

Laurel Street. Mattapan. Mass.

May 2^d 1880

My dear Papa

I have no letter from you since last writing. I enclose two photos of J. J. one for you, one for the aunts at Roxbury. I have already sent one to Bath. We think it is a very good likeness though it makes his face a little too broad at the lower part. Col. Thornton has been in Boston, but I missed seeing him. He has gone to Europe to travel all over as agent for the Washburn ^{Flour} mills at Minneapolis (Minnesota) the largest in America if not in the world. He will be gone three months. I sent him your address, and if he visits Dublin will be apt to call on you. I learned ~~from~~ about his business from a Mr. Lawton, now here, and now occupying the Wingate Thornton place at Wintrop, whom I had known in New York in

1867 but had not seen since. We found each other much changed and should not have recognized each other. I should think Washburn & Co (he was recently Governor of Wisconsin and belongs there, hence his acquaintance with Col. V.) will find him a good man for this business except that he has no knowledge of any continental language.

There is more or less truth in what you say about the gap in life of so many days in crossing the Atlantic, yet if the weather is tolerably fair, you will find opportunity both for reading and writing, and very possibly conversation amongst the passengers.

The Guarders leave Liverpool on Thursday (for Boston) and arrive here usually the

2^d Monday after sailing - a ten day trip.

Mary has never made any voyage about recrossing the Atlantic and dreads the voyage far less than I do. With

children to look after however, it must be a great undertaking though we hope to go again some time.

I enclose a plan of our house. The only really large room is the front lower room, intended for the drawing room but used by us as our bed room to make Marys housework and care of children lighter.

One room upstairs has to be used as a passage, but as we have rooms enough without it, and use this as a trunk and unfurnished room, it does not matter. Every room in the house gets sun some time during the day and as most of the rooms have a southern exposure those have sunshine most of the day.

The children are very well. This is a rainy Sunday and Joffy seems to find it a sort of a dull day.

The grass is very green but willows are the only green leaves as yet.

May says to explain that we do not
live at Mattapan, but in Dorchester,
and we don't want to have our names
connected with Mattapan any more
than necessary. Everyone knows about
Dorchester, very few about Mattapan.
We would put the address Dorchester
- and it is that for every thing except
letters - only that letters would then be
delayed one mail. Our station close by
is Dorchester, Mattapan is two miles
further.

Your affectionate son
J. E. Rindergast.

Tell Mrs. Loring ^{one} ~~an~~ for baking meat-
should be very hot - when the meat is
first put in and quite hot all the time.
One cannot bake any thing else very
well when meat is in. Meat-puddings,
breed and cakes need a more gentle
heat. M. A. P.

Laurel Street. Mattapan, Mass.
May 9. 1880

My dear Papa,

I have yours of
April 17th and 24th, also one from
uncle Joe of the 20th and one from
aunt Nannie of April 24th.

This ink is marked "Lyons. Depot
Watling St. London. Works - Park St
Manchester." It is good but
I have used better. Mr Flint had
some of "Antoinet's Modern Ink"
(French) which was very good. Colour
a purple black. This ink writes
black which I like. Hendrick is right
about embarking at Liverpool in
preference to Queenstown. If there
are many passengers, the few getting
on at Queenstown are rather like
people coming in to tea where there has
been a dinner party. It is more
expensive too though a day (nearly)
is saved thereby. In any long journey

ly rail steamer or stage. I like to be on hand early and see my fellow passengers added on one by one, it is so much easier then to remember them and I identify them.

I am glad to hear of your continued powers of walking even if it falsifies Dr Gordon's prediction!

I have a good deal of faith in doctors in some ways - mighty little in others. Peterboro N.H. is about 25 miles from Henniker. I have never been there.

If you still have "Bobbet's English Gardener" and do not want it, I wish you would send it to me, but if you have not got it, do not get it.

The fruit trees are in blossom and look lovely, there are orchards in abundance through Dorchester.

