

THE LETTERS  
OF  
JOHN FAIRFIELD



*John Fairfield*  
" "

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IN MEMORY OF

WILLIAM B. WESTON

To Edward F. Ricard -

The friend of my  
many years with  
the affectionate regard  
of a Christmas spirit  
intensified by the  
fond appreciation of a  
great character

William F. Staples.

December 25<sup>th</sup> / 1922







*John Fairbank*

United States Senator, Maine

THE LETTERS  
OF  
JOHN FAIRFIELD

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A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM 1835 TO 1837;  
A MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED  
STATES FROM 1843 TO 1847, AND A  
GOVERNOR OF MAINE IN 1839,  
1840, 1842 AND A PART OF 1843

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EDITED

From the original correspondence, now in possession of the Library  
of Congress, Washington, D. C.

BY

ARTHUR G. STAPLES

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*Special Subscribers Edition, Issued under Direction of the State of Maine  
and the family of John Fairfield*

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*The Letters of John Fairfield*

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STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
AUGUSTA

F16  
1922  
MAIN

FOREWORD TO  
"LETTERS OF JOHN FAIRFIELD"

By PERCIVAL P. BAXTER  
Governor of Maine

Man's outward surroundings, changeable though they be, make but slight impression upon his inherent character, and his inward self remains unaltered by passing generations. Unlike the cut of his garments, his ambitions, loves, successes and failures remain the same throughout the centuries.

In the rush of current events but little heed is paid the lessons of the past, and the men and women of the present are prone to disregard them.

The letters of John Fairfield portray the lives of the citizens of this State of eighty years ago who faced and overcame the difficult problems of the early days. Those actors on the stage of Maine's life moved and felt, thought and talked just as do their successors of today. History and biography are the refineries in which the nobler metals of man's character and achievements are separated from the baser. They furnish an unailing standard of value by which to judge the deeds of the past and to measure the merit of those of the present.

Inspired by unselfishness Mr. Arthur G. Staples has rendered a distinct public service in collecting and editing these letters. Mr. Staples loves "people" whatever be their generation, and by the skilful touch of his pen makes others love them.

John Fairfield, Governor of Maine for the years 1839, 1842, 1843, is taken from comparative obscurity and placed in a conspicuous position in the long line of Maine's Chief Executives.

October, 1922

Governor of Maine.



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To the Living Children  
of John Fairfield

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Martha W. Fairfield  
John Walter Fairfield  
Anna Paine Fairfield Perkins

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This Book is Dedicated



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The letters of John Fairfield, Congressman, U. S. Senator and Governor of Maine are believed to be unique. They were written between the years 1835 and 1847, while he was in Congress or in the Executive chair at Augusta, Maine. There is no contemporary correspondence of that period to compare with them and no student of history of that period can afford to slight them. They have the candor of Pepys and the simplicity of the Puritan. Intimately personal, they betray many things which never would have been written by Governor Fairfield had he known that they would become public. Nowhere else does one find such direct personal comment on Jackson, Adams, Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Benton, Buchanan, Preston, Prentiss, Wise and others, as in these intimate, everyday letters written by this delightful gentleman of the old school to his wife and children, and which, after the passing of nearly a century, are now made public, for the first time.

If there is any peculiar charm in these letters, it is in their very lack of effort, their freedom from attempt at literary or high-sounding phrase. It is said that when these letters reached the town of Saco, Maine, where Governor Fairfield's family lived and where his wife ran the great farm and cared for her large family, the neighbors came from many miles around to listen to the reading of them—so scant was the news of the day, so gossipy and clever the letters, to them. Some discussion has arisen during the publication of these letters in serial form in the Lewiston Evening Journal of Lewiston, Maine, by whom they were originally collected, as to the wisdom of publishing all of the minor detail of these letters. The statesman's personal wardrobe; his directions as to the affairs of his farm; trivialities such as an absent and loving husband might write to his wife at home on the farm and all of his directions to his law-partner carrying on their large law business in Saco, seemed to many not to be of historical worth. But it has happened that in many cases, the publication of these

seeming trivialities has led to the revelation of collateral incidents of much interest to the localities to which they relate and to the clearing up of matters of concern to students of Maine history, in particular.

They have come therefore in this way to have a value, wholly apart from their political or historical interest. To have changed them would have been to mutilate them. Their affectionate and loving concern; their spontaneity and humor; their graphic descriptions and their chance observations are too intimately interwoven with these family concerns, to permit of any elimination. They are published therefore as human-interest documents, covering a period of singular interest, concerning which there is very little correspondence of this familiar and candid nature. There may be plenty of formal correspondence relative to the period and there are one or two volumes of unusually interesting memoirs relative to it, such as Ben: Perley Poore's, but nowhere else, we are assured, the revelations of a harmless gossip and a Puritan Pepys.

We need hardly suggest the great interest among students of American institutions and politics in this period of the rise of popular sovereignty, through the social and political revolution brought about by the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency of the United States. It was the birth-time of the inquisitive newspaper press, continually asking questions about Federal affairs; it was the beginning of the self-assertion of the commoner in public affairs; it was the beginning of the downfall of the so-called aristocracy of culture and education as an essential of high office and of the first entrance of rough soldiers and rugged leaders into public life. It was over all, the beginning of the slave issue, the golden-age of the nullification doctrine and of the titanic debates in which Webster, Adams, Clay, Calhoun and Preston participated, the outcome of which yet dominate our policies as a nation. It begins in the blazing sun of a triumphant Jacksonian Democracy; it ends with the coming shadows of the great conflict of the Civil War; for, when Fairfield lay dead in the city of Washington in 1847, Stephen A.

Douglas and Abraham Lincoln were coming to the front in their political life, both of them in the Congress of 1847, Douglas as a Senator and Lincoln as a Congressman from Illinois.

Certain effort has been made to give a background to these letters of John Fairfield by some running commentary on politics and on the leaders of these times, as well as by some depiction of the social life of the times in which the letters were written. These conclusions have come from many sources to which, in general, sufficient reference has been made in the text. The spelling, the use of the characters of writing as used by Mr. Fairfield have been followed in the publication of the letters themselves. The originals of these letters are in the Library of Congress, where they are frequently consulted by writers, upon that period. "There is no other source of original contemporary correspondence comparable to the Fairfield letters" is the conclusion of the Custodian of that library in a letter to the editor of this volume.

For these reasons and others—such as a vital interest in the preservation of even the least of the records of the past—we have undertaken the publication of these letters. We make acknowledgment to the Governor of Maine, Hon. Percival P. Baxter, for a lively and continued interest in the work; to Henry E. Dunnack, Librarian of the State of Maine, for his assistance and favors; to Hon. John Francis Sprague of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, for his authoritative paper on the Northeastern Boundary Dispute, which is made an appendix to these letters; to officials of the Library of Congress for certain favors; to Miss Martha Fairfield, daughter of Governor Fairfield, who resides in Washington, D. C., and to whom we are indebted for the preservation and the copying of these letters in the present form and for many personal reminiscences of her father; to the 80th Legislature of Maine for its concern in the publication of this volume, and finally to the Maine Writers Research Club for a personal interest that has been friendly and helpful in many ways.

Lewiston, Maine, October, 1922.

ARTHUR G. STAPLES.





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## JOHN FAIRFIELD



JOHN Fairfield's ancestry may be traced to John Fairfield, a freeman of Salem in the year 1640. He came from England with his wife Elizabeth and his son, Walter, who was born in 1631. Walter was the father of William (b. 1662), who was delegate to the Committee of Safety in 1689, Representative of Wenham to the General Court of Massachusetts for twenty-seven years, for nine of which he served as Speaker of the House, and he was Moderator of Wenham, Mass., from 1706 to 1709. His son William, who was born in 1693, died upon May 13, 1770. His son, John, was Parson Fairfield of Saco, who was many years a beloved minister of the town. He was born in Wenham in 1736, was graduated from Harvard College in 1757, and was settled over the First Church of Saco in 1761. The ordination of Mr. Fairfield took place October 27, 1762.

Before his engagement at this place, Mr. Fairfield supplied the desk at Leominster, Mass., nearly five months, 1760; and subsequently preached at the warehouse at Arrowsick, Georgetown, in the First Parish at Scarborough, and at Dunstable, Mass. He was engaged as a teacher at Manchester and Roxbury, Mass., until he commenced preaching Feb. 1760. Previously to his settlement July 20, 1762, he was married to Mrs. Mary, daughter of Capt. Ichabod Goodwin, and widow of Foxwell Curtis Cuttle, Esq., of Berwick. His wife died April 16, 1774, at the age of thirty-seven, leaving a family of six children, five of whom were daughters, and all at a tender age. Mr. Fairfield was twice subsequently married. The ministerial labors of the Rev. Mr. Fairfield were continued during a period of thirty-six years. Mr. Fairfield resided in Biddeford several years prior to his decease; he died December 16, 1819, aged eighty-three years.

In his last three years this parson of Revolutionary time became a picturesque figure as he walked about the town, his long, white hair surrounding a face whose eyes were sightless and whose cheeks were bright and round and his short, spare form clad in a flowing red cloak.

Parson John's only son was Ichabod, who was born in 1783 and died in 1824. He married Sarah Nason, widow of Daniel Scamman. Their oldest son, John, is the subject of this volume. His brothers and sisters were Mary (who became the wife of the Reverend Jason Whitman), Benjamin, Martha, Cleaves and George Ichabod.

John Fairfield was born in Saco, Maine, January 20, 1797. Of his boyhood, little is now known. As a mere boy he was on a privateer in the War of 1812. He was educated in Saco, attending Thornton Academy from October 4, 1813, to April 10, 1814, and Limerick Academy. On September 25, 1825, he married Anna Paine Thornton, whose father was Thomas G. Thornton, United States Marshal in the War of 1812. Her grandfather was Col. Thomas Cutts whose mansion on the crest of the hill on Cutts' Island was her home. She was named for her aunt Anna Paine Cutts, wife of Richard Cutts and the sister of Dolly Paine Madison, the President's wife. Although a rare thing in those days in Saco, Ann Thornton was reared in luxury. She often accompanied her father on his long drives, for they enjoyed each other, her father being proud of her good "attic furniture" as he said. She inherited from him a comfortable sum of money of which she never knew even the exact amount, for it was given, as was the custom in those days, by her guardian to her husband at her marriage, and was subsequently lost. In 1824 her father died, as did also Mr. Fairfield's father.

As soon as John Fairfield finally decided to study law, he entered the Saco office of Judge Shepley, who was then U. S. district attorney. Being admitted to the bar in 1826, he formed a partnership with George Thacher, Jr., who managed the business of the office while Mr. Fairfield attended to their pleadings and court practise. Mr. Thacher was the son of Judge Thacher of the U. S. Supreme Court. In 1832, John Fairfield received an appointment as reporter of decisions of the State Supreme Judicial Court. In this capacity he traveled throughout the Maine towns, much of the time upon his own horse. His daughter, Mrs. Sarah F. Hamilton, in an interesting paper upon her father's letters, says concerning this:

"If the slowness of the means of business traveling strikes us forcibly so would also the social friendly intercourse promoted by it. . . . At that time when the line of march lay directly through the town, it would seem careless incivility to neglect a friendly call. Among his letters to his wife, many of which are now in the possession of his daughters, the earliest is dated May 21, 1832, while he was reporter of decisions. There are several other letters written while he held this appointment, all of them without an envelope but addressed upon the fold of the paper and sealed with red wax. These tell of his experiences, but filled from first to last with love for his





MRS. JOHN FAIRFIELD

Photograph taken in 1875



home. One was written from Augusta, April 24, 1834. "In something of a hurry, for I write this while taking notes at court." He asks her to ride into Portland to meet him on his return and bring him home. Incidental to George Thacher, Jr., it may be said that both he and his father, George Thacher, were members of the Maine Constitutional Convention of 1820, that the elder had been delegate to Congress and Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

In 1835 Mr. Fairfield was elected representative in the U. S. Congress. It was not a pleasant thing for him to contemplate leaving his wife and their children for so many months, but he yielded to the unsolicited honor, going to Washington in December, 1835. His daily letters throughout his Washington residence, during a period of more than ten years, are most valuable and interesting. By them he kept the affection of his children strong and lively. The father's letters were the chief events in the life of the family circle. Now and then "a wee bonbon from the gold and silver dishes of the minister plenipotentiary's banquet table made the tales of the Arabian Nights more real to us," says Mrs. Hamilton. Poetical effusions, acrostics and charades, and sketches of the men he saw about him found their way home from Washington.

From the first he had the advantage of friends in Washington, for Richard Cutts, his wife's uncle, one of Saco's former citizens who had served seven terms in Congress, 1800 to 1813, was there. Mr. Fairfield often speaks of visiting him, his son, Madison, and daughters, Mary and Dolly, and often he speaks of Mrs. Madison, the widow of the President, who was of much importance in Congressional society. Mr. Fairfield attended many receptions, for he enjoyed social life and all this Washington society was new and delightful to him. He was a prime favorite among the ladies to whom he was charmingly courteous. He laughed at the youthfulness they accorded him, guessing his age much too young and judging him to be single because he was so polite. His favorite entertainments were dinner parties where business often mingled with pleasure, wit and refreshment enlivening more serious purposes.

Amid the glow of social enjoyment he was, however, thoroughly statesmanlike. His chief complaints are at the waste of time and the irregular attendance at the meetings of the House. He finds fault with the extravagant speech-making members who use for commonplace matters a style

of speech suited only to great crises. "I am agin' 'em all and in favor of business."

Meantime Mrs. Fairfield and their children were much in his mind. He approved her plan of sending the boys to dancing school, and wishes them to be diligent in their studies at "Aunt Cutts' School." As many other Congressmen did, he bought a farm where they might bring up their children better, and enjoy the delights of their own orchard, poultry, cattle and garden. They also were anxious to attempt silkworming, so they raised mulberry trees and purchased silkworms. It promised to be a northern industry at the time. Mrs. Fairfield's pluckiness showed plainly when she resolved to move to their farm in the Ferry Road, on the height near the cemetery of today, before her husband's return, since it was the long session of Congress which would keep him there until summer time. He warns her against doing so, fearing the work will be too much for her, suggesting the additional burden incurred in boarding the workmen. Through his law partner, Mr. Haines, Mr. Fairfield bought a horse, oxen and dairy cows, and made inquiries for a suitable chaise.

The long session having finally terminated in July, he hurried back eagerly to his home and his new farm whose further establishment occupied most of his intermission. He was very apt in domestic affairs; if the children felt that mother had all the courage, firmness, decision and strength of a man, they also felt that father had the tenderness, consideration and housekeeping abilities of a woman. It was a rare combination which Mr. Fairfield had, that of real statesmanship and a genuine love of domestic duties, but it was not more remarkable than the good sense of his luxuriously reared wife. There was much of Puritan simplicity, patriotism and strength in both characters.

When Congressman Fairfield returned to Congress in December, 1836, he begged her to write often, more often than before. She had written somewhat irregularly once a week in response to his daily letters, but then, it was easy for him to write with his desk ready both at the House and at his room at any time; it whiled away the loneliness of many a solitary moment and the tedium of many a ranting speech, while for her it meant a collecting of pens, paper and ink and a half hour away from the children or a turmoil of their playing for accompaniment.

In March, the short session being over, he starts again for home, planning to take the mail stage from Boston and ride all night.

In 1837 he was re-elected for a second term, and upon his return was placed upon the Committee on Foreign Relations. He reports much excitement over slavery questions so that the business of the House is seriously impeded until a vote is taken not to consider any such matters. It is interesting to follow the course of events which led to his governorship as they show forth in his letters which, being meant solely for his wife, show his character in perfect sincerity.

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It is little wonder that the Democrats of his state wished him to be Governor and insisted upon it, for he was not only well known to them and trusted with important offices in their keeping but he was also at this time covering himself with laurels in the House and gaining a national reputation. Upon March the eighth, after repeated postponements, he delivered his speech upon the North-eastern Boundary, a question with which his name has become inseparably linked.

It was not, however, Mr. Fairfield's North-eastern Boundary speech which made his name familiar to all the nation. His chief part in that question came later. It was his action concerning the Cilley-Graves duel which gave him national importance. Mr. Cilley of Maine was challenged by Col. Webb, editor of the New York Courier, on account of some words used by Mr. Cilley on the "corruption case." Mr. Cilley refused the challenge. Then Mr. Graves, a friend of Col. Webb, challenged Mr. Cilley, who was forced by the custom of the day to accept or prove himself a coward. An attempt to prevent the duel was too late. After firing three times ineffectually, Cilley's seconds tried to stop the affair, but the opposition of Graves's friends was irresistible. The next shot killed Mr. Cilley. The next day in the House, Mr. Fairfield, contrary to the custom of the time, startled the members by his courage in demanding that an investigation of the affair be made. Upon this point the Maine Democrat says:

"We were tauntingly told that no Northerner would dare incur the fearful responsibility of demanding an investigation of the affair by a Committee of Congress. Mr. Fairfield proved himself possessed of sufficient moral courage to meet this critical emergency, unintimidated by the menaces of his opponents, and he forever silenced the foul aspersion flung in the

teeth of Northern men, that they dare not resist the current of prejudice in favor of the infamous code of the duello."

Upon the 5th of March, the members of the Democratic party at Augusta sent him the following resolution:

"Resolved, That this meeting view with pride and admiration the course adopted by the Hon. John Fairfield in the House of Representatives in demanding an investigation into the manner and circumstances of the death of the Hon. Jonathan Cilley; it has anticipated the demands of the people and will be by them fully sustained."

The historical importance of Mr. Fairfield's action is that it stopped duelling forever in Congress.

In the midst of all these excitements, he misses home as much as ever. In place of his luxuriousness he longs for a breakfast at the farm. It was a pure delight to him when his last session in the House was over, for he might then return to Saco and his legal work, knowing that if he should be elected for Governor he would not be far away from home.

At the time of his election a courier was sent from Portland by night to carry the news. Mrs. Hamilton tells a characteristic story of Mrs. Fairfield in this connection. "My mother went to the door to inquire the cause of a visitor at that time of night. Upon learning his errand, she simply thanked him, and concluding that a good night's rest was worth more to her sleeping husband than the announcement of his governorship at that hour, she returned to her slumbers and in the morning quietly but with a little sly fun, informed him of his election.

Hardly was the inauguration over before the boundary question threatened trouble. Officials who had been sent down to the disputed territory had been captured by Great Britain's subjects and were held in prison. With commendable promptness and decision which contrasted strongly with the dilatoriness of all previous authorities, Governor Fairfield sent troops to the line and prepared others to reinforce them. Of the whole disgraceful action of the United States in connection with the North-east Boundary question, Governor Fairfield's act is the one commendable proceeding. He writes upon February 13:

"There is but one course in this thing, and that is to go ahead. No backing out and no flinching."

In the Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin, by Charles E. Hamlin, the matter of the Aroostook war is explained thus fully:

"In a short time after the Governor had defined the position of Maine towards the disputed territory, the State was electrified at the news that a large body of Canadians were robbing the disputed land of its timber. The Governor promptly ordered Sheriff Hastings Strickland of Penobscot County to organize a posse of men and drive out the intruders. Great excitement prevailed, and an unmistakable war fever arose. With two hundred men the sheriff rapidly proceeded to the scene of action in what is now Aroostook County. The Canadians heard of the sheriff's movements and possessing themselves of arms in the province arsenal of Woodstock, Maine, and New Brunswick began to arm themselves. The legislature appropriated \$800,000 and the Governor ordered a draft of 10,000 to protect our claims. Congress appropriated \$10,000,000 and authorized the President to call for fifty thousand volunteers to help Maine. General Scott came to Augusta to take charge of the military operations. He opened up diplomatic negotiations between Governor Fairfield and Governor John Harvey, of New Brunswick, with the result that each promised to withdraw his forces from the disputed territory and leave it in charge of a peace posse until a settlement should be arrived at by diplomatic methods. Thus ended the famous Aroostook war. It was a bloodless affair, and yet it was a narrow escape from a collision between the two governments. Both sides were prepared to fight, and the loss of a single life might have prevented a peaceful settlement. The wonder is that no harm came out of all that excitement and manoeuvring."

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Three times Governor Fairfield was re-elected, though by small majorities such that he feared defeat and that, too, rather with a feeling of personal relief than of chagrin. This was not, however, the result of any personal unpopularity but rather the proof of it, for no other man of his party could have secured the election. Amid great and unusual responsibilities, he displayed a decision of character which commanded the attention and respect of the whole nation. As the result of this action, he became the favorite son of the State, being sent to the Senate chiefly to defend Maine's right to her North-east territory.

During his last term as Governor, in 1842, the resignation of Ruel Williams from the U. S. Senate resulted in Mr. Fair-

field's appointment for that office for the remainder of that term. It is worthy of notice that John Fairfield never completed his term of office in any position, being elected to some higher office before its expiration. While reporter of decisions of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, in 1835, he was elected U. S. Representative of the First District of Maine, to which office he was re-elected in 1837, resigning the office in 1838 to become Governor of Maine; after his fourth election in 1842, he resigned to accept a seat in the U. S. Senate to which he was elected by the Legislature. He was re-elected to this office in 1845, not completing his term before his death.

