

Dawson, N. W. T.  
Aug. 25/98.

My dearest Dottie,-

I should have answered your very welcome letter before, only I wanted time to think what to say. That is I wanted to tell you clearly the conditions of things here from a woman's standpoint. In the business phase, Jesse will advise you. Please let this letter be quite private, just between ourselves.

First, the trip in over the trail is particularly hard on a woman. The long hours, the walking, coarse food, and work, are apt to make weaker, one who is not quite strong. Yet with care to change damp clothing and such, one may get even stronger with the trip.

At Dyea a squaw, wife of a white man, one who had been educated at the Mission was helping me cook one day and told me that the farther north I went, the less would be the monthly sickness, and that the climate was such as to greatly favor pregnancy. A legend goes among the Indians, that when a squaw is barren, so journeys North and the spirits of the lakes makes her fruitful. It has a foundation, for all the women I have met in here who have been here a year testify to it. Women who have been married ten years and are childless rarely stay here long before they become pregnant. And the unmarried women have much trouble with repression.

Not since the last of April have I come around, and the physician whom I consulted told me I was pregnant and might expect it the middle or latter part of January. I take very good care of myself and Jesse is exceedingly kind yet I have days of horrible suffering. I do not wish papa or mama to know as they would worry during those winter months when mail cannot reach there; and if anything happens to me, it will not grieve them the more because they did not know sooner. We have agreed that it is best not to tell them. They are both so nervous.

I've told you that you may know all the dangers which threaten a woman here. I cannot tell you how pleased both Jesse and myself would be to see you and Otto in the Spring. You won't think this letter queer or unwomanly, will you? I did not know how else to tell you some things I felt you should know.

Confinement here will be very hard, for the lack of variety in food, and the extreme cold. Good medical care can be had, but little nursing. I shall try to be brave for Jesse's sake. He has wished me to go home for the winter but I feel it is not right to entail such expense, just as we are getting ahead, and our prospects are bright.

I was so sorry to read of your disappointment in your party. I was anticipating a report of such jolly times. But "man proposes, God disposes". Next time will no doubt make up for it. I hope you will stay with papa and mama this winter. They need someone young and cheerful with them. I do hope we shall have claims and money enough by next Spring to return. Everything goes well here, but home is so dear; among all our people and friends.

Give my best regards to Otto.

Your loving sister,  
Lepha Mae Edgren

The steam-boat whistle is a blowing – blowing its fare-well to Dawson. Some sweet day either in the near or far away future – we hope to be able to leave on our journey home.

I have quit the Restaurant business. I am going prospecting now. It is no use of dabbling in other business but mining except to get some ready money. We are not as yet millionaires; but we expect to have quite a little pile by this time next year. The opportunities here are manifold; still there are more idle men here than in any city in the world in proportion to the population. The conditions too are such that you cannot work as hard as you do in the States, as it is sure to lead to sickness. To keep well is our foremost thought; money comes in second. Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> the mines are to be thrown open to the public; that is, those that have heretofore belonged to the Queen. If luck is with me I may get one. As we have enough ready money to keep us going for quite a while I shall give my times to prospecting now. Of course working and making 10 the \$20 a day is a sure way of making money; but if you once strike it rich mini[ng] your future is made. One in business loses many opportunities in a mining way. I will freight with the dogs all winter. Last winter the average dog-team earned \$150.00 a day. Of course it may be different this winter, but there will be a neat little sum in it just the same.

This country is all right if one will stay by it until he or she wins out. One may do it in a week in a year, in two or three.

Every day new hopes arise in your heart; ah, maybe this is the lucky day.

I missed one good opportunity by being in business. I had a chance to get No. 12 Benet Claim on Bonanza; but could not leave my Restaurant to stake. No. 13 sold last Saturday for \$20,000.00. No. 12 is worth almost as much now. Now, don't scold because I didn't do it. You would have done the same if you had been here. At that time No. 12 was not worth \$10.00 or was it likely to be, and it costs \$15.00 to record it.

This mining business is all a gamble. Lucky if you win. The one who works the hardest is not the one who gets the rich mines; the one that knows the most about mining does not always win. The gold is not found here like in other countries, there are no indications. The green-horn as well as the expert wins. He that is lucky. That is what a man wants here. But he can always make at least \$10.00 a day, and if he is wide a-wake more, so you see that the country is all right.

Pretty soon we hope to be able to tell you of our rich claims. Do not be dissapointed (sic) however if you do not; but remember that we can always make more money here than most any other place, and if we never strike a rich claim we will not have to come home with our pocket-books empty.

I do wish Ed. Sund was up here. The best place in the world for him. He would like it, and would win out if he would stay by(?) it.

A great country to make money in and that is all. When we make our pile we will return in a hurry. We did not come up here to return empty handed. We will take pride in proving to you that which other failed. Mae and Jess, two youngsters, now on the icy, treacherous Yukon.

Jess