On one evening this week someone is to lecture at the church here on old "Old Dorchester" (in England).

This is a hot day with hot wind. We not yet begun to use ice. There was an ice famine last winter and it is more expensive than usual. There is a bush in the gardens round here, apparently a new species of thorn, with the most brilliant crimson blossoms. The red of the flower buds was visible before the leaves started. I have sown peas, beets and radishes in our garden, shall sow also cauliflowers, shall sow beans and Indian corn later. Mrs Harrington left some geraniums and other flowering plants. I like gardening but find it aggravates humbug, which still continues, though less severely. On Monday Mr Amory and one of his sisters called on us, and made quite a pleasant visit. He was very pressing that we should go to dine with them. As a compro. of all.

-wise I am to dine there tomorrow.
Through him, Mr Flint and Mr
Burtis I am beginning to look
some engineering employment.
I have just had a letter from
Capt Rager of Janesville Wis.
saying he was going to St. Fe
New Mexico to take charge of
some waterworks and offering me
the place of chief assistant at
\$20 per month and all expenses
and intimating I might have
more if that was not enough.
Of course my going was out of
the question, though there is
nothing objectionable in the place or
climate. It is some 300 miles
south of Denver.

The Brooks were out to tea on Monday
and we have been to drive twice this
week, so Mary has had more variety
which is good for her as she does

not go into town. I am thinking
of joining the "Boston Society of Civil
Engineers" though I do not know
many of the 90 members. Amongst
them is a "Desmond Fitzgerald," a
good Irish name if ever there was one.
Yesterday forenoon I went for a long
walk through Milton to Hyde Park
and found views and scenery of
surpassing loveliness. No city that
I know, unless it be Florence, can
compare in beauty of suburban scenes
with Boston.

The children are very well and F.F.
is beginning to put words into senten-
ces. He is growing fat and rosy-
cheeked, though both of the boys
are very brown from being out so
much. There is a little girl next
door, somewhat older than J.J. by
with whom he was playing yesterday.
I have put him up a swing and
he and F.F. each have some kind of

a cart or wagon on wheels to amuse them. The rabbits and poultry next door also amuse them.

We have again begun using the oil stove and have got a second one so as to be quite independent of the coal stove except on washing day. We had some bread baked and meat roasted with it to perfection yesterday. I have got half a barrel of kerosene (25 gallons) at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per gallon.

These stoves are very economical being only lighted when cooking is actually going on, and are a great comfort in summer. They are coming more and more into use every year.

I enclose an engraving of a few. There are various makes and sizes of them.

Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

Laurel Street, Mattapan, Mass.
May 16. 1880.

My dear Papa,

Your latest is of May 1st to Mary. There is also a card from uncle Joe of April 29.
From the stove circular you enclosed I infer that your new cook stove would not be considered either cheap or convenient here, but it may answer as a heater and dryer well enough. The "water front" to our stove is a small water space or reservoir in front of the fire which you would never notice unless told of it. Cold water enters this by one pipe, the hot water leaves it by another. The cold comes from the upstairs cistern, the hot goes into a tall cylindrical reservoir in the kitchen and is also sent upstairs. It is difficult to understand the arrangement even from seeing it so I will not further describe it.

You speak of our "palace like house of nine rooms" and say you have only half as many. As we reckon ours you have seven rooms.

I remember the college of St. Columba, that is, its situation for I was never in it. It looks as if it might be the home of conservatism and ritualism.

On Monday I dined with the Amorys. He regrets that he will not be in Boston when you will be here. They spend their summers at Newport in (State of) Rhode Island, the most expensive watering place in America, the summer resort of wealth and luxury. Indeed ~~many~~ many make it their permanent home as its climate is cool in summer and mild in winter, the scenery ^{is} said to be lovely. It is only 2 1/2 hours from Boston.

Tuesday I went by steamer to Hull, a pleasant trip of 40 minutes in a fine steamer through the fine harbor,

then walked along the narrow peninsula to Hingham, a quaint old village, and returned thence by the same boat.