He regretted leaving his wife to so many domestic cares for so long a time again, but the next session of Congress found him once more in Washington. The handwriting of his almost daily letters is coarser and more irregular than before. He was not well. For years he had had trouble with his joints, one knee suffering most, his whole state of health being uncomfortable and nervous in consequence, a steady increase of the malady continuing during his term of service in the Senate, as his letters clearly indicate. There is less description of Washington and more yearning for home than in his former letters, yet there is no diminution of his interest in government affairs. Upon March 24, 1844, he writes:

"You asked me at a wrong moment if I was not sick of politics. The fact is I feel a deeper interest in them than ever."

Upon the 30th of May of the same year he writes, "To my astonishment I received yesterday in the Baltimore Convention, the highest vote for Vice-President (with James K. Polk, President) on the first trial, but not a majority. I had nine states, to wit, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island, New York, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri, making a hundred and six votes. I am informed I should have been nominated on second ballot if it had not been thought that my course when Governor in the controversy between Maine and Georgia and my views on the treaty would operate against me in the South. With the result I am entirely satisfied—it is honor enough for me to have been a candidate for nomination." Senator Fairfield was a popular man in government circles and the disappointment of his friends at this result was keen and as great a surprise to him as was the unanticipated suggestion of such a nomination. Upon June 2, he writes to his wife:

"What the deuce has got into the people? I would prefer a much humbler station—one better suited to my talents and tastes. (Ain't I modest?) Well, I don't care whether I am believed or not—I speak the truth."

During the forming of the new Cabinet, there was much talk of making Mr. Fairfield Secretary of Naval Affairs, a position which he himself would have liked as much perhaps because of the benefit the increased salary would be to his growing family for whom he felt he ought to be making surer future provision as for the honor and personal liking for the task itself. His rival was George Bancroft, the historian, who had often declared that he was more than ready to leave his chance to Mr. Fairfield. To his secret disappointment, the seat in the Cabinet was not, however, given to him. The disappointment of his friends was such that his popularity increased and there were prophecies of his future presidency.

During the summer of 1847 at home, he wrote some delightfully characteristic sketches, including a Ride to the Pool, which were printed in the *Maine Democrat* of which he had charge in the editor's absence. These now exist in the form of clippings arranged so as to form a neat little volume. The face side of the fly-leaf is inscribed in his own hand, "John Fairfield;" the reverse side says:

"Letters of O. K. published in the *Maine Democrat*, Saco. The whole dedicated, and this volume affectionately presented to his beloved wife by

#### THE AUTHOR"

Since these letters not only reveal the character of John Fairfield but also give a glimpse of some Saco scenes of the time, some quotations may not be inappropriately inserted in this place. He begins by telling of his ambition to write some great travels, not knowing where to go to find a suitable journey for his description.

"Almost on the point of yielding in despair, we were most happily relieved by one at our elbow having a conjugal right to advise us, with one of those looks you have no right to interpret into anything in particular, and yet which might be made to mean anything in general, according to one's fancy, said, 'Why don't you go to the Pool, my dear, and then you can return the same day, you know.' Mountains and Molehills! Think of that. Was there ever a finer specimen of pathos in prose? What a descent. From the tour of Europe—the visiting of Rome—the Holy Land—tracing the sources of the Nile—

exploring the interior of Africa—peeping into the craters of a dozen volcanoes, putting our finger upon the North Pole, etc., etc., down to a ride to the Pool. The idea was capital—decided fun. We seized it with avidity and settled the whole thing in our own mind in a moment. Next to doing a great thing, you know, is the doing a little thing in a great way. One morning we were off with old Switchtail and the buggy at the rate of three miles an hour.”

He speaks of the “white and yellow house formerly owned and occupied by the late Richard Cutts (his wife’s uncle), once the most elegant house in town, but now surrounded and thrown back, as it is, by splendid new brick blocks with iron fronts, it looks like some old, faded belle who is endeavoring to compensate for the loss of her lovers by flaunting a portion of her finery that appropriately belonged to the day of her youth and beauty.”

He says of the old mansion house (his wife’s girlhood home), home of the original proprietor of Indian Island, and indeed of almost all creation, Colonel Cutts (his wife’s grandfather) : “It is a substantial and elegant building, with a gambrel roof, luthern windows, small glass and other insignia of a former age. . . . On either side of the road, fronting the mansion house, were two fields formerly known under the significant sobriquet of the Colonel’s vest pockets. One of these is now a brick yard, and the other is covered with factories. The Colonel, if permitted to revisit us, would probably be not a little puzzled in regard to his identity, finding his pockets thus stuffed—one with clay and brick, the other with spindles and pretty girls.”

Of the Pool he says :

“It was almost entirely monopolized both by land and by water, by the fishermen, and has often, with its nets spread to dry, its boats resting lazily upon the shore and the fishermen lying about the rocks in scattered groups, reminded us of what we suppose the villages to be on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.”

About this time, a poem appeared, praising the Androscoggin above all other Maine rivers, to which a response was made in favor of the Kennebec. Mr. Fairfield added his voice to the chorus, singing his admiration for the Saco in the following verses :



"Oh, hush, ye brooks, pray did you e'er of such a stream as  
Saco hear?

If not, 'tis plain enough ye ought to.  
The whole of babbling Androscoggin  
Perhaps might fill a toddy noggin;  
And so perhaps the Kennebec would,  
Including mud, sawdust and driftwood.  
But Saco's full and rapid stream  
Old ocean fills up to the brim:  
And many think if it should halt,  
The sea would be one cake of salt.

for 'mixing grog'  
Or 'floating log'  
Or 'drowning dog'  
Or 'breeding fog'

It yields at once and oughter.

It scorns to take  
From muddy lake,  
Or slimy brook,  
By hook or crook,

Its daily draught of water.

On mountain-side  
E'er eventide  
The sun from sky  
Comes down to lie

Upon the fleecy banks of snow:

And there distills  
Those gentle rills

That sparkling down to Saco flow.

Oh, Prince of Streams!  
The poet's dreams

Ne'er formed a fairer vision.

Compared to thee  
Most streams will be

But subject of derision."

Mr. Fairfield had a decided aptness for such verse making, which enlivened many a letter or entertainment, or now and then ornamented an album.

The following letter, now in possession of John Fairfield's children, is presented here as a sample of an old-fashioned love-letter and as showing in John Fairfield, the young man, the same characteristics of serious-mindedness, strong conviction, and firmness, tempered with consideration, that dis-

tinguished him in later life, both in public matters and in his domestic relations.

The letter has the old-time dignity of phrasing, in those days considered the proper form of correspondence between lovers, and it expresses his concern over the apparent reluctance of his sweetheart to enter into an early marriage. At this time John Fairfield was twenty-six years old and Ann Thornton was nineteen.

There is no doubt that Miss Thornton was deeply devoted to her fiancé, nor was she given to caprice and coquetry. She was a shy, sensitive person, and not fond of dress and social functions and her daughters have suggested as the explanation of her attitude that she dreaded "the fuss and feathers of a fashionable wedding," which seemed inevitable, as her family belonged to York County's best society and would be certain to insist on the proper observances of such an important occasion.

At the time the letter was written Miss Thornton was in Machias at the home of an older sister, who, after being informed of the engagement, wrote to her: "I should think you would like to come away as soon as your engagement is announced." This seems to have been considered the proper proceeding at that time. This is the letter:

Saco, October 12, 1824.

Dear Ann,

I have just received your last letter dated the 10th, but as I should very much deprecate the charge of hypocrisy against me, more particularly by you, I shall give no opinion respecting it—but proceed in this letter to notice an expression in your letter last but one in which you say "I mean to put off your marriage as long as I can."—In the first place I say that I have ever been an advocate for early marriages, and I believe my reasons for it have their foundation in common sense. If they have not be so good as to show me wherein, and you will not find me so obstinate and self-willed as not to acknowledge the force and justness of an argument, when they are made clearly to appear to my mind. First, then, I contend that while we are young all the generous and noble feelings of our nature are alive, active, and in full play—our hearts are warm, and overflowing with kindly & disinterested feelings. We are now more susceptible to the tender and bewitching charms of love, than we are in after life—consequently there is less of that cold, calculating policy in attachments between youth, than we almost daily observe in matches between older people. As the blood in young persons flows rapidly and freely through the veins and arteries uncorrupted by dissipation or luxurious living, so in their passions & feelings we observe a corresponding playfulness and purity, and disinterestedness—we observe a certain buoyancy of spirits and feeling, which is an indication of honesty and virtue—which knows no wrong and intends none. Consequently friendly and affectionate attachments formed in youth are purer and less disinterested

than in after life—and although they are sometimes imprudent, and the subjects of them are consequently exposed to many temporal evils and sufferings, yet in the main I suspect they receive as much enjoyment and real pleasure, as those of another class and description. It is a melancholy truth that the older we grow the more *refined* (in fashionable language) we grow, but in correct language the more corrupt. The pernicious influence and sample of a wicked world does have an effect upon us, and we have much reason to fear not a very salutary one. It is then most prudent, *bestest*, and safest to marry young. We are more likely to get husbands and wives who will love us, and adhere to us in life through good report, and through evil report.

In the next place as life is short we ought to set about the great *day's work* of life early. When marriage takes place late in life, the subjects of it almost invariably find that when their services are most required here, they have become incapacitated through the infirmities and imbecilities of age—or their time and attention taken up with the concerns of futurity. Besides I have always found on all subjects that "*delays are dangerous.*" And then again if considered in a moral point of view it is expedient that we marry young. It is more particularly true if considered in regard to males than females. Young men who are not engaged in such business as requires all their attention, are apt to pass their spare time in acquiring habits of dissipation and extravagance. But when they have become engaged to a female whom they love—or have taken unto themselves wives, they acquire a more permanent interest in the affairs of the world. They then feel more of the importance and dignity of human nature, for instead of standing alone, solitary, isolated beings, they then have others depending upon them. They then feel that they have a character to establish and preserve, not only that they may advance their pecuniary interests, but that their offspring may not blush to own them as the authors of their existence. Do you not perceive in daily life that all this is the effect of early marriage? I do. And even in myself I perceive a most wonderful change in the tone of my feelings since I was first engaged to you—I do not now, and *cannot* take the same pleasure, that I used to do in dissipation of any sort. I used to be fond of what we called a good *blowout*, but now I feel myself more of a man, and above such puerilities to call them by no harder name. Now I take more interest in life, because now there is a prospect that I shall have one whom I love to lean upon me, and accompany me through life. One who will participate with me in all my pleasures and divide with me all my griefs. I feel now that my time and talents are not my own, and that I have no right to waste either, but that there is one at least, who has a claim upon the proper use of them, which I ought not, and cannot in justice dispute.

With these views of the subject, it appears to me that no two persons situated as you and I are ought to delay marriage longer than circumstances absolutely require. And if in our case good reason should exist for such a postponement or delay, it appears to me I could wait for you twenty years. But if the determination on your part to delay proceeded merely from a caprice of the mind—from the consciousness of possessing my entire affection, and consequently of having a power over me—from whim or some idle phantasy of the brain, or from some worse motive, it cannot, and I presume will not be expected that I should consent to delay our marriage a great length of time. In our conversation upon this subject heretofore, there has seemed to be a sort of tacit agreement that

it should take place in *May next*. I have so far calculated upon it, and presume that no objection would be made to it on your part. For if we love each other, and ever intend to be married the sooner the better. But if in May any good reason can be urged why it should not take place, you will find me as willing as yourself to postpone it. But no such reasons appear to me to exist at the present time—and I pray most heartily they may never exist. Not perceiving any reasons for delay as I have just said, I am utterly at a loss to account for your wishes “to postpone it as long as you can.” Many in my situation would conclude it proceeded from want of affection—but I do not and *cannot* believe it to be the cause, and I think nothing shall tempt me to believe it, but a declaration to that effect from your own lips or pen.

I hope, my Dear, I have not treated the subject too seriously, for I think it requires some seriousness, and much candour. You are dearer to me than you can imagine, and I feel an interest in you which I never have and never can feel for any other being, always excepting the ties which bind me to a *mother & sisters*, and which can in no way interfere with the ties which bind me to you. Answer this soon—speak freely—confide in me—and believe me forever yours in affection if not in marriage.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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In the winter of 1847, his chronic lameness confined him to his room for some days. It made all his walks so uncomfortable and uncertain that he considered it unsafe to try to get about much in the evening darkness. At the urgent advice of friends he consulted Dr. McGruder who had had some success in curing such cases and submitted to an operation which proved not unsuccessful. He prepared carefully for this operation, being well provided with nurses and sending for his son, George, who was then at Bowdoin, to come and help care for him. The operation did no permanent good, however, and upon his return in December, he visited him again.

Another operation was then performed, concerning the danger of which he does not seem to have been quite cognizant, although dreading the anticipated pain. He did not send the letter telling the anticipated pain, meaning to finish it when all was successfully completed. The letter was never finished, for after suffering intense agony from the time the poison was injected into the knee-pan until seven o'clock in the evening he died, the victim of gross malpractice on the part of the physician. So sudden an ending of so promising a life just when a more brilliant future was in prospect was lamentable in an exceptional way. He had the admiration, not only of his political friends but of those of the opposing party, was of keen statesmanship, and was the pride and hope of a warm circle of adherents, who recognized that his ability was of a

superior type, capable of executing greater responsibilities than he had yet been entrusted with.

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Among his eulogies may be noted the following paragraphs:

Hon. James W. Bradbury addressed the Senate in these words:

"I need not speak of his honorable career in this body. You will bear witness to the sound judgment and ready zeal which he brought to the discharge of his varied duties; to that honesty of purpose which knows no guile; to that frankness and sincerity incapable of concealment; to that firmness of resolution which no difficulties could shake nor dangers overcome; and to that purity of life and conscientious regard to his convictions of right which distinguished him as a man and as a Christian."

Senator Niles said that he was

"A plain, unassuming man, never attempting to shine or attract attention to himself, but with his strong sense, sound judgment and practical views was content with his honest and faithful discharge of his public duties. He was true to his constituents, true to his country, faithful to his party and faithful to his principles."

Representative Hammond said of him:

"His fine manners and affable deportment attracted public attention. His public career was not long but brilliant. He possessed in an eminent degree all the elements of popularity."

Prior to his death the New York Herald spoke of him in the following way:

"Governor Fairfield of Maine is a man whose noble heart beat for his country when the British invaded the territory of his native state and it was he who stood nobly for her rights, her honor, and her glory during the timid administration of Martin Van Buren. I have carefully studied his character and believe we have few more patriotic and none more honest. He is one of the strongest men in the Senate. I look upon him as one of the last of the seventy-sixers in everything that dignifies a patriot and gives force to a statesman; and the only thing I regret is that we have not more such men. He will yet write his name in letters of glory upon the brightest page of his country's fame."

If his loss to the public was great, that of his wife and children was incomparably harder to bear. Then it was that his remarkable wife showed in full strength her power. A widow

with eight children, the eldest in college, and the youngest a baby in arms, with a farm to manage and less than three hundred dollars of income, she immediately assumed the responsibility of keeping her family together and rearing them into manhood and womanhood. Her work was heroically done, she lived 35 years after her husband's death, having educated her family and seen them well started in their ways of life, leaving a larger property than had been left her. Her business ability was of no small kind as is evidenced by an incident of which Mrs. Hamilton writes in "Mothers of Maine:"

"The first evening, after the tidings of my father's death in the morning, when my mother was alone with her children, the remembrance of her quietly putting out one wick of a common oil lamp, saying, "Children, we cannot afford to burn two wicks of the lamp when one will answer," has always remained vivid in my mind; but the grim pathos of the act was only appreciated in maturer years."

That she was able, not only to care for her own family, but also to think of those more unfortunate than herself, is shown in the custom she had of sending the children to school with calico bags filled with apples to give to the children who had none; when they remonstrated, she would say very quietly,

"Then go without apples yourself until you know how much other children like them who have none."

Of the personal characters of this remarkable husband and wife but little needs to be added. Mr. Fairfield was fond of many people, enjoyed both the giving and the receiving of hospitality, was quite at ease among a concourse of friends. His wife was of a singularly retiring nature, her real personality known only to her friends and her family. In later years her embarrassment before strangers melted away into a genial, sunny old age. Both were fun-loving people, their humor sparkling over all domestic matters and making as much comfort at home as their keen common sense. In appearance Mr. Fairfield was short, with a boyishness about him that made him seem younger than he was even after he was somewhat crippled by his lameness. He refers to himself as "the little old man;" we are told that "the affable little man" would better describe him. Throughout the state he was known as "Honest John."







## CHAPTER I

### THE TIME AND THE PLACE

John Fairfield first went to Washington as a member of Congress in 1835. It was a period of intense partisanship, of approaching financial depression, of multiplying perplexities in foreign affairs and of bitter feeling among statesmen of that time, surpassing in personal acrimony that perhaps of any other period in our national life.

The central figure of the day was Andrew Jackson, nearing, in 1835, the end of his service as President of the United States; but, like some of our other strong men in the Presidency, forcing a successor to the Presidency upon his party and fighting, with all of his fiery temper, the battles of his party and his pride. The spoil of his quarrels lay about him; the harvest of his triumphs was at his feet. He commanded, demanded, and, swearing strange oaths, had his way. He had upset an ancient aristocracy of power. He had overthrown social traditions. He had introduced a new policy of party patronage and spoils. He had called the common people to the support of a rough and rugged soldier, in the chair of the Presidency, hitherto consecrated to "gentlemen and scholars." Thus he had become the idol of Democrats. He was undoubtedly the one person whom the young Maine congressman, John Fairfield, most desired to see, to know and perchance to worship.

Jackson was now, in 1835, serving the third year of his second term of office—the protagonist in the longest and perhaps the most dramatic play of political passion and prejudices that ever was enacted in this nation. It had been more than ten years in the setting. Though it was nearing the end, it was none the less in its climaxes, and the principal actors were yet about him—John Quincy Adams, Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Benton, Van Buren, Mrs. Eaton (Peggy O'Neill) and his "kitchen cabinet" of eager advisers who never left his side. A moment's review may be illuminative of the substance of the correspond-

ence of John Fairfield which is to cover the next ten or twelve years subsequent to this year of 1835.

Andrew Jackson was elected President in 1829 and inaugurated in December of the same year. He had been a candidate for President in 1825 against John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, William H. Crawford of Georgia, and Henry Clay of Kentucky, then Speaker of the House. Of these four candidates, Jackson had the largest number of electoral votes, but neither one of the four received a majority and according to the law, the election went forward to the House of Representatives for election of a President. As the law required that the choice be limited to the three candidates who were highest on the list, Henry Clay, having the fewest electoral votes, was excluded. Exercising, as he did, great personal control over his supporters, it was in Clay's power to elect the President. He elected Adams, and he did so against the wish of his state of Kentucky and against its vote to that effect. The triumph of Jackson was thus delayed for four years, solely by Clay's coalition with Adams. The Adams-Clay coalition was a political agreement that left its trail through years and years of national political life. Jackson never forgot it or forgave it. It rankled for the rest of his life, and though he could extend his hand to President Adams on the night of Mr. Adams' inauguration, he never failed to allude to Henry Clay as "the Judas of the West; the traitor who received his thirty pieces of silver by being made Secretary of State in Adams' Cabinet as the payment for his treachery." But there is no evidence in history, dispassionately reviewing Mr. Clay's procedure, to prove that the coalition between Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams was corrupt. Mr. Clay stood, in all his thought, with Mr. Adams, for the same principles of construction in applying the Constitution, protective tariffs, internal improvements, and a deliberate binding together of the states into a nation. Gen. Jackson's friends, on the other hand, were found among those who reacted against such a program—a scrupulous limitation of the powers of the government and a studious regard for state's rights. Yet it was a bitter thing to see the support of Clay

given out of the West to a gentleman from New England. "A coalition," cried John Randolph, "of the Puritan and the black-leg." Calhoun was elected Vice-President and re-elected Vice-President four years later with Gen. Jackson.

The four years of Adams' administration were therefore tense and tempery. From 1825 to 1829 Aaron Burr, Martin Van Buren and Edward Livingstone, men of peculiar charm, political sagacity and executive power, had charge of the fortunes of General Jackson. Sensing the areas of popular revolt against Adams and Clay, they persuaded Jackson to resign from the United States Senate, lest he make some mistake to damage his popularity; and, establishing organs of publicity, with the brilliant Livingstone to write the propaganda of the Jackson campaign, the hero of New Orleans, in his retirement, was made the "man of the people" and the essential Democratic candidate for Presidency. The country was flooded with tales of his military exploits and his peculiar trait of loyalty to those who befriended him in any way. Daniel Webster told Samuel Breck, as will be found in Breck's diary, that he knew more than fifty members of Congress who had expended or pledged all their fortunes in setting up presses and employing other means to secure Jackson's election and the defeat of Adams, in 1829.

