

Montreal, 25th Dec. 1837

My Dearest Mary,

Marion's fine long letter with my Mother's cards found me out here yesterday and was eagerly perused. It gave very good accounts of you all except poor Nelly, whose head seems to be very troublesome to her. You will see by the date of this letter that we have changed our quarters. We were sent up at a first hour's notice as the ice became safe exactly [...] in the river to allow of a Steamer moving up. We however found it as much as we could do to make out our passage owing to the quantity of floating ice, wh. smashed our paddles to pieces + almost brought us to a stand still more than once. We got up on Monday the 11th, + found great preparations going on for our expedition that was to start in two days against the rebels + of wh. our Regt was to form a part. Accordingly on the Wednesday following our arrival the following troops marched out of Montreal. 1st the Royals, 32nd + 83d Regts., about 100 Cavalry, 5 pieces of Artillery with Shells, Rockets + all sort of destructive ammunition. The whole force had a very imposing appearance + gave the unfortunate Rebels + we all thought the Rebels must be much smarter boys than we took them for if they could make any stand against it. I may as well tell you now that we were on our way to what was considered the great stronghold of the Enemy they were said to have fortified themselves in a village called St. Eustache about 30 miles from Montreal, + had committed [] all sorts of depredations such as carrying off all the Cattle + Sheep belonging to the Loyalists, + even forcing them to join their party, + if they refused to comply, they ran a very good chance of not joining any party by being murdered by some of the ruffians. Our first days march was to a village called St. Martens about 15 miles from Montreal where we put up for the night. We had but very shy accommodation for the Troops. The Company to wh. I was belong was crammed into a barn, + as Officers had orders to remain with the men & always sleep in the house they were in, [Lieutenant Joseph] Kelsall + I had a corner of the above mentioned barn set apart for us. We contrived to get up a very tolerable dinner & with plenty of hay and our blankets + a tremendous fire, we passed the night comfortably + rose the next morning at day break we marched against St. Eustache. We had to cross a Lake about half way, wh. delayed us some time as the ice in some places was hardly strong enough to carry the Artillery over + one sleigh filled with munition plunged in + took some time to be got out again. 6 horses + 9 sleighs were lost by going through, fortunately all the guns got over safely + we were all greatly pleased when we saw them on the road again in front of us. The first thing that gave us notice of the attack was hearing the Artillery firing away in front of us. They [commenced here] going away at the church where they were known to have resorted to in considerable numbers. We left the guns behind us farther away, + made a detour to the right + entered the Town by one of the [] principle streets. We met with very little opposition during our advance into the place, only a few shots were fired at us, wh. did no harm. All the houses in the village excepting those immediately round the Church were deserted those they had loopholed + made as long as they could. The guns still continued playing away, endeavouring to make a breach to allow of our storming it. At last we were told to advance as a house had been set fire to not far from the church, the smoke of wh. was carried right against the church windows + so thickened it that none of the unfortunate devils inside could see us to fire at us with any precision. The howitzers fired away very persevering in our direction. The Royals were in front + our Regt. close behind them. Both regts. charged down the street as quickly as we could + took possession