It made a walk of eight or ten miles. The day was fiercely hot but I did not mind that. I am trying to get all the running around I can while at leisure, for if I once go to work again I shall be tied down to regular hours as engineers always are.

The pear trees and apple trees are white and pink with flowers, the leaves are almost hidden on many trees. A fine little mountain ash was blown down in our garden last week. I found its stump completely riddled with large holes by some boring insect, and a small pear tree has been killed in the same way. This is common here. I have put in three long rows of peas and three of string beans. I have also planted beets and radishes, later

I shall plant corn (Indian) for "roasting ears" melons, squashes and cucumbers, and last but not least, tomatoes which are on every table and almost at every meal when in season, either cooked or raw - generally the latter.

The children are very well and enjoy being out most of the day, playing with their carts, swinging, or better than all, digging and playing in the dirt.

We have ~~not~~^{no} pets of any kind. I should like a well behaved full grown cat, but the children would pull around a kitten too much. Our neighbours on one side have poultry, tame rabbits a cat and a large black dog; so far none of these have troubled us much. They keep their poultry shut up except some hens with chickens -

We now have the open tramway cars running. The seats in these run crosswise! The cars are open at the sides, but have curtains to let down

in case of cold winds or showers. They are very pleasant, but for careless people who get into them heated up and then cool off too quickly, they must be dangerous. The seats have swivelling backs and all face forwards whichever way the car is going.

One day last week I saw a muster ~~the~~^{and} a the march to a review of the boys of the Boston Latin School.

They formed a large regiment and as they get regular daily drill and have a semi uniform and carry rifles, look very military.

The uniform and faces are both rather French than English. Indeed in military matters, where the Americans follow any model, they imitate the French, just as the women do in dress.

I am now getting books from the Public Library which is as a plate on its door says "free to all."

Many cities have free libraries but as far as I know Boston alone has a free lending library. It is an immense collection and is much used. Yesterday I got Drake's "Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast" a rather interesting and well illustrated book.

Mary's brother Richard has a second girl born last week. All going on well there, but as they have one girl already they are disappointed it was not a boy. Mary thinks our Connaught woman very Irish, and so she is. She gets $7\frac{1}{2}$ per hour for washing and does not hurry herself. Her Connaught brogue and ways are little changed by 30 years residence in Dorchester. Among visits town from Newport every week so you would see him were it you did not visit Newport. Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

Laurel Street. Mattapan. Mass.
May 21. 1880.

My dear Papa,

We have a daughter^{born} born this at 5 o'clock this morning. All well so far.

The doctor engaged for the occasion was out attending another case and could not be found, and yet another had been looking for him, so I had to get a team and go some distance after another doctor. When we got here, at the end of two hours, the child was just ~~for~~ born. Fortunately we had got the nurse in the day before yesterday and she was equal to the emergency.

Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

Laurel Street. Mattapan. Mass.
May 23^d 1880.

My dear Papa,

Yours of the 4th
and one from uncle Joe of the 11th are
received. Mary continues to get
along well. The baby is very small
but seems to be quite healthy. She has
cried a good deal so far, but
very likely for want of milk which is
beginning to come to day.

The nurse Mrs Nye is very satisfac-
-tory and ~~gives~~ gives herself up entirely
to her duties. The weather is warm
moist and relaxing and makes my
rheumatism more troublesome.

There is "poison ivy" round here and one
day Jeffy got so poisoned that when
he woke up next morning one eye
was entirely closed, and the other nearly
so. It all disappeared however in
48 hours. The poison affects some
people quite seriously others not at all.

The him mounted picture book has come and is much approved of. I had never seen that kind before, those sold here of English and American manufacture are printed on linen, and though more nearly indestructible, are not so well printed.

I attended a meeting of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers last week but unless they do more than they did that evening, should not care to join. The society, is the ^{American} Society of Civil Engineers (of N.Y.), - but is expensive and I should get little benefit from it, unless residing in or near New York.