It is quite probable that there have been other political campaigns as virulent and deliberately personal as that of Adams and Jackson in 1829, but they have been few. Jackson's youthful indiscretions, his brawls and duels, his marriage to Mrs. Robards before she had been legally divorced from her first husband, his summary handling of deserters in the Florida campaign were subjects of handbills and posters. A campaign book, entitled "Reminiscences: Or an Extract from the Catalogue of the Youthful Indiscretions of General Jackson, between the Age of Twenty-three and Sixty," especially attacking his beloved wife, was circulated broadcast over the country, leaving a wound in the breast of General Jackson that never healed and that opened afresh in a manner later to be indicated. Jackson's election was therefore one of unique im-

portance. It was the victory of class against class. It was the overthrow of a political and intellectual aristocracy by a "popular hero and a man of the people." It dethroned an austere and powerfully cultured dynasty, and set up the political dynasty of a man who could not write his own speeches, could not observe the full requirements of a traditional etiquette, or—what was worse—could not fail to reward his friends without regard for merit and bitterly despise and punish his enemies.

The upheaval was social as well as political. It commenced a new chronicle in the life of the Capitol. Those who had known the Presidents of the United States as educated and cultivated gentlemen saw to their consternation a military hero, who had lived a life of brawls and duels, who had given repeated evidences of disregard of laws and statutes, who had swept away enemies by pure force; who had no learning or education and who, as a member of the U. S. Senate, had given no evidences of his ability as a legislator. And behind him loomed the faces of the imperturbable Burr, the smiling and the unctuous Van Buren and the alert and the capable Livingstone. It was the beginning of a period of tense and eager partisanship; of profound emotional legislation; of war upon the Bank of the United States; of bitter Congressional duels; of the installation of the Spoils system so-called; of the Webster-Hayne debate; of the stamping out of nullification; of the "Kitchen Cabinet"; of the Peggy O'Neill scandals; of the expunging of the resolutions of censure against President Jackson; through which and through many more besides, President Jackson sailed along on a growing sea of popularity—so great that it was believed he could have been again and again elected President if he would have consented to be a candidate for additional terms of office.

It is not the purpose of this consideration to pass upon the life or character of Andrew Jackson, but rather to indicate if possible the background of the letters which make up this substance of John Fairfield's impressions of the times. The political scope of his epistles to his wife is evinced in his estimate of that able and honest statesman, John Quincy Adams, for

whom Mr. Fairfield had no words strong enough to express disapproval, and his admiration of that shrewd and smooth gentleman, Mr. Van Buren, the most consummate of politicians who ruled by indirections and handled the temper and the disposition of "Old Hickory" with a skill that bent it always in the direction of his own purposes.

And Mr. Fairfield was going into a company that might well arouse his interest and stimulate his ambitions. Henry Clay returned to the Senate after his service as Secretary of State and became recognized leader of the Whigs; for he would recognize no other leader. His oratory was persuasive and winsome, stirring and suggestive. Daniel Webster even yielded to Mr. Clay the leadership of the Whigs in the Senate, although never yielding, so far as any individual was concerned, his own personality or independence.

Calhoun was there, no longer Vice-President but a Senator from South Carolina; best hated of Jackson. "What act of mine," said the old hero, "will God not pardon when I die; what will posterity most condemn in me? I will tell you; not for the specie-circular; not the removal of the deposits (which was the material of the 'expunged resolution'); none of these, but because I was persuaded not to hang John C. Calhoun as a traitor, which I fully intended to do." And Calhoun was the leader of the Democrats, although Thomas H. Benton represented the Jackson adherents in the Senate, thus "dividing the House against itself" in many an issue; for it was "Old Bullion," as Senator Benton was called, who fought President Jackson's personal battles against the United States Bank and forced through the resolution "expunging" the resolution censuring Jackson for removing the deposits from the Bank of the United States. All through the early days of John Fairfield's service in the House, this expunging resolution took up the debates; forced the bank issue on the attention of the nation and in the campaign of 1832 was the political rallying call of the loyal Jackson Democrats from sea to sea. Names familiar enough are recalled from the Senate of that day. Tom Ewing, John J. Crittenden, William C. Rives, Richard H. Bayard, Thomas H.

Benton, John M. Niles, Daniel Webster, John Davis, George Evans, Judge White of Tennessee, successor of Jackson in the Senate and later his political foe—these are some of the men whom the young Congressman was eager to see.

In Mr. Fairfield's own deliberative body, the House, Andrew Stevenson of Virginia had long been Speaker, but was to be succeeded by James Knox Polk. Stevenson served for four terms and was a most adroit parliamentarian and tactician. He went from the Speaker's chair to the Court of St. James as Ambassador and John Bell of Tennessee succeeded him; but later, in Fairfield's first term, Mr. Van Buren secured the election of Mr. James K. Polk and thereby passed the succession of President down the line. Mr. Van Buren was indeed adroit. There was also, in the House, that interesting man, "Parson" Brownlow. He was a tall, spare man, with long, black hair and black eyes, sallow of complexion, and spare of figure. Parson Brownlow led the editorial forces of the Judge White party against President Jackson, and he acquired a national reputation by his trenchant writing, his defiant personalities in debate and by his marvelous hold on the popular fancy of the East Tennessee contingent. He was a curious subject of general interest because of his persistent support of denominational doctrines of immersion, and the political doctrine of emancipation of the slaves. And he was a Methodist without fear or favor. In Fairfield's time the first representative of labor was elected to Congress in the person of Eli Moore of New York, a journeyman printer and a very able and powerful speaker. He made a sensation in a reply to Waddy Thompson of South Carolina and after his impassioned and dramatic peroration fell forward on the floor insensible. Churchill Cambreling, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, leader of the Jackson men in the House, was an able man. Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, James K. Polk, afterwards Presidents of the United States, were in Congress in this period. A character of whom Mr. Fairfield speaks was Richard Mentor Johnson, a burly and slightly educated Kentuckian, who was reputed to have killed Tecumseh, the great

Indian leader, at the battle of the Thames. Gaily dressed in fine colors, smooth of face and piercing of eye, he looked more like Tecumseh, than did Tecumseh's portraits of the time. Johnson was afterwards elected Vice-President of the United States with Van Buren, but was later defeated in the Harrison campaign four years later. Elisha Whittlesey of Ohio was in the House. He became auditor of the United States after sixteen years of service as a Representative. Gulian C. Verplanck and Thomas J. Oakley, two members of the New York state bar, were prominent men in a way and esteemed for pure ability. A character of the House was Dixon H. Lewis of Alabama, the largest man who had ever occupied a seat, or rather two seats, in Congress and for whose ponderous figure, special chairs were made. Tom Corwin, a wit and a scholar from Ohio, was a true personage. His name yet endures for the brilliancy of his repartee and the chaste and elegant style of his oratory.

Such were a few of the familiar characters among the men of the times of which we write, under the attention of some of whom Mr. Fairfield immediately came. General Jackson had already served as President for six years and had passed through the most stormy period of his administration. The first shock of the nation at the entrance into power of a rough and ready President, of courtly address when he pleased, and of a certain natural grace, sweetness and winsomeness of manner, but of a determined fixity of policy and a rude disregard of the etiquette of kings and princes, had passed away. His deliberate purpose to sweep from power all political opponents and reward by office all party and political friends had been forced upon the nation to the joy of the partisanship of a triumphant democracy. Old Hickory had made his place in popular esteem. He had an impressive dignity and power. He was regarded as a man of destiny and of prescience. And he had lived through a period of fierce and bitter controversy, some of it based on sufficiently solid grounds of contention. He believed that those who were with him in any issue were friends and those opposed were enemies. He rarely left the White House and passed most of his time in the second story of the White House where he

kept his office, smoking, it is said, a long-stemmed corn-cob pipe and surrounded by such of his friends as he particularly esteemed. He was sixty-two years of age when he came to the Presidency. He had a high forehead from which the hair was brushed back, a decisive nose, searching, keen eyes and an almost childish expression about his mouth. Ben: Perley Poore, a famous correspondent of that time who knew him well, describes him as a "self-reliant, prejudiced and often irascible man whom it was a very hard task to manage." Some of his advisers were always with him. These made it a point to keep others from ingratiating themselves into his good will and some of these, especially in the first years of his administration, 1828-32, were chronicled in the ballads of his times as follows:

King Andrew had five trusty squires  
Whom he was wont to do;  
He also had three pilot-fish  
To give the sharks their cue.

There was Mat and Lou and Jack and Lev,  
And Roger of Taney hue,  
And Blair, the book,  
And Kendall, chief cook,  
And Isaac, surnamed the true.

These were "Matt" Van Buren, Secretary of State at the time the foregoing was written; Lou McLane, Secretary of the Treasury; John Branch, Secretary of Navy; Levi Woodbury, his successor; and Roger B. Taney was Attorney General. Francis P. Blair, Amos Kendall and Isaac Hill were a group of newspaper editors and staunch supporters (Hill being responsible for swinging New Hampshire to Jackson's support). These three last named were more especially known as the "Kitchen Cabinet," a term that was bandied about from sea to sea. They were able and, for the most part, decent men. Blair and Kendall had been partners in the publication of the *Frankfort Argus* and both had deserted Henry Clay when he broke



for Adams against Jackson; had raised the cry of "corruption and bargain" and had joined in the movement that gave the electoral vote to Jackson. Blair came to Washington, entered into partnership with William C. Rives as "Blair and Rives" and published the *Washington Globe*, a Jackson organ, that had the name of every Federal office-holder on its subscription list. Perley's Reminiscences of the times says that no hesitation was shown in sending this paper to the office-holders under Jackson; of sending the bill and, if it be unpaid, notifying the recipient that unless he paid, his position would be filled by someone who would pay. Such was the legitimate outcome of the new policy of Mr. Jackson, "to the victors belong the spoils," the policy of war.

Mr. Fairfield does not allude in any of his letters to his wife of the Peggy O'Neill affair. He would not speak probably of such a matter to a lady, and it had measurably passed out of notice in 1835. But even in his time, the politics of this pertinent imbroglio could not have been unknown to Mr. Fairfield. There was not a Whig newspaper in New England that did not teem with allusions to Mrs. Eaton, even then. Some of them were not chaste or nice. We may find in Maine newspapers of that period allusions to President Jackson's friendship for the charming lady, that are as coarse as possible and as unkind as could be imagined even by the most callous and brutal enmity. The politics behind this subject demands a moment of consideration in any attempt at an effective setting of the stage upon which this young Maine Congressman was entering. Mr. Webster's speech in reply to Hayne was delivered January 20, 1830, and published to the country on Feb. 23d, after having been carefully revised from the notes taken at the time. Mr. Webster himself did this work of revision. The debate continued long after this date, and it was not until May 21st that Col. Thomas H. Benton delivered the final speech, on the South Carolina doctrine of nullification. President Jackson, at first, spoke highly of Hayne's speech and said that he considered it abler than Webster's speech; but the astute and long-headed Van Buren, alarmed at this doctrine of nullification and

fearful of its effect on the North, set about slowly and silently to demonstrate to the imperious old soldier, who occupied the Presidential chair, that this doctrine could not fail to be destructive of the Union. The reasons behind Mr. Van Buren's attitude are variously explained. The political reasons, usually ascribed, lead up to John C. Calhoun, whom Mr. Van Buren did not desire to see further advanced in favor or power. Mr. Calhoun was not aware of Mr. Van Buren's intrigue and it was he who organized for April 13th, the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, the Democratic dinner of that year, 1830, in Washington. When the toasts were prepared and published, in advance, as was then the custom, it was found that they were so strongly "States' Rights," so strongly anti-tariff and pro-nullification, that many Pennsylvania Democrats declined to attend the meeting; and got up an opposition dinner of their own. General Jackson had, by this time, been persuaded of Calhoun's purposes. He attended the dinner but left early, leaving a volunteer toast which, when read, fell like a thunderbolt into the midst of the plotters. "The Federal Union: It must and shall be maintained." This was President Jackson's toast. It stunned the South and electrified the North. This was a severe blow to Calhoun who had labored hard to break down Mr. Adams's administration, in order that a Democratic party might be formed which would elect Mr. Jackson first for President and himself as his successor. But Mr. Van Buren had other plans. Van Buren and others found a letter which William H. Crawford, a very powerful and prominent man of the period, published, showing that Calhoun had once advocated severe punishment of Jackson for his procedure in the Florida campaign—a tender topic to Jackson. President Jackson began to suspect and finally to discredit Calhoun and finally to hate him, with a bitterness that lasted to his death.

Mrs. Eaton, or Peggy O'Neill, was a very fascinating and beautiful daughter of William O'Neill, an inn-keeper in Washington. She was somewhat acquainted with General Jackson when he was a Congressman. She married a handsome naval officer, John Bowie Timberlake, who died under a cloud of sus-

picion, leaving his accounts in a mixed condition. Much contention arose over the death of Timberlake. Defalcation was charged that led up either to him or to Lieutenant Randolph, an officer of prominence at that time. Randolph was acquitted. Amos Kendall, fourth auditor of the Treasury at that time, claimed that Randolph was guilty. President Jackson dismissed Randolph from the navy and Randolph pulled President Jackson's nose in the cabin of a steamboat at the wharf in Alexandria. He charged openly that Jackson had dismissed him and sustained Kendall's findings because he wished to relieve his friend, General Eaton, from liability as bondsman of Timberlake.

General Eaton subsequently married Mrs. Timberlake. She was the most beautiful woman of Washington, but of a reputation for easy life and virtue that kept busy the tongue of gossip and perhaps of slander. President Jackson had come to Washington fresh from the griefs of the death of his wife whom he had idolized and whom the tongues of slander had often hurt. He breathed vengeance against all who had defamed his wife in the campaign and he swore by the eternal that they should never drag the name of his "old friend Peg" through the mire. His kindness to her was undeviating and his support was loyal. He deluged the press with letters in support of her. He discussed the most outspoken attacks upon her life and virtue. There is nowhere any suggestion, in history, of any motive or animus that is not the most pure and honorable on the part of General Jackson. It appears to have been altogether a chivalric devotion to the purpose of sustaining the good name of a difficult lady. Enchanting, unscrupulous and ambitious, Mrs. Eaton had the old soldier completely under the influence of her troubles and her griefs. She went to him with every sort of a complaint. He defended her at a cost of his own good name and his political career. Pages of the various biographies of Jackson are given over to this controversy. It flooded the press. It kept society alert and conscious.

This was Mr. Van Buren's opportunity. A widower with a fine house and abundant means, he made Mrs. Eaton his hon-

ored guest. He entertained with great dinners to which he invited the society of the day and of which the society of the day refused to take notice. Mrs. Calhoun especially refused to recognize or to sit at table with Mrs. Eaton. She led indignant squads of her women-friends away from the tables when Mrs. Eaton was installed as guest. Clergymen denounced Mrs. Eaton. But Old Hickory attended the dinners; gave her all attention; made her the principal guest at state affairs, and forced her to the best of his ability on Washington society. Van Buren was his able assistant. Every day he won thereby the favor of President Jackson and every day Calhoun lost it. Mrs. Eaton determined, without doubt, the succession of the Presidency.

History has long since written the story of the fight over the United States Bank and the power and vigor of President Jackson's course. While Jackson reigned, he seemed rather the maker than the representative of policies. He had headed a Democratic revolution. He was the last of the great makers of that revolution. When Fairfield went to Washington, the Democratic party, powerful, popular, with a leader of magnetism and of strength was at the climax of its glory. Already the seeds of dissolution were sown. It had been a man rather than a party that had won in 1832, for the contest had been on the re-election of General Jackson rather than on his record as President. The nullification issue was not made a test of doctrine in that campaign although General Jackson took it as a verdict against South Carolina and Calhoun. The Bank was the General's hobby and the Bank was the issue. He had been tractable on the tariff and on internal improvements. On the matter of the Bank he stood resolute and unmoved. He won on personal popularity and the people's love of a fighter and of a man of resolute convictions.

This is not the place to enter on a discussion of the Bank. The purpose of this chapter is to set up a background of the politics and the social life of the period, of which historians have written so much and so interestingly; for it was perhaps the most vital and climacteric period of our national life. When

Jackson asserted that the Bank had spent its money—the money of the people—to defeat him, he believed it. And he believed it because such men as Isaac Hill and Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, bankers themselves and men of influence, told him so, and when Amos Kendall of Kentucky “proved” to him that the Bank had spent money in Kentucky to defeat him, Old Hickory believed that he was on safe ground in asserting it and maintaining it. And this swung the popular vote. The charter of the Bank was safe until 1836; it were wise for its friends to have let the subject drop; but they did not. In the summer of 1832, they applied for a new charter. It passed both houses. Jackson met it on the eve of election with a veto that was delivered point-blank and without equivocation and the Clay men and the Jackson men turned to the country for its verdict.

We hardly appreciate at this time what a turmoil this thing made as an issue. Such men as Fairfield fought this to the finish. Statesmen might approve of the Bank, but under the circumstances, the people regarded it with suspicion; else why General Jackson’s opposition? The people saw in Jackson a defender against Capitalism. They saw in him a deliverer. He interpreted the verdict of that election as a command to destroy the Bank. Its fate was sealed. He began immediately his work. He asked for an investigation as to whether or not it were safe to permit the deposits of the United States to remain longer in the Bank. No one had doubted its solvency, but this act of Jackson cast discredit upon it. The House immediately declared that the deposits were safe in the Bank. General Jackson decided to act on his own responsibility. He resolved that the Bank should no longer be custodian of the Federal funds. Lou McLane of Delaware, a friend of Jackson, was Secretary of the Treasury. He was favorable to the Bank. Jackson transferred him from that place to Secretary of State; appointed Edward Livingstone, then Secretary of State, to be minister to France; put William J. Duane of Pennsylvania, an opponent of the Bank, in the Treasury Department, and the way was thought to be clear. Mr. Duane showed scruples and was

removed. Roger B. Taney of Maryland, Attorney General, later a figure in the Dredd Scott decision, was more placable and he accepted. An order from Taney removed the Federal deposits on September 26th, 1833, and the thing done at infinite hazard of a financial panic was accomplished.

The turmoil of the country may be imagined but not described. The President took all the responsibility. His own Cabinet had been opposed to the removal of the deposits. Taney was admittedly only the servant of the President in the matter. Jackson declared that the issue was clear, and that, simply stated, it was as follows: "Whether the people were to govern or whether the power and the money of a great corporation were to be used to influence their judgment and control their decisions." How like the frequent utterances of the present day!

The House of 1832 was controlled by friends of Jackson. The Senate, led by Clay, was controlled by Jackson's foes. The Senate spread on its records the resolution of a formal censure of President Jackson for the removal of the Federal deposits from the Bank of the United States, which was the issue of the tremendous agitation of debate on a motion to "expunge" that runs through the letters of John Fairfield. General Jackson replied to this resolution with vigor and force. He asserted that he was bound by no precedent and recognized nothing else but his own conviction of duty as a representative of the people under the Constitution. The fate of the Bank was sealed. It gave up its charter in 1836 and accepted, instead, a charter from the State of Pennsylvania.

By 1835, when John Fairfield went to Congress, the results of Jackson's policies had begun to be felt. Jackson said that the Bank did not give a stable currency. The death of the Bank was followed by inflation of bank issues, and the establishment of so-called "pet-banks" in which the funds of the Federal government were deposited, all of them Democratic banks, and charged with political power. State banks came in again. State legislatures multiplied charters without safeguards and without limit. All banks were banks of issue. Paper money began to pour out without limit and without security. It was

a period of inflation, of glittering optimism and of joy. In 1835, the close of the year when John Fairfield went to Congress, the nation was out of debt and Jackson had declared for a distribution of the surplus among the States. He pricked the bubble of his own making. For this joyous experience of a surplus of cash was soon to be followed by another sort of financial experience—the experience of the panic of 1837, in which business was prostrated, ruin followed upon the heels of success and business concern after business concern, banking institution after banking institution went down in one nationwide crash.

It was indeed a period worth chronicling, and any sort of comment, even the most trivial, throwing light upon the contemporary state of mind or upon the character and abilities of the actors in this great political drama of 1835 to 1847 is of interest to those who are to write the history of this nation in the years to come.





## CHAPTER II

### THE LETTERS OF FAIRFIELD

The locomotive and the steamboat were new things even in 1835. The first locomotive in America was then only ten years old. Mr. Fairfield's predecessors from Maine in the early years of its statehood, which began in 1820, went to Washington by stage. The old stage route from Maine to Boston continued from Boston via Worcester, Springfield, Hartford and Norwalk to New York. Passengers paid ten dollars a seat from Boston to New York and were fifty-six hours on the road. In about 1825, this gave way to a steamboat line, via Providence to New York, which carried passengers in twenty-four hours, at a fare of five dollars each.

Stage books for the Providence line were kept in Boston in various places and those wishing to go, registered their names. The central stage office was at the Marlboro Hotel. At four o'clock in the morning, a man started out in a chaise and went about, waking the people who had registered. As the Old South Church clock struck five, whips cracked and the stage coaches started at ten miles an hour for New York, stopping at Timothy Gay's tavern in Dedham for breakfast.

The steamboats lay at India wharf in Providence and the stages reached there at about half-past eleven o'clock. There were no staterooms and the 24-hour trip imposed many inconveniences and even some hardships. Arriving at New York, the passengers were landed at the foot of the pier. The city did not then reach above Broome Street, although above that point there were the villages of Greenwich, Bloomington, Yorkville and Harlem. The Boston stages stopped at Hall's "North American Hotel" at the corner of Bayard Street and the Bowery.

