Dear Herbert

As I plainly see

By your last letter unto me

That you have 'taen [taken] to Poesy

I 'll try to get my pen to go

And write away a page or so

And tell you what I 've seen

And all about this wondrous place

And of the ancient Cambrian race

With whom I 've lately been

you know it is a good long time

Since I have left Cold Radnors line

From thence unto this place we came

By many a spot of ancient fame

But now of small renown

O 'er many a mountain dark & drear

And vales whose groves the parting year

Had tinged with mellow brown --
And as the morning sun arose
new beauties round us to disclose
we reached fair Brecons Town
Then crossed the Usk my native stream
A River fair & bright
From which the suns bright morning beam
Reflected back the light
And shewed a fair & beauteous scene
Unto my lingering sight --
Then rose before us up on high
Like Giant reaching to the sky
The beacons double head
Around whose summits mist & cloud
here hanging like a gloomy cloud
The way travellers dread --
Thence by a mountain road we came
Unto a place well known to fame
And Merthyr Tydfil is its name
A place where men from stones & earth
Cause Iron bars to take then birth
Where rushing fires forever roar
And mighty blasts increase then more
when fire & air and steam combine
With the rough ore raised from the mine
To make this metal which we see
Spread around us universally
a metal of far greater worth
Than all the jewels of the earth
A metal which for every use
The arts & sciences produce
Exceeds in value gems & gold
more than by words can ever be told. 2,3

[2] From thence we passed over mountain face
And down a valley long & fair
Into this place which now I'll try
Unto you to describe & tell
And tell you what we've been about
And many things beside --
This Parish Cadaxton [Cadoxton] by name
Is just 16 miles long
In a straight line over Hill and dale
Over rocks and torrents strong
And though perhaps you'll think this length
In every way is plenty
yet if you go along the road
The miles will come to 20 --
Over all this Parish we must go
Each field & house & garden shew [show]
In proper size & place
And every river stream & brook
with every turn & bend and crook
Correctly we must trace --
The land upon the surface here is very poor & bad
And as the folks round here do say none good is to be had
The fields are mostly all about
With rushes overgrown
The hay so bad you ’d hardly think
It worth while to be mown
about 3 inches ’ tis in length
and very coarse and brown
About September when they think
It time to cut it down --
Tis underneath the surface that
Its value all does lay
In beds of coal and ironstone
which famously do pay
And all about the country here
Are large pits dark & deep
From which the men at work appear
much blacker than a sweep
A wild & savage race are they
Who work far from the light of day
A race whose minds are dark
Who have [?] no intellectual ray
Whose only joy is drunked fray
Or dangerous midnight lark

[[3]] Steam Engines at every pit
Which bring the coal up every bit
And pump the water out of it
Which otherwise would drown the men
Unless they soon came up again
From every pit a railroad’s made
To take the coal away
Some to the town is ta’en [taken] for trade
Some to the place where iron’s made
to purge the dross away --

‘Twas but the other day I saw
A sight would strike your mind with awe
And fill you with such sweet surprise
‘Twould make you both to turn your eye
Away from such a scene to see
But Barren hills or open sea
‘Twas a waterfall as fair a one
As ‘ere was shone on [M.S. damaged] the sun
The river rushed along its bed
With rocks of mighty size ‘oerspread [overspread]
Now dashing down some rugged rock
The white foam rising [?] with the shock
Now eddying through some deep recess
Amidst a rocky wilderness
Till come unto the accustomed place
When it must take its its [sic] desperate leap
Like racehorse rushing in the race
It pound its waters down the steep
Down down into the mighty deep
Clear of the rock behind it fell
Till from the bottom of the dell
It rose in clouds of mist & foam
Once more to fall and seek its home [?]
By rushing on its rock ground course
Till undiminished [M.S. damaged] & force
[[4]] Untill [sic] its foaming waves are seen
To lose themselves in Fame ’s [?] stream —
(NB. The fall is about 100 ft. perpendicular)
Dear Herbert now I hope you ’ll write
A good long letter telling me
Of every fair & wondrous sight
You ’ve seen at your Academy
Tell me all that you see or do
And all that you are learning to Σ [sic]
Have you yet Algebra begun
If not I hope you quickly will full soon
As I am sure the day will come
When you will think it a great boon
Having now no more room I must send [?]
Your Brother ever dear & sign my name | A.R. Wallace

[signature]

To Mr. H.E. Wallace

[Addressed:]

4 Mast F. : Herbert Wallace

at Mr Perry 's Academy

Shenfield

nr Brentwood

Essex

ENDNOTES

1. The text " -- ?Shroud " has been added later in Wallace 's hand.

2. Parts of the text have been marked up and corrected in blue pencil at some later date on this and subsequent pages.

3. There is illegible text written vertically up the left margin of the letter.

4. The text "March 16 th 1842 " has been added later to the left of the address.

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http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/scientific-resources/collections/library-collections/wallace-letters-online/339/339/T/details.html > [accessed 16 April 2014*] *Please give the precise date you used the WCP Database.

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