Astoria Dec: 22d 1852

My Dear Alfred

I presume you are again wondering what the devil has become of me for I fear that my last letter to you has miscarried, as I hear nothing of others sent at the same time. I wrote you from the Salmon at the end of September, and just as I had finished it yours of April and some other date came along. It was the first time I had heard of you since your departure. I gave you in mine, a full account of my doings and wanderings since the previous one. You very naturally blame me for my neglect of writing home, but I have written once a month since I ~~came~~ went to the mines with perhaps one exception, & sometimes oftener. There is however no mail farther than Humboldt Bay and access to that is very uncertain. We not only have great trouble in getting letters, but as the only means of sending is through occasional pack trains, are by no means confident that ours will go out safely. In fact I did not hear of my appointment till about the 20th of November, and then by a mere report brought up by a man who came from San Francisco. My letters did not reach the Bay until the 1st December. But for the impending famine through all the northern mines, I should not have left them even on hearing of the appointment, for I was not an applicant for it, and was ignorant then that the salary had been raised. To remain was however out of the question for I saw clearly that the suffering would be terrible and that the winter diggings there would not warrant one in remaining. There was not ten days provisions in the whole country when