From New York, travelers to Washington in 1825 to 1830 went south probably by steamboat to Elizabethsport and were transferred across Jersey to Bordentown on the Delaware River where a steamer transported them to Philadelphia. Many of the

passengers remained over a day at Philadelphia as the journey had by this time become fatiguing. From Philadelphia by steamboat to New Castle; thence by stages to Frenchtown on the Elk River; there re-embarking on steamers, they went down around into Baltimore. This was another long and wearisome trip. At each change the passenger had to look after his own baggage. Checking systems were unknown. Between Baltimore and Washington they went over the old turnpike, where many daring hold-ups by highwaymen had been perpetrated and where in those days the agent carried a blunderbuss loaded with slugs for protection of mail and passenger.

It appears from Mr. Fairfield's letters that he went all of the way from Boston to Washington by steam; and part of the way at the speed of 26 miles an hour; which must have meant by railroad for a portion of the way. In 1828, there were six hotels in Washington, the favorite being the Indian Queen, kept by Jesse Brown, who used to come to the curbstone to welcome his coming guests. The price of board was ten dollars a week, and the food was sumptuous and plentiful. Brandy and whiskey were on the table in decanters without extra charge.

In 1830 to '35, the city of Washington was decidedly a "city of magnificent distances." The capitol had been pronounced "complete" in 1825. There was a group of shabby houses around the Navy Yard; another cluster on the river bank just above the arsenal, which was then set out for the business center of the city; and Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to Georgetown was lined with tenements, many of them with shops on the ground floor. The executive departments in 1835 were located in four brick buildings on the corner of the square in the center of which was the "White House." There was one small theatre occasionally opened for plays; and perhaps another had been opened by the time of Fairfield's coming to Washington. At this theatre Junius Brutus Booth, Forrest (not yet famous), Cooper and others are said to have played. Fanny Kemble was a favorite of President Adams. The popular performance of the days of President Adams was "Tom and Jerry, or Life in London." There was much of gambling,

Mrs. Clay saying that she did not object to Mr. Clay's whist, because he almost always won. There was much of dueling, much of social life and many balls and dances in which the most rigorous of evening dress was demanded, silk hose, knee breeches and pumps, a good deal of drinking and roistering.

The most elegant estate in Washington in Jackson's time was the Van Ness mansion on the banks of the Potomac at the foot of Seventeenth Street. John Van Ness had been a member of the House from the state of New York, but gave up his seat in the House for an appointment as Major of the Militia in the District Volunteers.

Here was a "mansion" which cost the then fabulous sum of \$30,000 in which entertainments the most costly and lavish were given; "a mansion," as a chronicler of that day says, "fit for a king." Major Van Ness was president of a bank, mayor of Washington, philanthropist and benefactor of all, and yet always just a little short of ready money. General Jackson was a frequent guest at this home. It was during Mr. Fairfield's term in Congress that the automatic chess-players and other automata made such a deep impression on the public life of the nation. In the current journalism of the times, there is no subject more under comment. In this period (the subject may be hardly worth notice) Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, widow of the great Hamilton, introduced ice-cream into the cuisine of Washington. Mr. Fairfield refers to viands which may be fairly supposed to be this delectable which at the time made the most tremendous sensation in fashionable society. President Jackson was fond of ice cream and served it at all White House affairs.

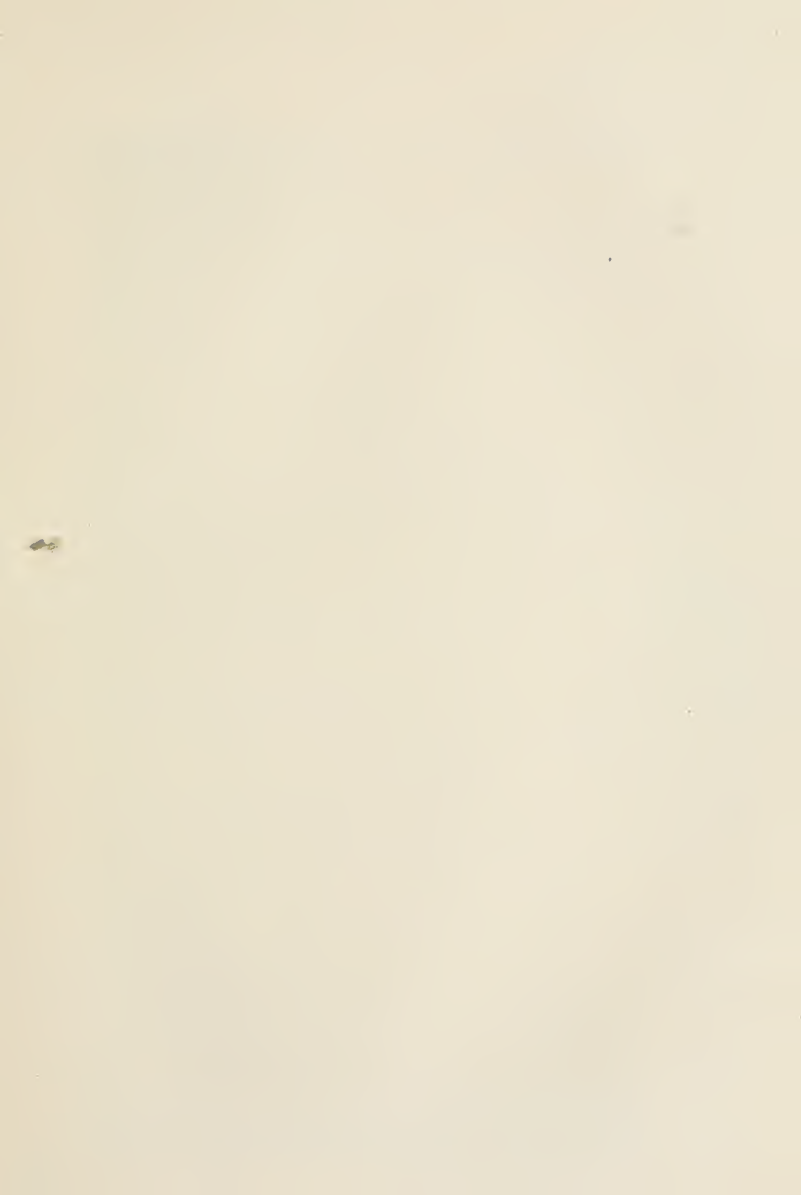
Although debates in Congress were of the most vital and interesting sort, the attendance of the public upon them was very small, owing to the limited room for visitors. The Senate Chamber was small and while ladies managed to get seats either on the floor of the Senate as was then permitted or in the limited gallery space, the men had to be content with uncomfortable positions leaning against pillars or peeping through the doors. Mr. Van Buren presided as Vice-President with imperturbable grace and fairness and stood for the gibes of his political ene-

mies with a smile and a politeness that never were disturbed. John C. Calhoun who had resigned as Vice-President that he might be elected a Senator was almost the only Senator who broke the unwritten law of the Senate and appeared in anything but the dress suits of black broadcloth which were the requirements of the time. With his pale attenuated look, his scholarly face and his reputation for the strictest probity and the finest personal character he was a personage to attract the attention of the young Congressman from Maine and he frequently alludes to him. Congress usually convened at about noon and adjourned at 5 P.M. and almost always adjourned over from Thursday until Monday.

On January 8th of 1835, the year of John Fairfield's arrival in Washington, President Jackson gave a dinner. It was not only the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans but on that day the last dollar of the national debt was paid. General Jackson was jubilant. "At last the apparition so long unseen on earth," said he, "a nation, a great nation without a national debt."

Such, in a brief way, is the environment and such are the political conditions into which Mr. Fairfield goes and under which he writes. It is agreed by all historians and commentators that the company of statesmen was brilliant. Moore's History of Congress says that it was the most brilliant of our national life.

In the period covered by Mr. Fairfield's letters, seven Presidents were seat mates with him, either in the House or the Senate. They were Polk, Buchanan, Johnson, Pierce, Tyler, Fillmore, and Lincoln, who was in Congress in 1846. His letters of the year 1835 cover the period of the debates over the resolution to expunge the censure of the President and the final days of the Bank. Up to 1830, members had usually sat in the House with their hats on, a custom that had come down from the Continental Congress. It was thought to be a great honor for the House to "uncover" for anything or anybody. The Speaker would sit through all the session with his hat on, but when he rose to call the attention of the House to any matter





The Fairfield Homestead, Saco

he would remove his hat. About five years previous to John Fairfield's entrance into Congress "cloak rooms" were introduced and gradually members discontinued the habit of wearing hats during the session. It was the habit in both branches of Congress to have great silver urns filled with the choicest and most fragrant "Maccaboy" and "Old Scotch" snuff placed where members could help themselves freely. It was no uncommon thing to see a speaker who was delivering an epoch-making address to the House or Senate, stop suddenly, go over to the silver urn, take a sniff, sneeze once or twice, flourish his bandana and resume his eloquence. Mr. Macon and Mr. Clay were esteemed to be the most graceful snuff-takers in the Senate, Mr. Clay affecting the French manner in so doing. The representatives were partial to a beverage called "Switchell," supplied by the nation generously and in charge of a dispensing official. It was made of molasses, ginger, pure water from the Capital spring and "flavored" with Jamaica rum. During exciting debates vast quantities of it were consumed. It will be noticed that Mr. Fairfield speaks often of writing with a steel pen. In each house were official pen-makers who mended the goose-quills used by the members, and official sealers who sealed the letters of the members with red wax. Everything was exceedingly formal and simplicity was far from fashionable. The steel pen was introduced just previous to 1835 by Nathaniel P. Willis, a son of a Portland, Maine, editor, himself a poet and a literateur, then a Washington correspondent. Mr. Willis had been traveling in Europe, had visited Charles Lamb, Bulwer-Lytton, Barry Cornwall and many others of the lions of the day and had brought to Washington steel pens made by Joseph Gillott.

It will be noticed in the beginning of Mr. Fairfield's letter how close and intimate was the life. He might have "messed" with "Old Bullion," Col. Benton, but did not like the appearance of the house. He meets Judge White, Senator from Tennessee, the implacable foe of Jackson and leader of an opposition to him. He meets John Bell, Speaker of the 22d Congress, soon to resign—a person of fine imposing presence and great

natural ability. He messes with Buchanan whom he admires, and has apparently unusual opportunities for close acquaintance with the men of the times, as is indicated in the letters which follow.



## JOHN FAIRFIELD'S LETTERS

### Arrives in Washington

Washington, Dec. 4th, 1835.

Dear Wife,

Here I am at Washington—and embrace the first moment to write you a line. We arrived here last evening Thursday as we calculated. Our passage a part of the way was not very comfortable in consequence of the extreme cold. From Boston our progress has been altogether effected by steam—and a part of the way at the rate of 26 miles an hour. My health is good—and Oh, how I long to hear the same of the rest of you at home. I reproach myself that I did not make you promise to write me by the next mail after I left, and so on every mail afterward for an indefinite time. I had no idea before being put to the trial, how hard it would be for me to quit you and ours. But I need say nothing in regard to this—you know what I feel—and I know whose sympathies mingle with mine.

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On our way, we fell in with Smith<sup>1</sup> from own State—Bean, Hubbard, Hill, Burns & Pierce<sup>2</sup> from N. Hampshire and several members from other States with whom we came on. We arrived here about 8 o'clock, and the N. Y. members having left one of their number in charge of the baggage ran up to the Capitol to secure seats—most of them having been taken before, many of the members having been here a week. With the N. H. members I went up this morning by daylight, and selected a seat from among those that were left which I think almost as good as any in the house. It is in the 3d row from the Speaker's chair and a corner box. I will by and by make a little diagram of the house and show you where I and all the other great folks are located.

When we got to Baltimore, whom should we meet but Parson Clark—and on his saying that he was going on to Washington in the car with us I asked him as a matter of joke whether he was going to put in his claims for Chaplain to Congress, when what should he do but hand out letters of recommendation from gentlemen in B. to members of Congress, nominating him for that place. He did not ask for my vote.

Tell Mr. Haines that probably Polk will be elected Speaker on the first ballot—Mason having most magnanimously declined being a candidate. The news here from Mississippi

leaves it very doubtful as to what is the result of their elections. Gayarre, the Louisianan Senator, has resigned. This is too bad, considering the present state of the Senate. You must now begin to take some interest in politics—or you perhaps won't like all my letters. Many of them, however, will answer for you and Mr. Haines both. Do write often. Do let the boys carry out the plan I laid for them—keep a diary—it will not only delight me, but be an excellent exercise for them. I told Judge Ruggles of it, and he said he should write home and make his children do the same. We called on the President today. He is in fine health and spirits. I think his message will not breathe much of a spirit of war.

Yours ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>F. O. J. Smith of Portland, a prominent railroad builder, business man and political leader, a Democrat.

<sup>2</sup>Franklin Pierce, afterward President of the U. S. It is freely said that had Fairfield not died untimely, his position of prominence would have made him President rather than Pierce. He was the superior of Pierce in every way.

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### Seeks Lodging

Washington, Dec. 5th, Saturday.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday we called on the President, Mr. Woodbury and Amos Kendall. Today we have been running most of the time to obtain a boarding place. Have examined a good many rooms etc., but do not get exactly suited. At Mrs. Harbaugh's, there was an excellent mess—say Messrs. Grundy & Robinson of the Senate, Mann of N. Y., Johnson of Ten., and Conner of N. C. of the House—but then, the best rooms had been taken—and she wanted us to go into the third story and pay \$10—this was up near half a mile from the Capitol.

Afterward we looked at Dawson's rooms on the hill near the Capitol. There we found Col. Benton', and would have been right glad to have become his messmates—but then the house appeared to be old, and cracky—and the furniture in good keeping with it—so we couldn't go that, and passed on. Our next place was Mrs. Hill's on Pennsylvania Avenue—a pretty good location—good house—good furniture—fine looking, smart landlady—and a pretty good mess of New Yorkers and Connecticuters—but, then, the price was too much—\$12. After our leaving, however, she concluded to come down to \$10,

but, then, she had in the meantime taken in an opposition man with his wife—so what we shall now do I don't know—we would rather prefer being with those of the same political complexion. I'll let you know more about it on Monday, till then we shall probably remain where we are, at Gadsby's.

Tomorrow is Sunday and I shall go to hear Mr. Palfrey. There are several candidates for the Chaplaincy of the House, among the rest Rev. Mr. Clark, Mr. Fisk, editor of the Reformer, Boston, Mr. Stockton, an eloquent man who was Chaplain year before last. After throwing my first vote to Mr. Palfrey, our Unitarian minister here, as a matter of compliment, I think I shall go for Mr. Stockton who is a Methodist.

Today I have looked a little at the Capitol and found—upon the whole I have hardly time or room for description. Having at least six months before me I hope I shall be enabled to give you some definite ideas of matters and things here, so no more at present.

Your husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, a great figure in the Senate for thirty years, author of "Thirty Years View"; duellist; orator; soldier; editor; father-in-law of Fremont and the great representative of the Newer West in ante-bellum days.

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### Senator Smith's Sudden Death

Washington, Dec. 6.

Dear Ann,

Last night about 1 o'clock, I believe, Mr. Smith, a Senator from Connecticut died. His death has been most sudden and melancholy. He came on in the steamboat with us, having his wife and I believe a daughter with him. He appeared in perfect health and laughed and talked much. I have not learned the particulars, but believe he had an apoplectic fit. He was a large, fleshy man, dressed in the old style, having white top boots, small clothes, etc., and having his head profusely powdered.

We are still at Gadsby's. Hope to get a boarding place tomorrow. Mr. S. and I occupy the same chamber, having all the time, night and day, a good coal fire. It is very comfortable, but accompanied with the inconvenience of having everything in the chamber covered with dust.

I have met with, and been introduced to many of the great men. Judge White called on the President while we were there. Their meeting was civil, but I suspect there was but

little of that cordiality that used to characterize their intercourse. Mr. Bell also I have met. He is a fine looking man, rather handsome, but it is said he does not feel well. I have no doubt Polk will take his place as Speaker.

Ever yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**Pays \$8 Week for Room Including Fire and Two Candles**

Washington, Dec. 8, 1835.

Dear Wife,

I am now writing on my own table in my own chamber, in the fourth story of Mrs. S. F. Hill's house, Pennsylvania Ave. After examining most of the houses, messes, etc., etc., I concluded upon the whole to come here with Judge Ruggles and Col. Hall from Maine. Mr. Shepley has not yet determined whether to come or not, tho I think he will.

The prices are graduated from \$12 to \$8. My room being in the 4th story and rather small, I pay \$8 a week. This includes a fire, and lights, to wit two spermaceti candles and a wood fire—which I think I shall prefer to coal which some of the boarders have. Our mess at present is composed of 4 from N. York, 3 from Connecticut and 3 from Maine, to wit: Messrs. Doubleday (who by the way, is as dark as night), Phelps, Hunt and Leonard from N. York; Messrs. Toucey<sup>1</sup>, Wildman and ————— from Conn. There is room for 3 or 4 more, and I believe Madame is now expecting beside Mr. Shepley, Mr. Polk, the Speaker.

The house has an excellent reputation, and judging from first impressions, the mess a good one. They are all good democrats and true except Hunt from N. Y., who is an anti-mason, and on the whole perhaps a little inclined to go with us.

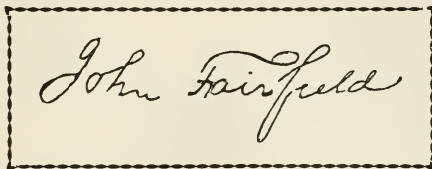
The waiter has just popped his head into the door and says he must have my letter, as he is going to the P. O. The mail I believe closes at 9 o'clock in the evening. I will write again tomorrow. Love to all.

Your husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

I enclose you my card. Should be very happy to have you call on me soon. You will perceive I have had a fac simile engraved. I have regretted it since I ordered it, as it affords fa-

ILITIES to those disposed to counterfeit. Hope I shall hear from you tomorrow, I have not time to read this over, etc., etc.



<sup>1</sup>Isaac Toucey of Hartford, Ct., was quite a "big gun" for the young Maine Congressman to meet, altho this was his first term in the House. He became Governor of Connecticut, U. S. Senator, Attorney General of the U. S., Secretary of the Navy under Pres. Buchanan. It was he who came under such disfavor among the republicans who charged him with active sympathy with the South just prior to secession, by sending the war ships of the U. S. to foreign stations where they could not be quickly recalled to serve against seceding states. He died in 1869.

### Attends a Funeral

Washington, Dec. 9, 1835.

Dear Wife,

Today we have done nothing but attend the funeral of Mr. Smith, Senator from Connecticut. The order of procession I enclose you. The carriages in procession extended I should think near half a mile, furnished and all other expenses, amounting, it is said to about \$2000, paid by the Government.

The services on the occasion were performed by a clergyman of this City as I was told by the name of Digby or Higby or something like it. His address was eloquent and excellent, and was delivered in the Senate Chamber before the Senators and members of the House, who filled the lower part of the hall, the ladies with their husbands and gallants, the gallery.

I have been to see President Jackson twice—the last time was on Monday evening after the election of Speaker, Printer, etc. The old gentleman was highly gratified at the result, and in speaking of it was highly animated, giving us some slight specimens of his eloquence. He is a warm-hearted, honest old man as ever lived, and possesses talents too of the first order, notwithstanding what many of our Northern folks think of him. He talks about all matters freely and fearlessly without any disguise, and in the straightforward honesty and simplicity of style and manner which you would expect from what I have before said of him. I wish some of our good folks North

could hear him talk upon a subject in which he was interested,—say the French question, which he talked about on Monday evening. I think their opinions would undergo some change.

Mr. Shepley has come to our mess tonight, so we now stand four from Maine, Shepley<sup>1</sup>, Ruggles<sup>2</sup>, Hall<sup>3</sup>, Fairfield; four from N. York, Leonard, Hunt, Doubleday and Lee, and 3 from Conn., Toucey, Phelps and Wildman.

### To Buy Bed Cord for Fire Escape

We have just had the cry of fire, which I believe turns out to be in Alexandria, but I am determined on one thing, and that is to buy me two bed cords, connect them, and have them lying near my window constantly, so that in case of fire, I may have some way of escape. Lodging in the 4th story, it seems to me imprudent to be without something of the kind. I shall attend to it tomorrow.

I rec'd. a line from Mr. Haines today, and was shocked to hear of the sudden illness and probable death of Cousin Marianne Storer. But it is a consolation to know that she is prepared for death, and that an exchange of worlds will be with her but an exchange of cares, vexation, sorrow and death for rich and ever enduring happiness at the right hand of her God.

I was introduced today to Bellamy Storer, member from Cincinnati, Ohio, to whom I communicated the above. He is a cousin to Marianne.

Dear Wife, give my love to the children. Tell Walter I shall write him tomorrow if I can, and to George very soon. Kiss Sarah and Augusta for me, and tell all of them if they want to please Father, they must be good children, do as Ma wants them to do, and try to help her all they can.

Love to Sister Martha and all inquiring friends.

Your affectionate husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Ether Shepley (dem.), Saco, who was a U. S. Senator for 1833-36, resigned to accept an appointment to the Supreme Court.

