to Victoria together, and booked passage in the

same boat, the Islander but unfortunately I could not get ready in time to go with them. The Islander belongs to the Can. P. N. Co. too, and sailed from here a week ago; there was about 20 men from Cariboo aboard her, so I was unlucky to miss such good company. She carried 400 passengers, a big lot of horses and 425 dogs for pulling sleighs. There are boats leaving here every day, full of Klondikers, you can have no idea what an excitement this is. Victoria is crowded; on every street you see gangs of men going around to the different shops, buying their outfits; the Klondikers are easy to know, they mostly wear, mackinaw, leather, corduroy or canvas suits, sometimes oil coats; big fur caps or wide brimmed hats; long boots; their clothes are made

in all kinds of striking colors. Every shop is outfitting miners in some thing or other. Sleighs, stoves picks, shovels, gold pans, and such like are piled up on the sidewalks; while sleeping bags, blankets, all kinds of Arctic clothing is hung up and piled up everywhere. ~~It~~ The scene is beyond describing. There are hundreds of dogs for sale, and they make the place hideous with their howling. I had a great time hunting for dogs to take with me, whenever I found any that suited me I always found that they wanted such a terrible price for them. From 50 to 75 dollars each is the average price asked for them. I bought one and bargained for two more, but the dealer let one of them go to another man and raised his prices, so I let him keep his dogs, and I bought a horse instead, for 55 dollars. I have

ordered a sleigh and harness and
booked passage for him. I expect
the horse, harness, sleigh, feed and
transportation to Wrangel will cost
me 150 dollars. I have ordered all
my provisions and got my clothes, but
I am now waiting to get the mosquito
dope made up. I am taking 400 lbs
of it with me, and if I get it there I
expect to make a good profit out of it
At a low figure I should get 1 dollar
an ounce for it, I have been told that
it should be worth 5 dollars an ounce up there.
Now I hope you will not tell anybody
about this, till I see how I come out.
It was quite a job getting all the ~~ingred~~
ingredients for this stuff, 2 of the oils
I got all there was in Victoria and Vancouver
then telegraphed to Seattle and got all
there was there, then had to telegraph
San Francisco. It should all be here

ly tomorrow, then the druggist who is mixing it for me, will have 4 men to work, besides myself, mixing and packing it ready for shipping. I am putting a lot of it in 1 ounce and 2 ounce boxes. It will be quite a job to get it up to Dawson.

I got my 'cello smashed coming down the road, I brought it with me and left it in a music store to get repaired. Speaking to a man the other day who is just out from Klondike, I told him I had a cello he said I ought to take it by all means. I cannot take it this trip; but if I have any success in this speculation I may come back during the summer for another load of something and take it along with me; if I dont take a trip out I'll have it sent up on the river boats during the summer. I'll have some company to go in with on this boat, there are several staying at this house going by her.

This Angel Hotel is a temperance place kept by a nice old English couple. I shall make this my headquarters again if I return safe, and will leave some of my things here. The proprietor is Mr Carne.

Before leaving Barkerville the hospital board, the doctor, and Mr Bowron Gold Commissioner, gave me good recommends, also Dr Callanan of Lucerne, they may be useful to me yet. Unlike my first trip to Victoria, I dont feel like a stranger now, there are so many people that I know, some from Cariboo, then I had notes of introduction to others. It was hard to part with the people of Barkerville, just like leaving home again. Many of them wanted my photo, so I had some taken, 15 cabinets and 1 dz small ones, I will send one of the small ones, cannot spare any more this time.

Ask our Will to let my chums in Fitchburg know that I have started.
I shall try and write to Tom Stetin.
I received Hetty Buckley's photo a short time ago, ~~I wup~~ I wish you would thank her for me. I have not much time now for writing letters; but will try to send a few lines from Wrangel. My funds are getting very low, for my expenses are greater than I calculated. It has cost me 100 dollars more than I expected for the mosquito salve. I think I can just about manage to pull through. Now I must close, hoping that you will all have good health and be spared till I come back. I long to come and see you again. Give my love to all at home. Good bye

your affectionate son

Tom