of the benches on both sides of the Church. The Rebels in those houses were all shot or made prisoners. They still however kept up a fire from the Church windows, + showed the most determined courage you can imagine. At last the door was stormed by a party of the Royals, + almost immediately after it the church was set fire to. They now began to run in all directions + made no further resistance of any kind. Our light company + the company I am in were sent to cut off the retreat of good lot of rogues who were making their escape on our left across a lake immediately behind the church. Our men shot [] about 7 of them & we brought 15 of them back prisoners. Two hours more were employed in scouting the woods + shooting any of the poor wretches who continued to resist, + making as many prisoners as we could. We now had the town all to ourselves, + we began to make ourselves comfortable for the night. We found a plenty of provisions of every description in the house we were in. We discovered a tolerable good supply of wine under the floor of one of the rooms. We took as much as we required for our own use + destroyed the remainder for fear of the soldiers getting amongst it. I went down to the scene of action about 9 at night. The Church was now quite consumed, and round about were lying about 60 bodies of the rebels from the heat of the fire many of them were partially burnt or half roasted. I never witnessed any thing so disgusting. Some of them had the most frightful wounds you can imagine caused by our Shells + artillery. One man I saw who had all the upper part of his head carved off, nothing left but the under jaw. Our Regt. was very fortunate in having none killed and only two or three slightly wounded. One man of the Royals + another of the 32nd were killed + including the artillery I suppose there were about 8 or 10 wounded. The Rebels must have lost at least 150, [] for besides those who were killed by our men about their church many were found nearly frozen to death in the woods, + about 20 were shot by the baggage guard who were a good way behind the main body of the troops. One of their principal leaders was found amongst the killed. His name was [Dr. Jean-Olivier] Chenier, another the principal hand ([Amaury] Girod) made his escape, but was taken a few days ago, + before he could be secured, succeeded in blowing his own brains out. He was buried at the crossroads about a mile from Montreal. We set fire to all the houses of the principal rebels in St Eustache + marched next day for Grand Brule about 10 miles further on wh. was another very disaffected place. On our road we met great numbers of the inhabitants with white flags + evidently in a great fright and found the village quite deserted when we got to it, not a soul of any description in it. The example we had made of their friends at St Eustache has effectually frightened them most off. We again showed ourselves into the best houses we could see + lived on the fat of the land. The soldiers had only to go out + pick out the fattest Pigs + Sheep wh. they soon had their bayonets into + the hams grilling on the fire very shortly afterwards. Fearfull was the havoc committed amongst the poultry, they began entirely [] to take to flight at the very sight of a soldier at any distance, the Swinish multitude too used to scurry off whenever a red coat heaved in sight, squealing with all their might. The men got plenty of plunder of all description, some you would see cramming a womans gown or cap into their Haversacks, others I saw selling some cattle for about a dollar a head. They made the most extraordinary selections I ever saw. We only remained one night at Grand Brule, set fire to the village in several places + next morning started on our returned to Montreal. We halted again for one night at St Eustache, + next day marched into Montreal. I thought the people of the town wd. have murdered us with kindness as we came into the town, one would think we had won the battle of Waterloo over again. [Weeks] body has been found sunk in a river with stones over it terribly cut + hacked. Some of his murderers have been apprehended + I hope will be hanged. A very melancholy event has taken place here. Young [Captain Henry] Dundas of

our Regt. has turned quite deranged, + is now in confinement here, + is so violent that he is obliged to be almost always in a straight waistcoat. The Colonel is very low about him, + does not know well what to do with him whether to send him home or not. From Marion's account your canaries must be very engaging animals. My poor Mother's eyes must run some with favour from affection for pitching into them. []

We were very fortunate in weather during our excursion. Not above a few inches of snow on the ground and fine clear frosty weather but very cold, colder there than any thing I ever before experienced. One day the Thermometer was down considerably below zero, but if people put plenty of clothes on + keep a segar going, they may get on very well. I think I have nothing more to tell you at present. I suspect you will not be able to make out a great deal of it as I have only a stump of a pen that requires all my ingenuity to get to scribble + sometimes refuses to spell. We are very unsettled here at present, living at different Hotels until the river is finally frozen over. [...] called St. Hellens about 1/2 a mile from Montreal in the St Lawrence. I hope the [...] may soon take for our present mode of life is both expensive + disagreeable. I do not think we will have any more to do this winter. This last skirmish at St Eustache has frightened the whole country that is inclined in that way. I am extremely well at present + do not feel the cold so much. [...] of those who have been [...] in the country. I am happy to hear that Addy Finlay is better. The Laird + his little wife will return swollen out with fat. I hope the next letter I get from you will come by the states, as the Halifax way is a very roundabout one. Remember to [...] if he has got his [...] as well as [...] to my dear Mother Addy + Marion. Believe me dear [...], Your Affect. Br.,  
D. Campbell

P.S. I Think you had better direct your Letters to Toronto Upper Canada as I gave instructions to the Post Master before leaving it to forward my Letters or Papers here