<sup>2</sup>John Ruggles, U. S. Senator (dem.), Thomaston, 1835-41.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Hall (dem.), Camden, member of House in the 24th Congress, 1835-37.



WILLIAM P. HAINES  
John Fairfield's Law Partner in Saco





**The Death of a Messmate**

Washington, Dec. 10, 1835.

My Dear Wife,

In the forenoon I wrote to Walter, not intending to write again today, but an event has occurred which induces me to write again.

When I came from the Capitol at 3 o'clock I was astonished to learn that Judge Wildman, one of our Messmates, was dying. How sudden, and awful. When we came here, he was afflicted as we thought with a slight cold, by which, however, he was confined to his room.

Yesterday he wanted to go out and attend the funeral of his Colleague, Mr. Smith, but was dissuaded from it by one of our boarders, Mr. Hunt. He sat up last evening and wrote letters home, and no one dreamed of his being dangerously ill.

Thus things remained until we were met with the astounding news on returning today that he was dying. He is somewhat advanced in life, perhaps from 60 to 65 or more, and appeared to have a very feeble constitution, one that was incapable of resisting a severe attack of any disorder. It is hard to realize the fact that he is gone, so late was he among us talking about and taking an interest in the things of the day. Such events are calculated to impress us strongly with a sense of our frailty, and admonish us to have our houses set in order, and be ready whenever our Master calls. Mr. Kane of the Senate, I understand, is also sick in this City and is not expected to recover. Why these numerous deaths in the national delegation I cannot tell. It seems otherwise to be healthy. As for myself I hardly ever enjoyed better health, and such is apparently the case with Mr. Shepley and Mr. Ruggles, except a slight cold.

The House adjourned over today until Monday next. What I shall do with myself tomorrow and next day I have not concluded on—perhaps I shall go out to Georgetown, or down to Alexandria.

Ever yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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**Anxious About the Home Folks**

Washington, Dec. 12, 1835.

Dear Wife,

It is now 2 o'clock and I have just returned from attending the funeral of our messmate Judge Wildman. I wish I

could stop here in the record of melancholy occurrences, but am obliged to say that last night another Senator died at his lodgings, Mr. Kane of Illinois. Three deaths within the first week. It is really awful. But I pray that you may not be alarmed on my account, there is really no reason for it.

In regard to these deaths that have occurred, there have been special causes in operation, applying peculiarly to those individuals, and not to all of us. Judge Wildman was a very feeble old gentleman, having no strength of constitution, and besides suffered under mismanagements. His friends here advised him to have a physician, but he declined; said he knew his own constitution best, and what would be best for him, and procured a considerable laudanum. This he diluted and had it by him to drink. Now altho I do not think he drank enough to poison him, yet I believe that he stimulated the vital powers to a very great degree, which was followed, as it always is by exhaustion and consequent reaction, and in this case the reaction was so powerful that his constitution was unable to resist it, and he sank.

In the case of Mr. Kane who died last night, it seems that he has been sick at home of a fever which has been pretty extensively prevailing in Illinois, from which he had not entirely recovered when he came here. The fatigue of the journey, and a cold added, caused a relapse which terminated his life.

Mr. Smith's case I believe was one of apoplexy, which may happen to fleshy people, those of plethoric habits, at any time or in any place.

I allude to these circumstances that you may not be alarmed. The fact is that the City is very healthy, and the members generally in good health and for myself, I have seldom been better.

Mr. Palfrey, the Unitarian minister, performed the funeral services today. He was brief but impressive, and I think left a good impression.

I look for the boys' letters with some interest and wonder why I have not received one before. Daily memoranda of events not in the family merely, but in the town, etc., will possess a deep interest to me, or as John Pierson used to say:

“A faithful list of Saco annals,  
Will warm me more than all my flannels.”

Your Husband

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

By Mr. Thatcher I regret to learn the death of our Cousin Mary Ann Storer. I believe if anybody is prepared for death, she was. She always appeared to me to possess great purity of heart and purpose, and I think she is in Heaven.

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### Another Son Born To the Fairfields

Washington, Dec. 14, 1835.

My Dear Wife,

I wept for joy at the information just received from home. You are comfortable, and I am the father of another fine boy. This is another link added to the chain that binds our souls in love, a love from which I have derived more pure and unalloyed happiness than from any other earthly source, a love that I find daily increasing and strengthening in my heart. There, having indulged in this ebullition of feeling, the overflowing of, I trust, an honest heart, I will endeavor hereafter to be more sober and fashionable. I cannot write more at present.

Yours in the depths of a Husband's love.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The "Bill of Fare"

Washington, Dec. 15, 1835.

Dear Wife,

I remain in the enjoyment of good health and spirits. The change in mode of living does not, that I perceive, affect me injuriously. Three o'clock comes round each day without my feeling any more hungry than usual. Our fare is, for breakfast, coffee, tea, green and black, beefsteak, mutton cutlet, sausage meat, hominy, buckwheat cakes, or flap-jacks, "corn cakes," or biscuits, flour biscuits, etc., etc. Dinner, roast beef, boiled turkey with oyster sauce, boiled ham, roast duck, no gravys except what is in the dish, which to me is a great deprivation, puddings, tarts and apples.

This has been the most common bill of fare so far, and it is as good as I want, indeed I as usual make my dinner from one dish, except that I first take a small plate of soup, which I forgot to mention, by way of an anti-eat-voraciously-appetizer.

I cannot say that I like their cooking—things are too fleshy—they use too little salt, and regard fashion and gentility at the expense of real wholesome substance and gusto. That is a very homely sentence I must confess, if it is correct, of which I much doubt, but I have not seen a dictionary since I left home.

Our landlady Mrs. Hill is an English woman and a widow of about 45. She is pretty good looking, smart, active and pretty generally keeping her eye on the main chance. She has two daughters, one of them married to a Mr. Wright, who has gone out to Texas to fight. The other I have only met in the entry. She looks like her mother, plays on the pianoforte and all that. Of our mess I can say nothing in particular at present. They are very clever, so so sort of folks, not remarkable for anything that I know of. Doct. Lee from N. Y. has his wife with him. We see nothing of her except at meal times. She is, or was, a Quakeress, is about 45 or 50, pretty fleshy, beautiful complexion, skin as smooth and fair as a child. She looks so fresh and healthy and good-tempered and intelligent, that I like to look at her, and think I shall try by and by to get acquainted with her.

Mr. Doubleday, also from the State of N. Y. and who was preceded in Congress by Mr. Day, is about as black as a starless night, and hair so thick all over his head, and down almost to his eyes, that you would think you could hardly draw a garden rake thru it. He is I think a man of good sense, and often disposed to be facetious. Mr. Hunt from N. Y. is an opposition man, very tall, slender, feeble and vain. Our mess are rather inclined to dislike him, tho I do not.

Doct. Phelps from Conn. is a man of good sense, and appears very well in all respects. Mr. Leonard from N. Y. was a Printer & Editor, I believe, of respectable talents and appearance. Mr. Toucey of Hartford, Conn., is a lawyer and very likely man. Of the Maine delegation I will say nothing now.

I am writing this letter in my seat in the House while the election of Sergeant-at-Arms is going on, leaving off only occasionally to put in my vote as the box comes round. We have already tried four times, without making a choice, and I fear may have to try many times more, there being a great many candidates. I voted the 2 first times for John A. Webber, and he having fallen off in his votes, I have gone the 2 last times for John T. Sullivan who was once nominated as Director for the U. S. Banks by the President and rejected by the Senate.

The members wear their hats, and talk and buzz while the business is going on so that much of the time it sounds like a town meeting, the Speaker only appearing to attend to the business of the House.

The pronunciation I find here somewhat different from ours, for instance the Speaker says cheer for chair and Clark for Clerk. It is also very fashionable to chew words, and when d u come together as in duty, durance, etc., they pronounce them juty, jurance, etc. Oh, I despise it—it is sheer affectation, and their style of oratory, too, is peculiar. The speakers all have abundance of action, if not the most graceful, many of them appearing as if cutting wood. Their style of speaking is declamatory, such as you would expect to see in times of great excitement, but unsuited to the sober business of legislation.

It is now 3 o'clock, and I suppose the House will adjourn in a few minutes. I therefore close this long and I fear tedious letter. Finding that Sullivan fell off the last time, I voted for Dorsey who they say is the best man politically. After going home, and after dinner I shall write to Mr. Haines if I can, if not I shall write tomorrow. I feel under much obligation to him for his kind attentions. Love to all.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Fairfield and Col. Johnson of Kentucky

Washington, Dec. 17, 1835.

My Dear Wife,

How do you do? How does our dear little son? Who or what does he look like? What his complexion, his eyes, &c.? How much did he weigh? How do the children like him? &c. &c. &c. Be kind enough to write me all about it, and I hope by the time this reaches you, you will be able to write, though I would by no means have you act prematurely and in imprudent haste in trying to get about.

Today we had quite a flourishing debate in the House merely on the motion of Col. Johnson of Kentucky<sup>1</sup> to supply the Secretary of War and some of the bureaus in that department with Congressional documents. Mr. Wise of Virginia<sup>2</sup> seized upon it as a pretext for abusing the administration, and

making a display of his eloquence & imitations of John Randolph. "He is no great shakes" and might have been very easily answered by no greater man than your humble servant. But I must keep cool, and try to be a sober, industrious and useful member, rather than a meteor, flashing and expiring. Old Col. Johnson answered him, but it was rather "small potatoes."

I like, however, the plainness and honest simplicity of the Col., though I don't think him the greatest man in the world. Mr. Patton of Virginia also made a speech, passable and that's all. He doesn't know which side he is on now, but I hope he & Wise will both find themselves past all redemption before long, on the side of the opposition—their friendship is more to be dreaded than their enmity.

It is strange that I can't get a newspaper from Maine—they are the impolitest folks imaginable way down east. Ask Mr. Haines to ask Condon to send me a "Democrat" during the session of Congress. The Eastern Argus, daily, is to be supplied me by the House. The Age I have sent for.

I think it would have been well for us to have acknowledged the receipt of letters with their dates. Now I have written some one of the family every day since Thursday the 3d. day of December i. e., 14 including this—saying nothing about two on the same day. Love to all.

Your husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Richard Mentor Johnson, soldier, politician, Vice-President of the United States from 1837 to 1841. Member of the House from 1806 to 1813. Soldier in the War of 1812 and a colonel in William Henry Harrison's division of Kentucky riflemen. It is said that he shot and killed the great chief Tecumseh. In the House in 1814-15, elected to the U. S. Senate in 1819, served as Senator to 1829, and went back to the House in 1829, where he served until 1837. He was put on the ticket with Van Buren in 1835, but failed of election, thru no choice. The choice went to the Senate and dragged along, but Johnson was elected finally. He was a candidate for President in the Convention of 1844, but was defeated. Gov. Fairfield gives an interesting side-light on Col. Johnson.

<sup>2</sup>Henry A. Wise of Virginia, famous in American politics and history, his name still perpetuated in his descendants. He was a great political boss in his day, Congressman, minister to Brazil, Governor of Virginia. One of his last acts was signing John Brown's death warrant in the Harper's Ferry raid. Wise opposed immediate secession in the Virginia Convention of 1861. He became a Major-General in the Confederate Army. He wrote a history entitled "Seven Decades of the Union." He died in 1876.

## Calls on Cabinet Minister and Mends His Trousers

Washington, Dec. 19, 1835.

My dear Wife,

It seems you have good sleighing, and I suppose a plenty of bitter cold weather. Here the weather is about as cold as we have it in Maine the middle of Oct. About a week ago, however, we had a little snow in the night, say  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch, but it very quickly disappeared in the morning. I have worn my sur-tout every day but one, and then I found my wrapper too warm.

Today Col. Hall, myself and Mr. Leonard took a hack and went around leaving our cards, that is to say, with Mr. Van Buren<sup>1</sup>, Mr. Cass<sup>2</sup>, Mr. Kendall<sup>3</sup>, Mr. Butler<sup>4</sup> and Mr. Dickerson<sup>5</sup>. All we do is to drive up to the door, and without getting out, send our cards in by the driver. This, you see, places us in the way of invitations, and for myself I feel very much inclined to see & hear whatever is to be seen & heard in this great American Babylon I had almost called it. Mr. Chas. Cutts has called to see me at my lodgings, and your Uncle Richard at the House. I intend soon to call on them again. But after all, I cannot find here a New England winter evening with all its domestic and social accompaniments—the closed shutters, the brisk fire, the table & light & books, the familiar and pleasant chit-chat, the plain fare of an apple & nuts, the unsophisticated honesty and bluntness, and absence of what is merely artificial, &c. &c.

We have just had news of a dreadful conflagration in N. Y.—they say that between 20 and 30 millions of property has been destroyed, but I suppose you will get all the particulars before this reaches you, so I add no more.

If you wish to be very inquisitive and ask me about my small affairs, I suppose I must answer. So, let's see—since I left home I have bought me a new hat, a silk stock, and a pair of overshoes, bought them all here. I have had occasion 3 times to use my tailoring apparatus which you with so much wise forethought provided me with. My suspenders gave out twice & needed a good deal of stitching over, and once my black trousers gave out at the meeting of the four seams by tearing, and not knowing that I had any cloth scraps in my trunk until afterward, I darned the rent, and then sewed a piece of tape across the seams to hold all fast, and if I didn't have the pantaloons as handsome as they were before, I believe I left them much better able to endure a strain.

Today my washerwoman called for her pay, and after some little dickering with her as to prices, I agreed to give her 6 cents a piece, or fippenny bit as they call it here, not counting as many dickeys as there are shirts, but paying 6 cents a piece for each extra one, which is in my case today 3. I believe she washes very well, but now I think on't for the first time, she has not brought back the bag in which the clothes were carried away. That perhaps is a little worse than Mr. Shepley said would happen to me, that is, that they would, in spite of directions, wash the bag itself and charge a fippenny bit for it.

What do you say to the name of Hampden? If you don't like that, suggest some other.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Martin Van Buren, Secretary of State under Jackson; Vice-President in 1835.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis Cass, the distinguished American statesman, was Secretary of War in Jackson's Cabinet.

<sup>3</sup>Amos Kendall of Kentucky, Postmaster General.

<sup>4</sup>Benjamin F. Butler of New York, Attorney General, succeeding Lewis Cass as Secretary of War.

<sup>5</sup>Mahlon Dickerson of New Jersey, Secretary of the Navy.

### A Metamorphosed Congressman!

Washington, Dec. 21, 1835.

My Dear Mrs. F.

It will be three weeks tomorrow since I left home and however ungallant it may seem I must acknowledge that the time has flown to me, somewhat swiftly. It seems but yesterday that I left you, so fresh are all the circumstances of that moment remaining upon my mind, nay, may I not say engraven upon the tablets of my heart. And yet how crowded with events have been those short three weeks—events interesting not to us alone, but to millions & millions of beings—to the nation and the world. Happy shall we be if the instruction dropped from the wings of time in his rapid flight has contributed aught to our improvement—has made us more confiding in the goodness of our Heavenly Father, more grateful for benefits bestowed, more earnestly desirous to attain to the moral purity of Him who was given to be our pattern; more fit for the society of the spirits of the just made perfect in Heaven.

Today being Sunday, and having no pew in the Unitarian House, I concluded to attend services at the Capitol. Mr. Theophilus Fisk preached—a Universalist and former, if not pres-



ent, editor of the Republic in Boston. He has a very pretty poetical style of writing, abounds in figures, piles on figures, and some of them very good ones, too. Has abundance of action, even to theatricals, a tolerable voice, but he is wanting in what we homespun folks away down east are apt to consider somewhat essential, to wit, ideas. He is a candidate for the Chaplaincy of the Senate—what his prospect is I know not. We have not chosen one yet for the House, and I don't know when we shall. Clark has been busy as the "—— in a gale of wind," as the sailors say, but I doubt whether he is going ahead very fast. I suspect that when we do choose, Stockton, a Methodist, will be the man.

We have now added to our number at Mrs. Hill's, Mr. Niles, the new Senator from Connecticut, and Mr. Polk, Speaker of the House, & Lady, tho Mr. Polk does not mess with us. I continue to like our house very well, with one exception, and that is my smoky fireplace. So, if you ever discover any tears on my letters, you must not suppose I am unhappy or give me credit for any extraordinary degree of tenderness, but you will attribute it simply to Smoke, the whole Smoke, and nothing but the Smoke. I keep hearing every day about a grate and coal, but they don't come, and I am not sorry, for this coal is vile stuff in some respects. It gives us heat, to be sure, but buries us in its ashes, and yet it teaches one moral lesson for which it should have credit—on examining anything in your chamber where coal is burnt you cannot but be ready to exclaim, "We are dust."

Mr. Hunt, one of our boarders who is a Whig (instead of an anti-mason as I thought) has made a speech in the House, and you can't think what a metamorphosis it has produced. Before, he spoke like a mouse in a cheese, and didn't seem to have courage enough to fight a sheep; now, he talks loud, has much to say, drinks porter at dinner and wine after it, and is so elated, that I shouldn't wonder if he swelled to the size of a gallon pot, being now not much larger than one of Deacon Gray's legs, though at least six feet high. He is very far from being a favorite with any, and to Mr. Hale and Judge Ruggles he is exceedingly obnoxious. The rest of our boarders, so far as I can judge, are capital fellows—Mr. Toucey from Connecticut in particular. Mr. Doubleday is queer as anybody's folks, has a sober face, a sly eye and much humor.

Dear Ann, when am I to hear from you again? No letters today, but I suppose it is in consequence of the great fire at New York, as we have no mail from there or beyond.

Love to all.

Your husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Objects to Abolition Fusses

Washington, Dec. 22, 1835.

Dear Wife,

I thank you for your note recd. today. I rejoice that you are getting along so comfortably, and pray for a continuance of your progress. I cannot say so much for my own comfort as heretofore, for I have been troubled for 2 or 3 nights past with a pain in my foot on the outer edge of the right foot, just back of the little toe joint. Last night, however, it jump'd at one time to the bone above the heel and there continued during the remainder of the night. By day it is less painful. It has now commenced again in the old place, and gives me some trouble. It causes no swelling, nor is the flesh sore, so I apprehend it must, of course, be in the bone. I have taken some corrective powder, but it does no good, so I shall try to "tough it out," i. e., "grin and bear it."

Since writing to you last we have added to our mess Messrs. Niles and Norwell, the new Senators from Connecticut, and the almost a State, Michigan, and Mr. Polk, the Speaker, & wife, who live by themselves though under the administration of Mrs. Hill.

We have had another exciting debate in the House today upon the subject of slavery in the Dist. of Col. It appears to me if the abolitionists, or those who get up these petitions, many of them at least, knew what mischief they were doing, that they would abstain. The South will not have that question meddled with, and if we persist in attempting it, a dissolution of the Union must follow.

We had some pretty able speeches today, particularly one from Ingersoll of Philadelphia. Wise has also been letting off the steam again. Among other things he said, in answer to some compliments on the Ladies by Granger of N. Y., that if ever there was a devil incarnate, when she was a devil, it was a woman. How this suited the long row of ladies in the gallery

I don't know, but it was followed by a considerable rustling of the silk.

I enclose you a plan of the Hall of the House of Representatives, which has just been published. My position, you will perceive, is in one wing, a pretty good one for hearing, as you may face almost the whole House, and the inconvenience from the proximity of the door, has in some measure been obviated by a screen which the Doorkeeper has caused to be made. The back seats are considered the poorest, it being difficult there to hear the speakers. The circles, as I believe I have before stated, are marble pillars about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, and take it all in all, I suspect it is the most splendid room, perhaps I might say, in the world.

My twinges are so importunate in demanding attention that I believe I must stop writing. What shall I do for my poor foot?

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The Admission of Michigan

Washington, Dec. 24, 1835.

Dear Wife,

The Senate yesterday chose the Revd. Mr. Higbee their Chaplain, the same who performed funeral services at the burial of Senator Smith. The House has just balloted for a Chaplain, without making a choice. Mr. Comstock stood highest, having 50 odd; Clark next, having 33; Stockton—the eloquent Stockton—31; Mr. Palfrey 8, &c., &c. The boxes are being carried round again, I believe I shall vote for Palfrey once more—Stockton is my second choice.

The first hour of this morning's session was spent in discussing the question what committee the subject of Michigan's application to be admitted into the Union should be submitted to. We had 2 or 3 short speeches from Ohio and among others, one from Bellamy Storer. He is a pretty good speaker and has considerable enthusiasm for a Northern man. Lane of Indiana also gave a speech. He is, they say, a real screamer, but was pretty moderate today. I have taken a lurch in favor of Michigan—Mr. Norwell, one of her Senators, boards with us, and is about my size, how much influence this has had on my opinion I can't say; in justice to myself, however, I should say that I have read the appeal of Michigan to the people of the U. S. in

which she sets forth her claims & the foundations of them particularly in regard to the question of her boundary.

The 2d vote for Chaplain has just been declared—no choice—Comstock stands ahead—Clark, I believe, fell off, though I did not distinctly understand the Clerk. The boxes are going round again. I shall now vote for Stockton.

