West Kilbride

Ayrshire. Nov. 5th 1864

My dear Mamma

Last Sunday we saw something of Glasgow, visiting the cemetery and seeing the outsides of the Cathedral and Barony Church (Norman McLeods). Tuesday, Gower, Carey and I came down to Dalry where we stopped Tuesday and Wednesday nights, being engaged in the vicinity both those days, then next day we moved on to this place where we shall be till Monday, when we expect to return to Glasgow. We breakfast at 7.15 and start at 8, then work on as long as it is light which is about 4.30 or 5, and then return to dinner at six. My work

the line

is setting out, by means of a plan, sticking whites, i.e. small sticks with a piece of newspaper stuck in a cleft in the top, in the hedges, roadsides and wherever the line goes, Gower Cavelling and Carey chaining behind me, I being generally a quarter of a mile ahead of them, they have two men with them and I have a boy, my work is easy enough except in woods, through which it is very hard to ~~be~~ see how to drive the line, particularly as I have never been in the country before and do all from the plan. We only do about 2 miles each day and there are 10 miles in all, but we walk or run at least 20 miles in getting the 2 miles set out, as one has to keep going backwards and forwards altering and "trimming" ones work, the curves particularly. It is most lovely country, something like that about Loch Awe, only not so grand, part of it is very like the Co. Wicklow, and we are close to the sea here; opposite we have Cumbrae and the Isle of Arran with the Mull of Cantire behind it. We eat the most tremendous breakfasts and dinners, but nothing between except a hunch of bread

and we take a cup of tea to keep us awake in the evening. The line is 14 miles long (Dalry to Largs) but we have only 10 miles to do, Josslyn and Simpson having done the other 4. Externally this Inn, the Wellington looks like a small bothouse, but somehow it contains good rooms and comfortable beds and they feed us remarkably well, so I consider we are very well off. The letter was directed "Stoneyford" instead of "Sandy-ford" Place, and there were some P.O. hieroglyphics on it to the effect that there is no Stoneyford Place in Glasgow and they had sent it to Sandyford, I think Papa might remember the name from its being so like Sandymount. Charley sent me the Diploma list - he has got a Special Certificate in "Chemistry and Geology" - One subject not two. We shall have a quiet Sunday here tomorrow and if it is fine I hope to see some-thing of the country, for really during working hours in the field one has not time to look at any-thing. We have had glorious weather except a little rain one morning; and it has not been very cold, in fact we have no time to feel cold; it is very pleasant, but there is no mistake about its being real hard work, and having to be constantly

thinking the whole time makes it harder.
I can't quite understand the natives
yet but manage to get along pretty
well, Scotchmen have no fun or life
in them and won't hurry much
but they are civil and work well
but they don't understand "chaff"
at all. We shall be working up
to all hours again when we get back
to Glasgow and I shall have no
time for writing, so I wish you
would forward this to uncle Joe
~~and~~ as I have not time to write
a separate letter to him. I suppose
I shall find some letters from you
at Glasgow as I desired them not to
be ~~ford~~ forwarded.

your affectionate son
Francis E. Prendergast.