July 24th/97

Barkerville
Cariboo
British Columbia

Dear father

I am very sorry to have kept you waiting so long for a letter. I have been so undertermined as to what course I was going to take, and yet I have not made any attempt to carry out any of my plans; but I have not been idle, having been earning money at one job or other, except for two weeks. This week I have been working for the Cariboo Gold-fields; but I think I shall return to the hospital in another week or two. Maybe it is all for the best that I did not go prospecting up to the Peace river country, as it would have cost me a great deal of money, and perhaps without any returns. Of course, the prospectors has to lay out money as in any other specutation, gold-mines are not found very often without hunting for them; but within the last few months some extraordinarily rich gold-fields have been struck away up in the Yukon river country, which is partly in British North West Territory and partly in the American territory of Alaska. The richest ground is on the British side. These rich finds are causing great excitement along the Pacific Coast, both in B.C. and America. All the papers are publishing accounts of the great wealth being found there, lots of men in Barkerville are talking earnestly of going up to the Yukon, and I may say I expect to be one of them unless we get other glad tidings from Peace, Findlay, Nation, Black and Parsnip Rivers; one expedition that went out there have staked off 80 miles of these rivers, for dredging purposes; but we did not hear of any rich strikes yet. There is a proposition being favorably discussed among the Barkerville men bound for Yukon, to club together and form a ~~bar~~ contingent of Cariboottes to proceed together and help each other both on the rough journey and after

they reach the land of promise. To divide up and go prospecting in parties and in different directions; but to have a central camp where they can leave the bulk of provisions, where each could repair to in case of failure or accident and so keep track of each other. If one party was to strike something good, of course they would stake off claims for the rest of the company. A kind of Cooperative Society of Prospectors, and I think it will be a good plan if only followed out. Each man will have to provide himself with an outfit of provisions, tools, and clothes, etc for 18 months at least. All the men that I know of who intend joining, so far, are good honest men, and experienced miners and prospectors. I would not be the least afraid of going on such an expedition with men like these, all friends and first-rate company; but I would not trust myself to go with a stranger. It is a long hard journey, and there are always some blackguards amongst the crowds rushing to new gold-diggings. I will enclose a few clippings from one of the newspapers, telling of the richness of the new goldfields and the effects of such a find, then you will see if I am to blame for wishing to go there, too. Many thousands of men will flock there from the cities; but I think the great majority will return empty and disappointed, for it is not every man that is cut out for such a trip, though I am pretty sure I can stand it myself. I think I told you or our Will, in one of my letters last winter about a young man wanting me to go with him to this place in the spring. Then, I did not think there was enough known about it to warrant such a journey. I wish I had gone now. It is rather too late now to go in there this season. I expect to start from here about March or the end of February, next year, and Tommie Fletcher will come to take my place again in the hospital, then if I think we can do better in the Yukon, he will come too. Nearly every man here now intends to try his fortune in the new Eldorado.

If I can only have as much luck as some of the men who go there you shall have a good time, anyhow you have no need to fear about being short of money, for I think I can always make good money

now, for instance, in my present job at the hospital I am getting £9.0.0 per week, board and lodging free, and I could easily send you a good sum. I have now lent our Jim $300.00 nearly; but I shall not lend them any more I am going to save all I can, and take as big a stock as I can into the Yukon and try to make something by trade. If I cannot do anything better I can work for wages, from $10.00 to $15.00 per day; but I intend to try and start some kind of business.

July 28th

Since writing the above, I have quit working for the Gold-fields and I am going back to the hospital, Tommie is going to work at haymaking he will get good pay for it. Our Jim is looking after the ranche and has a man with him, he is going to try cut a big lot of hay, so they may make quite a bit of money with their ranche. They will have to employ Indians to help them. They will not have much of any other crop, by not having horses and plough to break up their land, they had to break it up with mattocks, a laborious and very slow process. I am sending some photos and views by this post; there are 8 photos of our Jim & myself, one each for you, Martha Ann, Ada Sam Turner, Mrs. Brearley, Tom Astin, Cousin Fanny, and Mary Fletcher (Gatehouse). I have also sent 7 large pictures, 2 of them belong to Tommie Fletcher, give them to his sister. (One of the hospital and the "Charlotte" going out from Dawson) Give the other pictures of hospital to Cousin Jane, the picture of boat with crowd aboard is for Albert, Main Street of Dawson is for mother, and

the other two views of 150 Mile House and the freight-team in front of Court-house, Clinton. I shall be pleased if Mrs Adamson will accept them as a small token of kind regards. The two last views shew the means employed to bring freight into Cariboo. It is hauled up the Cariboo Rd in huge wagons, and distributed to the outlying mining camps and trading stations by narrow trails, over mountain passes, (sometimes several weeks journey) loaded on pack-trains of mules, as seen, ready to leave 150 Mile House. I am thinking about buying a small camera or good kodak for myself to take with me to Yukon, to obtain a lot of views of the Artic scenes.

I think this is about all I have got to say about the country; but I will let you know what kind of an I go with. Hoping you are all doing well.

I remain

Your affectionate son

Tom