Third ballot declared—no choice again. All fell off, but Comstock & Stockton—the former ahead. Box is going round again. Oh, how my foot twinges. By the way, I found a medicine last night which gave me some relief, and that was no more nor less than a long walk. After my return the pain ceased, and I have felt but little of it till within an hour. After dinner I'll have another walk. Tonight I go to the President's, and tomorrow Doct. Mason & I have agreed to walk to Georgetown, and then what do you think I mean to do? I'll tell you. I mean to ascertain what you & I & Doct. Mason & wife can get boarded for next winter with as many of our children as we have a mind to take with us, keeping a horse & chaise with which we could ride each day to the Capitol, or not keeping a horse but going back & forth in the omnibuses which go hourly. The distance is only about three miles. I understand we can get boarded there pretty cheap compared with City board. What do you say to that?

The result of another ballot is declared & no choice—Comstock 83, Stockton 73, and all the rest but a few apiece, poor Clark 5. He sits in the Ladies' Gallery looking like a "motherless colt." You must mind how you repeat what I say about Clark considering how my friend, Amos Clark, is connected with him.

It is now within 5 minutes of the time of adjournment, and so I close.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. Stockton is elected, 1 majority.

Washington, Dec. 26, 1835.

Dear Wife,

The Eastport, Calais, Bangor & Thomaston papers have been sent to me gratuitously, while the Saco Democrat, for which I expect to pay, is not sent to me. I attribute it to the irregularity of the mails and not to Mr. Condon's forgetfulness.

I would thank you, however, to ask Mr. Haines to remind Mr. Condon of my request.

My letters are not very valuable nor are they designed to be. I do not pretend to act the philosopher or scholar—to make profound remarks or write elegant essays, but simply to chat with my family as I would if I were present with them. And in doing this, if I contribute in any degree to relieve you from the tedium of daily cares, and to excite a single pleasurable emotion, I am only doing that which contributes essentially to my own happiness.

Yesterday Doct. Mason and I walked out to Georgetown and back before dinner. I was much pleased with my jaunt, though there were many things to be seen of an unsightly character. The land all the way between Washington and Georgetown lies entirely uncultivated and the most of it unfenced. The houses, except here and there, are small, old, ill-fashioned, and out of repair. At Georgetown we found quite a city—buildings large—streets wide and paved, etc. But in the lower part of it towards the river, where the merchants, formerly, and what remains of them, now occupy, exhibits a most desolate and melancholy appearance. A large portion of the stores are unoccupied, and those that are appeared to be occupied by the small fry, a sort of nuts, gingerbread and egg-pop gentlemen. The back part of the city, however, on the high ground, is very pleasant. There are many very fine houses and much more taste is displayed in laying out the grounds and decorating with trees and shrubbery than I have seen anywhere in this city. I did not visit the College, the nunnery or anything else of a public character, but the canal, the locks of which are worth examining. I think very shortly, whenever we can steal a day or two from the press of public business, I shall get on board of the canal boat and go up to Harper's Ferry. We did not have an opportunity to make any inquiries about board out there, but I think there is so little doubt about our being accommodated to our liking, that you may if you please put on your bonnet and shawl.

Last evening Mr. Shepley, myself and Doct. Mason and wife spent at Mr. Charles Cutts', and I must say very pleasantly, too. Doct. Mason and Mr. Cutts played cards, Mrs. Cutts talked till all was blue, and Mr. Shepley and Miss Stras (I believe) talked till all was bluer. He is a capital hand to entertain the ladies and enjoys a little social chit-chat much. I beat Stephen a game at chess and then Miss Stras beat me, it was

however through the accidental loss of my Queen. Miss Stras gave us some very good tunes on the pianoforte, and a few very pretty Scotch songs. She is I presume a little over blooming 16—say 45—but that you know was of no consequence to us old married men. She is a sister of Mrs. Cutts and I think it likely that you have heard of her. Next week I mean to go up and pass an evening at your Uncle Richard's.

Thinking that it might afford you some amusement at home, I have permitted Doct. Fowler a Phrenologist to examine my head and lay down the results of his examination on a phrenological chart, which I have enclosed with a document and shall send by the same mail which carries this letter under direction to Mr. Haines. Let me know where you think he has succeeded and where he has failed. He occupies the same room with Brown, the profile cutter, and it is really very amusing to sit, and hear the result of his examination of heads. He speaks right out plainly, and if a man has no conscience, or is conceited and vain, he says so. There are various opinions entertained of him and the science, but he has been remarkably successful, and has made, they say, \$2000 here in 2 or 3 months. I wish I could send you my profile but I am afraid to try it. I think it would be injured in the mail, and shall therefore probably retain it until I return home, and perhaps I may add to it those of the Pres. Mr. Van Buren and Amos Kendall.

We have two more added to our mess but not permanently, Doct. Dubois and wife from N. Y.,—just married. There, my letter is long enough—perhaps too long for your patience. You may not however expect such long ones by and by, when I have something more to do in committee, and when I begin to work on my reports, which I have not done yet.

Give my love to our Dear Children and all the rest.

Your Husband

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. Doct. Fowler never saw me or heard of me before, and never was in our part of the country.

### A Voice from the Ladies' Gallery

Washington, Dec. 28, 1835.

Dear Wife,

We have just had a sermon or exhortation from a Quakeress in the Ladies' gallery. While the members were lounging

about, reading newspapers, writing letters, &c., &c., about 20 minutes before the hour of meeting of the House, a female voice came in most sepulchral tones from the gallery. To some it was a source of much merriment, others looked upon her in pity as insane, but all were for permitting her to go on when the Doorkeeper attempted to stop her. I could not distinctly hear all she said, but it appeared to be a religious exhortation or as some would call it a moral one, i. e., "fiat justitia, ruat coelum." If the time would have permitted I suppose she would have applied her principles to the subject of slavery. Her language was good, and were it not for the time, place & circumstances of her address, no one would take her to be insane. Who or what she was I know not.

After the House adjourns I will resume my letter.

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The House has adjourned, the forenoon having been occupied with a discussion of the question of reconsideration of the vote by which the President's message, &c., relating to admission of Michigan was referred to a Select Com., of which J. Q. A.<sup>1</sup> was chairman. We had some very good speeches upon the subject. Adams became a good deal warmed up, and was very sarcastic. Storer, Vinton, Corwin<sup>2</sup>, Lane & others also made speeches—Storer's very good. The House voted to reconsider—myself in the minority.

Ohio, Illinois & Indiana (29) go in a body upon these questions, being directly interested, having all of them stolen from the territory of Michigan. I tho't, therefore, that Ohio starting in the controversy with 29 enlisted in her cause & Michigan none, we ought to let the matter go to the Select Committee tho' Adams' opinions were well known.

I have not yet been in the Senate, except for one moment when they were about adjourning. We meet at the same hour, and new members, they say, are generally very sensitive at being absent when a vote is taken—it certainly is somewhat so with me. I hope, however, to have an opportunity soon, when I will endeavor to give you some account of the members.

I have recd. an invitation from Mrs. Cass to attend a party on Thursday evening, and as a specimen I enclose it to you. Tell Mr. Haines that today the President sent in the nominations of Toucey for C. J. P. P., Barbour for associate hero, and Kendall as P. M. Genl. Speculations are various as to whether they will be confirmed or not. My own impressions are that the

two first, if not all three will, and it is hard to believe that the opposition will be so demented as to reject Kendall, but they may. Today I got nothing by mail, not even a newspaper.

I hope soon to hear from my dear children again. Oh, I wish I could have a smack at certain fat cheeks beneath a pair of black eyes that I know of. I can see Miss Bunch sitting at the table looking sideways, slyly with the one sitting next to her. I would give a week's pay if I could have her here five minutes. Give my love to her, and Walter & George & Augusta and Hampden (?). Of this last name I have not yet heard your decision. I hope for a letter tomorrow.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>John Quincy Adams.

<sup>2</sup>Tom Corwin, born in Kentucky, orator and statesman, Congressman, Senator, Governor of Ohio, celebrated for arraignment of administration for War with Mexico. Secretary of the Treasury under Fillmore.

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### A Picture of Calhoun

Washington, Dec. 29.

Dear Wife,

I sit down to write my daily letter as regularly as if I always had something to say. I set the mill a-going without ever thinking to inquire whether there is anything in the hopper, and it cannot, therefore, be very strange if you sometimes are obliged to take an article a little worse than bran. But I can't well avoid it. It constitutes a part of my daily food, that is, food for the mind and the affections. It seems like going home after the day's work is done and sitting down with my wife, children and friends, and if my imagination is not equal to hearing you talk, I can imagine that the next morning's mail will bring your thoughts if not your voice.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had written thus far last night, when I was sent for to go to the parlor. There I found Saml. Cutts who detained me until after our bag had gone to the P. Office. So I am one day behind-hand. Your letter, my Dear Wife, of the 24th I have just received—4 pages—I thank you heartily—you are deserving of a pension, and if you will send on your petition I will present it, and make a speech in support of it. Your letter touched upon many interesting topics, and afforded me much pleasure, excepting that part relating to your cough, and indeed



even there, though I regret your illness, yet I am pleased to think that you will be honest with me, and when you are really sick let me know it.

To one part of a prior letter of mine I think you had a pretty fair offset. The fact is that many of the ills of life are imaginary, and all of them are much more endurable than they appeared in their approach to us. It is a very happy faculty (and I think I possess something of it) of adapting one's self to the circumstances in which he may be placed for the time being.

I am glad to hear of Grandma, Aunt Mary, Phebe, Lucy, Augusta & others, besides our own family—give my love to them all. The children, you say, call the baby John—that won't do. You know I don't like the Jnrs., & 2ds. & 3ds. I think we had better stick to Hampden.

\* \* \* \* \*

The House adjourned at a little before 4 o'clock, having spent the whole day in discussing the question whether the petitions of the Banks in this District for renewal of charter should be referred to the committee on the Dis. of Columbia or to a Select Com. The vote was against referring it to our Committee, in which I concurred, together with Mr. Townes of Georgia—the rest of our committee voting the other way.)

There is a general impression here that one of these Banks which failed or stopped specie payment during the panic, did it purposely to help Clay & Co.<sup>1</sup> along with their villainous projects, and our friends here are desirous that the matter should be thoroughly probed. Find that it was to be a party vote, & considering that Shepard, our Chairman, was an opposition man, I concluded to vote against its coming to our Committee, though it is not very usual, I believe, for members of Committees so to vote.

I went into the Senate Chamber yesterday for a few minutes, and heard Mr. Calhoun<sup>2</sup> make a short speech introductory to a resolution which he offered proposing an alteration in the Constitution so that the surplus revenues may be divided. He speaks like what he in fact is, a man of talents, but he is far from being an orator. His voice is not very good, and his manners are stiff, and upon this occasion, if the people could have heard him, they would have laughed in his face. He was croaking about the state of affairs, as if we stood upon the very verge of ruin. Really he & many others seem to be laboring under

some strange hallucination of mind, which nothing can remove.  
Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Henry Clay, of course.

<sup>2</sup>John C. Calhoun, the great democratic leader, soon to split with Van Buren and, even then, losing favor with such as Gov. Fairfield.

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### Sees Hope in His Eldest Son

Washington, Dec. 31, 1835.

Dear Wife,

From among over 20,000 volumes, contained in our library, I took out the other day Hazlitt's "Table Talk & Essays." In the chapter "on the ignorance of the learned" I found the following remarks which gave me some pleasure, on the ground of furnishing an apology for "our eldest," and exciting a hope of future progress in some way if not in that of learning.

"A lad with a sickly constitution, and no very active mind, who can just retain what is pointed out to him, and has neither sagacity to distinguish nor spirit to enjoy for himself, will generally be at the head of his class. An idler at school, on the other hand, is one who has high health and spirits, who has the free use of his limbs, with all his wits about him, who feels the circulation of his blood and the motion of his heart, who is ready to laugh and cry in a breath, and who had rather chase a ball or a butterfly, feel the open air in his face, look at the fields or the sky, follow a winding path, or enter with eagerness into all the little conflicts and interests of his acquaintances and friends, than doze over a musty spelling book, repeat barbarous distichs after his master, sit so many hours pinioned to a writing desk, and receive his reward for the loss of time and pleasure in paltry prize medals at Christmas and Midsummer. There is, indeed, a degree of stupidity which prevents children from learning the usual lessons, or ever arriving at these puny Academic honors. But what passes for stupidity is much oftener a want of interest or a sufficient motive to fix the attention, and force a reluctant application to the dry and unmeaning pursuits of school learning. The best capacities are as much above this drudgery, as the dullest are beneath it. Our men of the greatest genius have not been most distinguished for their acquirements at school or at the University."

There, though I think this would be dangerous doctrine to preach to boys, I cannot help thinking there is some truth in it, don't you?

\* \* \* \* \*

So far I wrote last evening. The House has just adjourned, having spent the day in the further discussion of the submission with instructions to a select committee of the petitions of the Banks in this District. We have had speeches today from Thomas of Maryland, J. Q. Adams, Beardsley & Mann of N. Y., Parker of N. J., Wardwell of N. Y. and McKenman of Penn. The latter is a Roarer. He is almost a giant in frame, has a voice corresponding with his body, and flourishes a fist big enough to knock down an ox. Thomas has a middling voice, is a very good looking man and speaks tolerably fluently. But he is vain of his qualities as a peacock of his tail or a nightingale of his voice, and speaks much too often. Beardsley & Mann are both men of good talents & tolerable speakers, tho Beardsley's voice is not very good.

Adams<sup>1</sup> is generally interesting from the circumstance of his age, former high standing and great fund of knowledge which he possesses. He is very often animated and sometimes lashes himself into a great rage, when the top of his head, which is usually white as alabaster, becomes as red as a carnelian. The members generally treat him with much respect, and from some he gets the highest compliments, though from a few he has had some pretty hard cuts.

The debate today resulted in a reference to a select committee with instructions to go into a thorough examination of the affairs of the Banks.

Tonight we go to Mr. Cass's—Messrs. Shepley, Ruggles, Hall & Fairfield have engaged a carriage, as the distance is over a mile & a half, and the weather is somewhat threatening.

Your husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>The Ex-President of the United States.



## CHAPTER III

### THE YEAR 1836, AS FAIRFIELD SAW IT.

Frequent references will be found in Mr. Fairfield's letters of 1836, to affairs with France. Early in that year, the situation was tense and war-like. For several weeks, the United States and France faced each other threateningly. A French fleet was on the seas, preparing to strike our coast. Such was the official announcement in Congress and, for the opening weeks of the session of 1836, debates focused on appropriations for coast-wise fortifications and naval enlargements. Through these, raged all of the personal animosities of the Whig and the Democrat; the Jacksonian and the anti-Jacksonian.

As usual, the centre of the storm was President Jackson. In his annual message of 1835, he had discussed the "aggressions of France upon our American commerce" with emphasis and with a great deal of truth. So forcible was his address upon this point, that France took offence; and, while admitting the justice of the indemnity claims of the United States against France, declined to pay them unless President Jackson offer suitable apologies for the expressions of his message of 1835. This, President Jackson declined to do; and not even his bitterest political enemies, such as Clay and Calhoun, suggested that, as representative of the United States, the President should apologize to any foreign power.

Mr. Fairfield's letters frequently refer, therefore, to the debates of January and February, 1836, upon the resolution providing an outlay of some millions of dollars for fortifications and naval preparations for the war that seemed impending. The digest of debates of the period indicate the intense feeling over the issue. While the anti-Jackson partisan did not as a rule go so far as to suggest that the President apologize, he did not seem inclined to help the President out of his difficulties by providing him any further means of national defence. France's position also seemed a bit puerile. After having voted to pay the indemnity for its spoliations and having appropriated the money in its assembly, it was apparently confusing its

sense of justice with its traditional etiquette and its national pride. Calhoun, with his customary offense against Jackson, opposed any appropriation for national defense. Benton urged a union of all patriots against foreign aggression. The debates enlisted the supreme effort of the best that we had. Daniel Webster, James Buchanan, William C. Preston, whom Fairfield calls "the eminent South Carolinian," Clay and Calhoun all took part.

It will be noticed that, in February, Mr. Fairfield writes his wife jubilantly that he has heard the rumor that England is to mediate in the matter. History proves the truth of Mr. Fairfield's gossip. Great Britain did mediate in the matter. The French fleet of sixty sail, for which America had been watching on every headland, did not come. France ultimately paid the indemnity. The United States did not expend the \$3,000,000 for fortifications and Jackson did not apologize. Thus, the war cloud passed, and the skies cleared, soon, however, to be darkened by other portents, for the financial storm of 1837 was already gathering in the business centres of the land.

As a subject of a purely political and party concern, none is more interesting than the situation in Congress in regard to the expunging resolution of 1836, which reached its culmination in the vote of January 14, 1837, when "expunged" was finally written across the face of this obnoxious resolution. For a year, therefore, this subject of a purely personal and political scope, involving the censure of Gen. Jackson and the removal of that censure, occupied the attention of the master-minds of that day. The debates on it ramify into every department of public policy and search out every fundamental principle of our government.

Another issue of importance came into being in this year, in the debates upon the famous Cherokee Indian removal, which kindled the slumbering sparks of slavery agitation into the fires of civil war, within the lifetime of many who participated therein. The issue itself was apparently insignificant. The removal of the Creek Indians from the State of Georgia had been accomplished by treaty of 1826. This removal sat-

isified the obligations of the United States to Georgia under the compact of 1802. But the same obligations remained with respect to the Cherokee Indians, founded on the same consideration, viz., the cession to the United States of the valuable lands now constituting the States of Alabama and Mississippi. Thirty-five years had passed and the United States had not fulfilled her promises to Georgia with regard to the removal of the Cherokees. Georgia was impatient and importunate, demanding the use and profit of the land to which she claimed a title. Gen. Jackson was anxious to effect the removal of this tribe. Mr. Cass, Secretary of War, seconded him. A commission had investigated and reported in accord with the designs and desires of Gen. Jackson. In 1835-36 a treaty had been made with the Cherokees, who agreed to go West beyond the Mississippi and join a portion of the tribe which had long since journeyed westward.

Advantageous as this treaty seemed to be for all parties thereto, it was intensely and almost successfully opposed in the Senate and finally passed by only one vote. A discontented party of the Cherokees invaded Washington. Mr. Clay, Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Webster opposed the treaty tooth and nail. It was a Southern question, involving the extension of slavery over a great tract of a slave-state. It required only a minority of one-third to defeat it. The South divided on it under the leadership of Calhoun, who was opposed on general principles to any of Gen. Jackson's plans. The same may be said of Mr. Clay. Mr. Webster was opposing it on the fundamental basis of anti-extension of slavery and prospective nullification. The treaty, thus enkindling the fierce fires of the slavery issue, was saved only by the votes of Northern Democrats who refused to take any vote or action, which should cause the South to break with them politically as Democrats or which should stir the issue of slavery, which, as a rule, they believed might slumber forever, if undisturbed by Northern zealots. Among the votes that saved the Cherokee removal treaty were those of Senators Ruggles and Shepley of Maine. The only Northern votes against the treaty were those of Webster and Davis of Massa-

chusetts, Ewing of Ohio, N. P. Tallmage of New York, Tipton of Illinois, Wall of New Jersey and Silas Wright, Jr., that wise and capable farmer-Senator from New York.

This treaty was therefore passed by the fourteen votes of free-state Senators which precisely balanced the fourteen votes of the seven slave-state Senators, who followed the lead of Calhoun. Mr. Benton, sizing up this question in his *Thirty Years' View*, says, "I, who write history, not for applause but for the sake of the instruction which it affords, gather up these dry details from the neglected documents, in which they lie hidden, and bring them forth to the knowledge and consideration of all candid and impartial men, that they may see the just and fraternal spirit in which the free-states then acted towards their brethren of the South. Nor can it fail to be observed, as a curious contrast, that, in the very moment that Mr. Calhoun was seeing cause for Southern alarm, lest the North should abolish slavery in the South, the Northern Senators were extending the area of slavery in Georgia by converting Indian soil into slave soil; and that against strenuous exertions made by himself." How short a space Senator Benton saw into the future!

Again, in this period (in the extension of the Missouri question) did Senator Benton extol the generosity of the Northern Democrats in regard to extension of slave-soil. In his summary of the debates and the votes of 1836 upon this important question embodying fundamental issues of slave-soil extension, he records his undying gratitude to the Senators from such states as Maine and New Hampshire for their "magnanimous assistance under such trying circumstances." In resonant sentences he testifies voluntarily and graciously his appreciation of their vote as a proof "of the willingness of the non-slaveholding part of the Union to be just and generous to their slaveholding brethren, even in disregard of cherished prejudices and offensive crinations."

This side-light of history upon the spirit of the times is of peculiar interest, in view of Mr. Fairfield's letters. Again and again, Mr. Fairfield regrets the activities of those who would







Sarah, Oldest Daughter of John Fairfield  
Portrait taken when a young woman

disturb, by their impertinencies, the good feeling between North and South. Unquestionably a hater of slavery, Mr. Fairfield, like many another good man of that time who later became abolitionists, deprecated the stirring of this issue. They would let sleeping lions go on dozing. His case was identical with that of Hannibal Hamlin, who later became so vigorously anti-slavery. Mr. Fairfield, undoubtedly, would have done as did Hamlin, for he was a man of conscience and of honor. And there was reason for such a feeling among Northern Democrats in 1836. Congress, as Mr. Benton says, "was at this time being inflamed with angry debates over abolition petitions, and the transmission through the United States mails of incendiary petitions imputing designs to abolish slavery." And Mr. Benton refers particularly to the recent appearance in the South of issues of a certain "criminating article entitled 'The Crisis'" which announced an "impending Southern convention and the secession of the Southern states unless certain Northern states took action immediately to suppress the abolition societies within a definite time."