There is not work enough going on in or near Boston to keep enough members together for meetings.

On Friday afternoon I took Jeffry into town in the open tramcar. He saw the deer on "the common" four little goats harnessed to a little

omnibus on the Mall on the common the boats on the lake in the Public Gardens and other things that amused him. The trip in the open cars is generally very pleasant, as the route is so pretty - the pleasantest of all those leading out of Boston.

Everything is in full green now and on many houses I see the magnificent lilac or purple flowers of the Wisteria. I have planted the Indian corn; the peas betwixt and radishes are up and the beans just starting. Freddie has been very good since Mary has been down and has not cried once. He was very proud to day to be able to swing by himself in Jeffry's swing. He is getting quite fat. Just now he sits opposite me at the table playing with his blocks while Jeffry is racing up and down outside.

with his wagon.

I have heard a great deal about the east winds of spring in Boston but this year we seem to have escaped them almost entirely and we are now supposed to be free from the danger of frosts.

We have rather sudden changes of temperature, which from the moistness of the air are much more felt than similar changes in the west.

Your affectionate son
F. E. Prendergast.

I enclose a characteristic sketch of a train on the prairies passing through a small prairie fire, on one side you can see a wooden fence nearly consumed, on the other the wire fence untouched by the fire. Is this barbed wire in use in England or Ireland? It is most effectual.

Laurel Street, Mattapan, Mass.
May 30. 1880

My dear Papa,

Your last is of May. 15, received May. 27. Mary and the little girl continue to get along well, and to day for the first time Mary came into the sitting room for a short time on the sofa, though not actually getting up. The past week the weather has been intensely warm, 77° in the shade according to the Signal Service, and the highest ever recorded here is only ~~88 1/2~~ 98 1/2, a much more enervating heat than the ^{same} temperature in the west.

Mary ~~being~~ coming down stairs, has a cooler room than if she was upstairs. She has got along very steadily and the baby seemed to be doing well enough. The baby weighed ~~8 1/2~~ 8 lbs a pound less than either J. J. or F. F.

We are glad you like the photo of J.J. I think it a good one, though it gives rather the idea of a fuller faced stouter boy than he really is. F.F. is changing a good deal just now, and for that reason as well as from difficulties of taking him into Boston, we do not expect to have him photo'd very soon. You are mistaken about that thorn tree in the garden - as to its size when brought in. It was then nearly, or quite as tall as I was then and its stem about as thick as a heavy walking stick and it was a season or two before it really grew any after we brought it in.

Last Tuesday I went down to Providence, some 40 miles, to visit my old ~~at~~ Elkhorn friend, Coffin, and spent part of the day there. Providence is the 2^d largest city in New England (pop 100,000) and is said to be the wealthiest city in proportion to

its population in America. ~~It looks~~ It looks both wealthy and attractive and has some fine public buildings. The Coffins have been there for three years and like the place very well, but it seems to be one of the very hot places.

Yesterday was Decoration Day; that is, set apart for decorating the graves of those who fell in the war for the Union. It is a public holiday and coming at this season, is generally observed, the survivors and their friends marching to the various cemeteries and decorating the graves with flowers. In the South they decorate the graves of the fallen in Confederates who fell trying to destroy the Union. How they managed where some of those from both sides must lie in the same cemeteries, I do not know.

I have been interviewing Genl. James

H. Wilson the Vice President and General
Manager of the Railroad we live
on, with reference to employment on
some new work in Boston, but
have not yet learned as to what
may be expected.

Our hot weather has changed
and we now have cool damp
weather. Our elms and apple trees
are being eaten up by small
green caterpillars and in some
instances the trees have been com-
pletely stripped of their leaves.

The two boys are tumbling over each
other on the floor while I write.

They are both very brown from being
out so much in the sun. I cropped
their hair short yesterday.

Your affectionate son
F. S. Prendergast.