It was, therefore, a time of exciting discussion. On December 2, 1835, President Jackson had advocated, in a message to Congress, the passage of a law prohibiting, under severe penalties, the circulation through the Southern states of incendiary publications, intended to instigate slaves to insurrection. On January 7, 1836, in the Senate, Calhoun opened the flood-gates of debate on slavery by his motion not to receive two petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

This war of words lasted until March 11, 1836. Every day, intermittently, this subject reopened in the Senate and stirred new enmities. Reference to it appears frequently in Mr. Fairfield's letters. Northern Democrats like Fairfield and the Maine Senators of that Congress did not approve this sort of thing. They were willing to befriend the South but disapproved of much mention of their generosity. Even Calhoun's Southern colleagues severely reprovved him. They accused him of going on a quixotic expedition in search of abstract political principles. Was it not a frivolous playing with fire and powder

thus to force on Congress, at this time, the discussion of a question that was inessential to the South, under the circumstances? Did not the condition obtain that we have indicated in our quotation from Senator Benton? Every material right and interest of the South was absolutely secured by the perfect unanimity of Congress "energetically backed by public opinion in the Northern states." Would not this agitation do more to promote abolition than all of the pamphlets and emissaries of the abolitionists combined? And while the biographers of John Caldwell Calhoun assert with a show of truth, that Mr. Calhoun sought only the perpetuity of the Union, it is apparent that this eminent Southern statesman, in 1836, opened the debate that led to the dissolution of the Union and the Civil War.

Such was the condition of political and national life in the opening of 1836, when Congressman Fairfield begins his second set of letters to his wife up in Maine. Through them runs occasionally reference to these deeper problems of the times. Their chief value is, however, as a sidelight on the men and the problems.

He was surrounded, especially in Maine, by a group of stalwart and uncompromising Democrats who followed the lead of the party. As a rule, their attitude is properly depicted by the foregoing summary of their votes on the Cherokee Treaty and the Missouri extensions. They were eager partisans, reliant on their solidarity with the Southern Democrat and willing to condone slavery within the South for a consideration of peace and power. With a word or two more as to the personality of some of these men from Maine and a few other states, the stage is cleared for the continuance of Mr. Fairfield's correspondence.

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The first Senators from Maine after the separation from Massachusetts were John Holmes of Alfred and John Chandler of Monmouth. Both of these men had gained prominence in the State of Maine Constitutional Convention of 1819-1820. Holmes was significantly the leader of the two. He was born in Kingston, Mass., in 1773, and was graduated at Brown Uni-

versity at an early age. He settled in Maine at Alfred in 1799. Holmes was a stout supporter of President Madison as a member of Congress before the separation from Massachusetts, from 1817 to 1821. At first a Federalist, he was later a Democrat. His great abilities called him into prominent positions of trust and adjudication. He was a commissioner to Ghent on Passamaquoddy boundary disputes in 1815. His law practice had been large and his reputation for ability as a lawyer had been based on sound results of practice in the courts, and upon his masterful leadership in the debates of the constitutional convention in Maine, in which he, more perhaps than any other one man, was responsible for our form of Constitution and for the several unique elements of Maine's constitutional law which endure to this day.

Mr. Holmes was a very witty, powerful and intellectual man. In "Perley's Reminiscences" he is called the "leading Senator of the North." Perley says that Holmes became famous for his rude speech ("at times vulgar") and for his vigor in debate. "Humorous, powerful, sarcastic, ever on the watch for some unguarded expression by some Southern Senator, he was the humorous champion of the North."

John Tyler, thinking to annoy Mr. Holmes, asked him in debate what had become of the political firm, once mentioned by John Randolph as "James Madison, Felix Grundy, John Holmes and the Devil."

"I will tell you," said John Holmes, springing to his feet. "The first member is dead; the second has gone into retirement; the third is now addressing you, and the fourth member has gone over to the Nullifiers and is now engaged in electioneering among the distinguished gentleman's constituents. So the partnership is legally dissolved."

John Holmes's second wife was the daughter of General Henry Knox. Holmes lived at Thomaston, Me., from 1838 to 1841, in the old residence of General Knox.

Albion Keith Parris, Senator from Maine in the second period, was also sufficiently noted to be mentioned in the chronicles of the time. Ben: Perley Poore refers to him as a blue-

eyed giant and says that Senator Parris "is said to have filled more public offices than any other man of his age in the United States." Mr. Parris was born in Oxford County and was graduated from Dartmouth in 1806 at the age of 18. Admitted to the bar at the age of 21, he immediately took the State by storm. He was county attorney of Oxford County in 1811; member of the Legislature in 1813; Senator in 1814; member of the 14th and 15th Congresses; appointed Judge of the United States District Court in 1814, when he removed to Portland; Governor of Maine, 1822-27; United States Senator, 1827; Associate Justice, Maine Supreme Court, 1828, resigning as Senator to accept the office; Second Comptroller of United States Treasury, 1836 to 1840; and in 1852, when 77 years old, he was elected Mayor of Portland. The record of continuous office-holding is hardly surpassed in our public life.

John Chandler of Monmouth, Me., a Senator in the first delegation from Maine after separation from Massachusetts, represented Maine in the Senate for nine years, when he became collector of the Port of Portland for eight years, retiring from office in 1837 at the age of 75. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and in the War of 1812. He represented the Kennebec district in Congress from 1805 to 1810, and was also a prominent member of the Constitutional Convention of Maine in 1819-20.

Ether Shepley of Saco, Senator from Maine in 1836, a graduate of Dartmouth College and an eminent lawyer, had previously been a representative from Maine to the General Court of Massachusetts; a United States District Attorney for twelve years until elected to the United States Senate, from which he resigned to be an Associate Justice and later a Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine. He was a most able and conscientious man. Of fine personal appearance and of great dignity of bearing, he was also of high integrity and purity of life and purpose.

Judah Dana, who was a Senator in 1836 for a short term and of whom Mr. Fairfield speaks, was a grandson of Gen. Israel Putnam of Revolutionary War fame. In 1795, he opened

the first law office in Oxford County at Fryeburg, Me.; was executive councillor, bank commissioner, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and finally Senator. His son, John W. Dana, was afterward Governor of Maine. His wife was the granddaughter of Eleazer Wheelock, first president and the founder of Dartmouth College.

The members of the House of Representatives in Congress from Maine in 1836 were Jeremiah Bailey, George Evans, John Fairfield, Joseph Hall, Leonard Jarvis, Moses Mason, Gorham Parks and Francis O. J. Smith. Of these the most distinguished in service was undoubtedly George Evans, of Gardiner, Me., afterward United States Senator and a personage of renown in the debates of succeeding years.

Of other New England Senators and Representatives, the most prominent were Daniel Webster and his rugged colleague, John Davis of Massachusetts; Isaac Hill and Henry Hubbard of New Hampshire—Hill an influential friend and counsellor of Gen. Jackson, reputed to be one of his "kitchen cabinet."

The roll call of the Senate of 1836 included Nehemiah R. Knight and Asher Robbins of Rhode Island; Gideon Tomlinson and Nathan Swift of Connecticut; Samuel Prentiss and Benjamin Swift of Vermont; Nathaniel P. Tallmadge and Silas Wright, Jr., of New York; James Buchanan and Samuel McKean of Pennsylvania; John M. Clayton and Arnold Daudain of Delaware; Robert H. Gouldsborough and Joseph Kent of Maryland; Benjamin Watkins Leigh and John Taylor of Virginia; Bedford Brown and Willie P. Mangum of North Carolina; John C. Calhoun and William C. Preston of South Carolina; Alfred Cuthbert and John P. King of Georgia; Henry Clay and John J. Crittenden of Kentucky; Felix Grundy and Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee; Thomas Ewing and Thomas Morris of Ohio; Alexander Porter and Robert C. Nicholas of Louisiana; William Hendricks and John Tipton of Indiana; John Black and Robert J. Walker of Mississippi; Elias K. Kane and John M. Robinson of Illinois; William R. King and Gabriel P. Moore of Alabama; Lewis F. Linn and Thomas H. Benton of Missouri; Ether Shepley and John Ruggles of Maine.

In the House there were many prominent men. John Quincy Adams was leader of the Massachusetts delegation with such men as Caleb Cushing, afterwards an ambassador to foreign courts; Abbot Lawrence, an ambitious and purposeful aristocrat; Samuel Hoar, Levi Lincoln and Stephen C. Phillips. Reference has been made to some of the New York delegation, notably Mr. Cambreling, chairman of Ways and Means Committee, and Mr. Doubleday, to whom Mr. Fairfield often refers, in his letters. Mr. Doubleday has, however, no place of note in history. John Bell of Tennessee, who had been Speaker, was back in his seat, having cast his political fortunes with Judge White as a candidate for the Presidency in opposition to the plans of Gen. Jackson which were identified with the ambitions of Mr. Van Buren; and a colleague of John Bell's was Adam Huntsman, successor to Davy Crockett, whom Mr. Fairfield graphically describes in the subjoined letters. James K. Polk was also a member of the House from Tennessee. Richard Mentor Johnson, of whom Mr. Fairfield often speaks in his letters, was a member from Kentucky. Tom Corwin, Elisha Whittlesey, Sherrod Williams, Waddy Thompson, Henry A. Wise, Abram P. Maury, Bellamy Storer are some of the names with which the history of the times may have some concern. Mr. Fairfield frequently refers to Jesse Bynum of North Carolina but always spells his name as "Byrnum." He also has much to say of Dutee Pearce of Rhode Island.

John Chambers of Kentucky, a "gigantic economist who was always ready to cut out small expenditures and who looked rarely at the large ones," was one of the characters of the House in this year, and Davy Crockett was frequently in and about Washington and was delving into history and biography in a way to arouse the concern of his friends for his outspoken comments and his curious views.

Much of Mr. Fairfield's letters are made up of subjects that throw light on social festivities. Mr. Poore in "Perley's Reminiscences" says that although society had been disorganized by the removal from office of most of the old citizens who therefore kept aloof from the White House, there was no lack of social



enjoyments at Washington during the Jackson administration. Mr. Forsyth, Secretary of State, gave a series of balls. There were large "parties" at the beautiful home of Mr. Dickerson, Secretary of the Navy; Major General Macomb, General Miller and other prominent men vied with each other in entertainment. At each of these Mr. Van Buren was prominent, smooth and easy of manner, handsome and well-dressed, shaking hands with everyone and never making an enemy, and "trusting that everyone was well and happy." Col. Richard M. Johnson was to be seen at all gatherings in his scarlet waistcoat and ill-fitting coat. Mr. Webster was seldom seen at public parties. Clay and Calhoun were usually present. The foreign ministers and their suites, who were the only wearers of mustaches in those days, were distinguished attendants. There were also the magnates of the Senate and the House, each one great in his own esteem, and added to these the "chevaliers d'industrie," who lived by their wits on long credits and new debts. Mrs. Alexander Hamilton was yet living in Washington, widow of the great founder of the Constitution and Secretary of Treasury. Mrs. Hamilton was much troubled, it is related, by a pamphlet, published when Mr. Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury, alleging an intrigue with the wife of one of his clerks. She paid five dollars a copy for every copy of this pamphlet that was brought to her. A cunning printer in New York republished the edition and sold them to Mrs. Hamilton through the second-hand book shops of Washington.

Mr. Fairfield is continually referring to William C. Preston of South Carolina, and it is evident that the eloquence of this gentleman had a greater vogue in 1836 than history has since suggested. Senator Preston was not only a famous "orator of the times" but also a noted conversationalist of the monologue school. One of his colleagues in the House, Warren R. Davis, ran him a close second. On one occasion Mr. Preston had held the conversation at a dinner party against all comers, contending that the classics afforded the finest examples of terse and expressive language that could be found. Finally he paused to take a pinch of snuff.

Mr. Davis seized the opportunity; denied that the Spartan mother's remarks to her son to "return with his shield or upon his shield" was the finest and shortest expression of speech, as Mr. Preston had contended. He said that he knew a better in English. Returning towards his home through the mountains, he had met a rustic Naiad crossing a brook with a piggin of butter on her head.

He said to her, "My girl, how deep is the water and what is the price of butter?"

"Up to your waist and ninepence," was the reply. And the roar of laughter silenced the voluble Preston for the evening.

The wedding of Robert E. Lee to Mary Custis at Arlington was one of the social affairs in Jackson's times and was celebrated throughout the South by the first families of the day. No wonder that amid all this rout of dinner and "party" the letters of the Maine Congressman are full of tales of their splendor. The plain woman at home with her children up in Maine, must have appreciated them.



GEORGE A. FAIRFIELD  
Second Son of John Fairfield







## The Year 1836—The Waltz

Washington, Jan. 1, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I wish you a happy New Year—may the blessings of a good Providence descend on us and ours in the year before us, as in the year past—and may our gratitude in some better degree be commensurate with our blessings.

I heard from you this morning through the kindness of George, and have written him in return—since which I have been at the President's. Oh, how I pitied the poor old man! There are few men of his age who can stand as he does four hours upon a stretch receiving callers and shaking hands with each. However, his health is apparently pretty good—and he does the thing in excellent style. He is very polite, polished and gentlemanly in his manners. Today I should think while I was there that there were 200 carriages drove up. There were at least 1,000 people in the House & about the door, and it is not impossible that the President will shake hands with 2,000 people today.

In the outer Hall and near the door was deposited the great cheese, which you may recollect to have read about, a present from the democratic farmers of Oswego County in N. Y., I believe. It is over two feet thick and about five feet across it. Around it was a brown linen cloth with various inscriptions on it which I did not stop to read. The tub in which it was brought was standing near by. The staves were an inch thick at least and were bound with very stout hickory hoops, some of them with the bark on. In the bottom of the tub I noticed the following inscription, "The Union, it must be preserved."

It, the cheese I mean, excited a great deal of attention and I suppose made some mouths water. A band was also placed in the outer Hall who kept discoursing most excellent music. The officers of the Navy and Army were in uniform and foreign ministers in their Court dresses, though I did not see the latter. I saw a few with mustachios and with stars on their breasts, but these were of a subordinate grade, perhaps secretaries.

Last night I attended a party at Mr. Cass's. It was a pretty splendid affair but a terrible jam. Four rooms were filled except two little spots where they danced. There were besides a great many in the chambers. The ladies, I think, were more

elegantly dressed than they were the other night at the President's and a few of them were really beautiful.

Here for the first time I have seen waltzing. As a matter of curiosity, and none of my French friends being engaged in it, I was gratified but I do not think the dance would be tolerated in the North nor ought it to be. They also danced cotillions and had very fine music. Your Uncle Richard & Dolly and Thomas & his wife were there. Dolly is not so very homely, nor so very cold and gloomy as I thought. Mary, they said, had a good crying spell because she could not attend, but did not say why she couldn't attend.

I have not spent my evening with them yet, tho I intend to soon. As business multiplies on my hands, your letters will be shorter. This is the sixth written today—most of them on business of my constituents. Our Committee also expect to have a great deal to do, which we shall commence upon next Tuesday. Love to all,

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Comments on Religion

Washington, Jan. 3d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I have been to meeting today and heard Mr. Palfrey preach. He is a very sensible man, and sound preacher, but he has not so much animation as I should like. It was communion day and the sacrament was administered by him in a very solemn manner. The ceremony and mode of administering it is very similar to that adopted in our churches North. Of the members who remained to partake I noticed only three—Lawrence of Boston, Hoar<sup>1</sup> of Concord & Reed<sup>2</sup> of Barnstable. Gov. Lincoln with his family attends meeting there, but was not out today.

Mr. Palfrey is about leaving here—I do not know the particular reasons, but believe it is owing to the smallness of the society, & their inability to support a minister.

This is not a soil in which religion flourishes very well and least of all that which requires a man "to work out his own salvation." They had much rather rest in the belief that some one else has done or will do it for them arbitrarily & according to preordination. They are mostly Presbyterians & Episcopa-



lians. The Unitarian Church here is a very pretty building and well located. It contains about the same number of pews as our house, though of a different shape, being broader. The congregation is not more than  $\frac{3}{4}$ s. as large as ours, but of very respectable appearance and are very attentive listeners. The music is excellent. The organ is skilfully played and there are two female singers with very melodious voices, and who sing with much good taste.

Mr. Stockton, our Chaplain, has not yet made his appearance. What the reason is I do not know. We had no services at the Capitol last Sabbath nor today and Wardwell of New York has given notice that he intends offering a resolution against permitting the House to be used in that way.

Mr. Higbee, the Chaplain for the Senate, has officiated in our House also. His prayers are about 2 minutes long. Judge Ruggles has just informed me that there were services at the Capitol today by Mr. Higbee.

Do you have preaching at our house now? Has Mr. Williams returned? Who is preaching at Mr. Whitman's house? In your next tell me a little of everything. Love to the children & everybody &c.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Hoar, Whig.

<sup>2</sup>Member of Congress for Massachusetts, 1835-37. Prominent abolitionist, distinguished lawyer and judge.

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### Some Remarkable Pen Pictures

Washington, Jan. 7th, 1836.

Dear Wife,

This morning, very soon after the House convened, the rules & orders were agreed by vote to be suspended in order to make way for the introduction of petitions and, deeming it therefore a good time to visit the Senate, I cleared out. When I went into the Senate Chamber, Calhoun was speaking and, finding that an interesting debate was going on, I concluded to spend the day there, which I did. I had the good fortune to hear Calhoun, Buchanan, Morris, Preston, Porter, Tyler and Brown. The discussion was upon Calhoun's motion that a petition for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia should not be received.

Calhoun is rather tall & slender. He has a head of dark bushy hair and thick eyebrows of the same color. His complexion is dark, his eye deeply sunken in his head, and his face strongly marked. There is nothing amiable in his countenance, but the contrary. The strongest expressions are: mind, energy and malignity. His voice is rather harsh, but cannot be regarded as a bad one. He speaks with great force, but not with ease, not making many gestures, but expressing much by the muscles of his face, and his deep, dark eyes.

After him spoke Mr. Morris, who is a very plain looking man, not much superior to the best looking of our farmers. His remarks were plain, unimpassioned, and without gesture, but characterized by good sense. Then followed Porter of Louisiana, who is an Irishman. I was very much amused with him. He has very much of the Irish brogue and speaks with great fervour and rapidity, so much so that it is difficult to understand him. But there was at times such a queer, good-natured sarcasm in his smile, that I wanted to laugh outright. His personal appearance is ordinary, his voice only tolerable and his talents not above mediocrity, so that, were it not for his brogue & fervour & queer look, he would not be a very interesting speaker.

Mr. Preston, the great orator of the South, followed Porter. His personal appearance is very good. As much as 6 feet high and his size corresponding thereto. His face is rather full, complexion and hair sandy, features rather regular, and the general indications rather of an open-hearted, frank, ready, talented, off-hand man, than of a deep and strong mind. And I believe the facts correspond with these indications. His voice is pretty good—nothing remarkable about it—but his manner is inimitable. He abounds in action and most of our Northern friends here think there is a great deal too much of it—that he is far too theatrical, but his motions of hands, arms, head and body are so appropriate and graceful, that I must confess I liked him. He is very figurative—one for instance I recollect he used was this: He compared the petitions & memorials upon the subject of slavery now flowing in upon Congress to a swollen & turbid stream, while those which came in formerly were merely a little rill that percolated through the Hall.

After Preston, came Mr. Buchanan—and he is a great favorite of mine—I liked him the first time I put my eye upon him. He is rather tall & large—light complexion—and a fine, open,

manly, ingenuous face. In consequence of a defect in his eyes he holds his head sideways while he looks ahead and this, to me, makes him more interesting. His voice is clear, rather strong and very pleasant. He has about as much animation & action as is common among our Northern men.

Brown of N. C. succeeded much better than I had anticipated. He reminded me of Gov. Dunlap and is about as much of a man. Leigh is rather a small man & lame, having the sole of one boot near two inches thick. He has a short, round, handsome face, black, beautiful eye, and a round, bald, shiny head. His voice is rather small, but sweet & musical, tho he rose only to make a few suggestions and not a speech; it may be different with him at other times; I must confess I was rather favorably impressed for the first sight & hearing. How it will be after next Monday, when he gave notice that he should make a speech, we shall see.

After him Mr. Webster rose & after making a remark or two moved an adjournment, so that on Monday he will have the floor, when I shall try to hear him. Tomorrow is the 8th of Jan. and both Houses have adjourned over to Monday. I have recd. an invitation to attend the laying the corner stone of a new city tomorrow, by the Genl. We have had a rain storm for two or three days past. I suspect you have had a violent snow storm North corresponding with it. Last night about 4 I was waked by the cry of fire & the ringing of bells—it lasted, however, but a few minutes.

Your loving Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### He Has His Bumps Located

Washington, Jan. 10, 1836.

Dear Ann,

Our long storm has ceased, and we are left with fair weather and a strong wind; but what renders the latter almost as uncomfortable for me as a storm, is that, instead of blowing horizontally as it used to in old times, it now blows perpendicularly downwards—and the cowardly smoke instead of pressing its way upward as it ought, retreats before the wind down into the room, when I have to open the door and let it escape a back way, but what can't be cured must be endured, so, patience is the word.

I have been to meeting today at the Capitol to hear our Chaplain, Mr. Stockton—and I am sorry to say I am disappointed—I had heard so much of him that my expectations were raised too high. It is very probable, however, that he may do better hereafter. His manner is very fine, and he abounds in beautiful figures, but he is deficient in matter. His bump of ratiocination is very small—while that of imagination is large. His sermon commenced thus: “As in the natural world we sometimes see a dark cloud, one end resting on the horizon, and the other illuminated by the rays of the setting sun, so in the moral world no cloud of sorrow is so utterly dark but that some faint streaks of the light of joy may be visible in its borders.” I have not, perhaps, got his precise words, and the figure is not so good as it fell from him, but I have the idea. His power of description is great. He brings unseen things before you so that you can put out your hand and touch them—but I cannot say that he touched my feelings. He cannot make the heart rise up in the throat, or start a tear in the eye. At least he did not do it; perhaps he may, and lest I do him injustice in my haste, I will give no opinion of him until I hear him again. So you will just please rub all out and let’s begin anew—next Sunday.

In enclose a specimen of my handy work in sketching. Here you have Old Hickory himself. It is a middling good likeness, not perfect. The lower lip, I think, protrudes too much, though there is a falling in of the upper lip owing to the loss of teeth. Tomorrow, if I have time, I will send you Mr. Van Buren.

So it seems you have got my phrenological chart; well, I think you are right in regard to the two subjects alluded to, to wit, cautiousness and not being able to receive a joke unless he meant a joke founded in ill-nature, or of a wanton character, having no regard to feelings. It appears to me that Fowler was a good deal out in some things: for instance, before I sent you the chart I sat down & marked where I disagreed with him—thus:

Destructiveness	he marked	12	I mark	9
Secretiveness	he marked	4	I mark	9
Acquisitionness	he marked	6	I mark	10
Cautiousness	he marked	19	I mark	12
Marvelousness	he marked	6	I mark	10
Imitation	he marked	9	I mark	10
Mirthfulness	he marked	9	I mark	12

Tell Mr. Haines I should not be surprised if we should have a message from the President tomorrow.

Genl. Macomb<sup>1</sup> it is said, has had a fit of apoplexy, though not very severe, will probably get over it. He is fleshy, has a short neck, and looks like what is called a "good liver." I suppose Genl. Scott wouldn't cry much if Macomb was to die.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>General Alexander Macomb (1782-1841) commanding general of the U. S. Army at the time of Gov. Fairfield's writing. Gen. Macomb was prominent in the War of 1812 and greatly distinguished himself in 1813 at Fort St. George and Fort Niagara. He defended Plattsburg, N. Y., in 1814, against a greatly superior force under Sir George Prevost. In recognition thereof he was made major-general, receiving a vote of thanks and medal from Congress. He was commanding general of the armies from 1828 to 1841, the time of his death. He was author of many books on law, court-martial, and similar matters.

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### Squally News From France

Washington, Jan. 11, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I have time to scratch a word or two only. We have a long session, say from 12 to nearly 5. It is now only about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour since I rose from dinner table since which I have been hard at work directing some papers, &c., in time to go in this mail.

There was a long discussion whether a memorial from the Legislature of the State of Michigan should be recd. The Ohio folks stuck up their backs at once & spit like cats. After a long debate, however, it was recd. with some qualifying conditions appended to it.

Then, after it was time to adjourn, Leonard Jarvis as Chairman of the Com. on Naval Affairs, introduced a resolution directing that Committee to inquire into the expediency of increasing our Naval force in commission. It was a foolish move, he had better waited until tomorrow when we shall probably have some Executive recommendation upon the subject. However, having been introduced, it was necessary to support it; Wise of Virginia and Hammond of South Carolina opposed it; Hawes of Kentucky & McLean of N. Y. made short but thrilling replies. The vote was taken by yeas & nays & stood 160 odd to 18. So this shows a little the spirit prevailing. The Country will go strong for the Country and against France.

No message from the Pres. today. Barton has not yet arrived in this City, but expected tonight, I believe. The news from France—such as you will see in the papers—looks a little squally. And a great many of us are willing to fight if France will only begin—so as to let conscience have the principle of self-defence on her side.

There was no debate in the Senate today on the slavery question, as was expected.

Enclosed you have Mr. V. B.<sup>1</sup> which I sketched last night just before going to bed.

We have no mail today from the North, suspect there has been a violent storm.

Yours truly,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Van Buren.

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### In a Playful Mood

Washington, Jan. 11, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I have written you once today, and my letter is gone, but having returned from an evening at your Uncle Richard's, and not feeling very much of go-to-bed-ishness, I thought I would devote a few minutes to the beginning of a letter which I could finish tomorrow after the adjournment of the House.

I am very much pleased with your Uncle Richard and his family. He is very pleasant, exceedingly fond of talking over Saco, its people and affairs, is in good spirits, much better than when I was here before, and appears to be in good health. Madison and his wife, Mary, were at the theatre. Thomas was at home. He is a Lieutenant in the Army; was educated at West Point, and is, I should think, an accomplished officer. He exhibited to me many of his drawings, done while at West Point and since. They indicate much scientific skill and good taste. They also shew me many drawings and paintings of Mary, all of them good and many of them in pencil and crayon equal to anything of the kind I ever saw. I might say almost as much of some of Dolly's.

By the way, I must do penance in some way for having slandered and misrepresented Dolly to you. She is not as homely as a log fence, as sour as buttermilk, as solemn as a tombstone and as melancholy as a weeping willow. No, on the contrary, she is very pretty, considerable handsome; laughs as

much as common and talks a little more. She is learned, accomplished and on the whole what we should call in the North a "pretty likely girl." Thomas's wife talks through her nose; but, poor woman, I suppose she can't help that, her mouth being very small and her nose very large.

If, however, it can be regarded as a defect, it is all made up by her cleverness, in the best sense of the term. But I must stop, for

"I feel a wicked tingling come

Down to the finger & the thumb." That is, I am afraid that out of pure mischief, I shall slander and ridicule where I ought to praise. Tomorrow I will resume.

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### Col. Benton Characterized

Jan. 12.

Dear Wife,

No message yet. I shall think it strange if we do not have one tomorrow. I passed a couple of hours in the Senate today and heard Benton, Preston, Leigh, and Payton. Benton introduced a resolution in regard to an appropriation for military fortifications and took occasion to allude to the unjustifiable course of the Senate last session in not allowing the appropriation of \$3,000,000, &c., &c. It caused a good deal of fluttering. Leigh & Clayton tried to get clear of the imputation against them and were willing to go all lengths now in support of appropriations for strengthening the arm of defence. But Preston, who is honester than the rest, still insisted that he was right in his former opposition, on constitutional grounds. Benton has a fine voice and can express as much with his face and eyes as any other man. His contempt is withering.

We had no Northern mail yesterday and none today, until very late & then bringing us papers only, no letters, and the papers being over a week old. Among the rest is a Register for which I am obliged to you. I was in hopes today of hearing from our Legislature, am very anxious to hear.

This day has been about as warm and pleasant as our weather the middle of April.

Tonight I go to Mr Blair's, and break off writing to dress.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Lively Sparring in the House

Washington, Jan. 13, 1836.

Dear Wife,

My apprehensions, it turns out, were well founded, that is to say, you have had a tremendously severe snow storm at the North. We hear from no farther north than Philadelphia, and it seems that even there two feet of snow has fallen and is so drifted as to render travelling almost impossible. We have had no Northern mail now for 3 days but I trust we shall get one tomorrow.

The Committee of Ways and Means called up the appropriation bills today, and Mr. Cambrelling moved an amendment to appropriate two millions for the fitting out of the Navy, &c. This called out Waddy Thompson of S. C.<sup>1</sup> in a bitter attack on Genl. Jackson and Mr. Rives.<sup>2</sup>

His speech was a real Tory French speech, said our Government was wrong in every step that it had taken and that the French were right. That if he had been a member of the French Chamber he would have voted against the appropriation and would have gloried in it. That the French had done exactly right in making the preparation they had, but that it would be wrong for us to do anything of the kind and that he should vote against the appropriation of two millions. And many other things he said, so execrable that I can't think of them with patience, much more write them. Sutherland answered him, but it didn't suit me. It sounded like the falls of Niagara, while in fact it was nothing more than a shallow brook. He may, however, write out a pretty good one for the paper.

When he sat down Bynum of N. C., whom Mr. Haines has probably heard Mr. Shepley speak of, a real fighter and duellist, got the floor. And though his manner is bad, that is, ranting, voice up and down to the two extremes almost every minute, yet he made a speech much more to my mind than Sutherland. He made some pretty hard thrusts at Thompson and brought the latter to his feet two or three times to explain.

He said that during the last war we had a British party in the Country who rejoiced over the victories of the enemy while they deplored our own—burnt blue lights, &c.—and that it seemed now that we were to have a French party. He poured in broadside after broadside, until a friend near him, finding him pretty much exhausted in strength, moved an adjournment; so that B. still has the floor and I hope he will give these



Tory nullifiers "as much as they want." My blood boiled to hear Thompson talk and if I had had a little more confidence in myself, I would have taken the floor against him. But this "tarnal" great bump of bashfulness that Doct. Fowler has raised on my head will forever keep me in the background.

I went to Mr. Blair's party last night—had a fine time—found all things pretty much as at the other parties I have attended, and came home before eleven. I have become acquainted with Frank Smith's<sup>3</sup> wife notwithstanding his incivility (for tho we came on a considerable part of the way in company, he didn't even introduce me to her) and find her a very pleasant, companionable lady. I have written this upon a gallop and must now dismount and sign myself

Affectionately Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Waddy Thompson, American legislator and diplomat, born in Pickering, S. C. He was a lawyer of distinction, member of the House for 1835 to '41 as a Whig, in 1840 Chairman of Military Affairs, in 1846 U. S. minister to Mexico. He was a fiery debater and as Whig calculated to stir the anger of our Maine democrat.

<sup>2</sup>This is probably William C. Rives who had been U. S. minister to France from 1829 to 1832, U. S. Senator to 1834, re-elected in 1835. This French stir was spoliation claims and impending war.

<sup>3</sup>F. O. J. Smith of Portland, Me.

### Gov. Fairfield's Opinion of Webster

Washington, Jan. 14, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Yours of the 6th I have just received, having been a week on the way—which, upon the whole, considering what storms you have had, is a tolerable quick passage. I thank you for giving me a peep into domestic affairs, and I am happy to find things so comfortable with you. I can see you and the babe and the children, the girls with "woolen tires" and all that, and the rest of the family. It is a picture that I love to contemplate.

In the House today they have been discussing the Bill for the relief of N. Y. Merchants, i.e., a bill which proposes an extension of credit for 1, 2, 3 & 4 years, on bonds given for duties. We had speeches from Lee & McKean from N. Y., Old Ben Harden from Kentuck., Pickens of S. C., Mann of N. Y. and Underwood of Kentucky.

I heard only a part of them, being the rest of the time in the Senate, hearing a discussion growing out of Mr. Benton's

resolutions. I heard Porter, Webster & Cuthbert. I continue to think Porter rather an interesting speaker; Mr. Shepley thinks otherwise. Webster made, they say, one of his best speeches, or rather it was one of his best specimens as to manner, &c. He is a most powerful debater, but his positions, many of them, appeared to me to be perfectly untenable, and easily overturned by much lesser minds than his own. For instance, he held that the 3d of March did not terminate at 12 o'clock at night, but when the House adjourned, even if it was 3 o'clock in the morning; that there was nothing in the Constitution conflicting with this; that tho' it said members should be chosen for 2 years, it did not say when the 2 years should end. I have not looked at the precise words of the Constitution, but I think his positions utterly unsound.<sup>1</sup>

He attacked the President for saying in his message that the \$3,000,000 bill was lost in one of the Houses of Congress, and then went on to prove that it was lost in the House & not the Senate; endeavored to escape the odium of having defeated it, and then said that he should not have voted for it, at any rate, on the ground that it abounded in unconstitutionality. On the whole, though a powerful speech, it abounded in inconsistencies.

Cuthbert took the floor when Webster sat down. He is rather an ill-looking man, or rather not remarkably good-looking. He is about the middling size, bald-headed, red face and very much pitted by small pox. But he is made of capital stuff and appears to be a good, thorough-going democrat. He is said to be courageous as a lion and will fight like a tiger. His voice is very bad, and I found it difficult to understand him distinctly. But he turned upon Webster and answered his charges against the President and the dangers to be apprehended from his immense personal popularity and popular enthusiasm by firing a broadside or two at the aristocracy. He said that instead of dangers to be apprehended from the source pointed out by the gentleman, they were rather to be apprehended from a combination of powerful minds, of men of great weight of character, &c., who were the leaders of the aristocratic party in the Country, &c. After speaking 4 or 5 minutes he moved an adjournment, so I suppose he will have the floor on Monday, to which day the Senate adjourned over.

Our House sits tomorrow. Today the two Committees on the Dist. of Col. had a joint meeting & conference. The Com.

on the part of the Senate are Gov. Tyler, Gov. Kent, Doctor Nandain, Col. King of Alabama & Mr. Southard. Not having time or paper to do it now, I will endeavor hereafter to give you a particular description of each—as well as the members of the Committee on the part of the House.

Have an invitation to attend another party at Mr. Cass's on Thursday next one week. Give my love to the children and tell Walter and George they must write me oftener. Where is Martha's letter & Augusta's? I recd. today a letter from Bro. Wm. Cutts. So warm here today that I have been to the House without a surtout. We go nearly half a mile.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Note Col. Benton's long and interesting account of this debate in his "Thirty Years' View."

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### Davy Crockett's Successor

Washington, Jan. 16, 1836.

Dear Wife,

There has been no session of the Senate today. The House a portion of the time has been engaged in private business, i. e., passing bills providing relief for individuals. After this was disposed of a discussion was got up in relation to the extension of the Charter of the Banks in this District to the 1st of October next. Thomas, Mann, Pearce of R. I., Parker & Huntsman took part. The latter is the successor of Davy Crockett. He is short and rather fleshy, round face and bald head, one wooden leg, and one not wooden. He speaks rapidly, in a small, clear voice, but when very earnest clips his words so that you cannot always understand him. He appears to be a man of good sense having a spice of the West in his composition.

After that question was settled a debate commenced on the resolution offered by Hawes of Kentucky to raise a select committee to look into the affairs of the West Point Academy. Among other speakers Frank Pierce acquitted himself very well, but has not yet finished his speech. We probably shall not get a message from the President until Monday. The news from France today looks favorable, it is what you will see in the papers. We are going to have a goodly number of the letter of "John Dickinson" stricken off for distribution. Nothing by mail today. Spent last evening at Chs. Cutts's—Miss Stras (or what's her name?) beat me a game of chess and I beat her a

game of checkers or draughts as they call it. Mrs. C. sends her love to you and says she would be very glad to see you & I believe her. I am afraid if I go on improving so in my hand writing that I shall soon get to be illegible. After this I think I will take more pains and write less. Tell Mr. Haines tomorrow I shall send a draft for \$200. I wrote yesterday telling him how much he might subscribe for me toward hose for engine. Give my love to our household, and everybody else.

Affectionately Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Talks About Duelling

Washington, Jan. 17, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Your respectably long letter I recd. yesterday. It contained much to awaken pleasant reflections and to warm my heart. But to dispose of matters of business first, let me tell you that instead of mulberry for your cloak, my taste inclines to green if you can get a handsome one. However, when you suit yourself you will suit me.

Taking up matters as they stand in your letter, I would reply to your inquiry whether it is not most time for a duel, that yesterday I heard that there was to be a duel between two members of our House, and that one of them had been practicing down at the Navy Yard for some time—but I could not learn their names. Whether Mother Rumor has anything to found this tale on, time will show. I agree with you that I have not enough of combativeness in my disposition to make me a duellist, even if there were no restraint of principle, so you need not be alarmed about me. I hope, however, that my dispositions or principles will never prevent my defending myself even though it should be at the expense of life.

You say our great baby is well & improving though he is homely yet. It is of very little consequence how he looks, provided he has mind & right dispositions. Indeed, I sometimes think it is better for a man to be homely, certainly better to be not handsome. So far as our own children are concerned I have no anxiety in regard to it. I return Miss Augusta a kiss for hers and wish I could lay it on myself. I think it might be heard all over the house—the same to Sarah. You say Walter

& George have letters written, but have yet to copy them. As soon as I receive them I will write answers.

I have been to meeting today at the Capitol, thought I would hear Mr. Stockton again, and make up an opinion about him, but we had Mr. Higbee, Chaplain for the Senate. He is certainly more than a common preacher, much more of a man in point of talents, I suspect, than Stockton. There was a man that responded who seemed determined to let everybody know it as well as the Lord, indeed, he was rather annoying and forcibly brought a certain gentleman in Saco to my mind whose name I need not mention, though I believe he has quit the meeting-house where the boy thought "the people mocked the minister."

We had last night a fall of snow of about an inch and today strange looking vehicles are in rapid motion about the City. The sun has not shone out today, but the snow is nearly gone in the street.

Doct. Dubois & wife left yesterday, and Mr. Alexr. Hamilton & wife have taken their place at our table. He is a son of the celebrated Alexr. Hamilton and she was a rich heiress of N. Y. I know nothing more about them; their personal appearance testifies very favorably of them. She is the only lady now at our table. Mrs. Hill & her daughter, Mrs. Wright, used to take the head of our table, but having two other messes to look after, they have entirely deserted us.

While I think of it, what do you think I breakfast on? Buckwheat cakes baked thin like flapjacks, and molasses. We have often heard the Yankees ridiculed for their use of molasses, but I have never seen it used in the North as it is here. It is not, however, a matter of complaint with me, you know how I love molasses, and this morning I added some pork to it, which is really quite delicious—pork & molasses!

I don't know that I have before named to you that I have had two letters from Rufus King and that I have written to him. He is in Shiloh, North Carolina, is engaged in school keeping yet, and judging from the appearance of his letters, very much improved. He appeared to be very grateful for the letter I sent him, in which I tried to rouse him to aspire to something better than what he could hope for in his present pursuit. Genl. King<sup>1</sup> of Bath is here, and says he has sent for Rufus to come here, so I suppose I shall see him. He, Rufus, has been sick, but is now well, or better—whether it is best to tell anything of this

to the family or not, you will judge. If I have been rightly informed, they have no communication with each other.

Very Affectionately Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Governor King.

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### Slavery the Subject of Debate

Washington, Jan. 19, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Today, I understand, Leigh has been making an argument on the Constitutional power of Congress, or rather the want of it, over the subject of slavery in the Dist. of Col. In the House the same subject was on the carpet, to wit, Jarvis resolutions. Peyton of Tennessee made a most violent speech & travelled out of his way to try to hit Mr. Van Buren, but it was a failure. He was followed by Bouldin of Virginia who is on our Committee on Dis. Columbia and with whom I am pretty well acquainted. His speech was a most amusing one. He comes from the District formerly represented by John Randolph, and is his legitimate successor if anybody is, in some respects. His speech was exceedingly rambling, without much point, abounding in historical allusions, containing some wit and a good deal of humor, and all done up in great good nature. He stood very near me so that I heard all. He was not in his place and I heard it remarked that he happened to stand in the very place where Judge Bouldin, his brother, dropped down dead, winter before last, I believe it was.

He is a singular looking man in his personal appearance (If this is Irish I can't help it). Is rather tall & slender, round-shouldered, and bones looking as if they were meditating a release from their confinement. He is very bald and has a very singular skull. It is all bumps, there are no smooth places on it. His eyes are quite small, and set farther back into his head than those of any man I ever saw. He has a long arm and long, bony fingers which he shakes after the manner of Randolph. He is a man of pretty good sense and very fond of talking. The House adjourned before he had finished. Before these speeches the previous question was moved by Hawes of Kentucky and I voted for it, but was defeated 90 to 100, so I suppose we are yet to be afflicted with another long debate upon this troublesome topic.

I promised to tell you something about the others on our Committees—I can say a word or two only now. W. B. Shepard of N. C., our Chairman, tho' of the opposition, is a lawyer about 40 years of age, middling height, straight and well-formed. Has a dark complexion with light eyes or rather light which is uncommon, I think, black hair and a fine shaped head. He wears gold spectacles, dresses fashionably and speaks with his gloves on. is something of a man, reminds me of Folsom, and is perhaps about as much of a man, tho I have had no particular means of judging yet.

Lane of Indiana is older, say 50, nose about the color of John Holmes'; an administrative man, and something of a debater, having a stentorian voice and pours forth and smashes down and about his eloquence in the true Western style. Washington is a gentleman, rather handsome, dresses elegantly, is President of the Potomac & Ohio Canal Co., a gentleman of fortune, I believe, and of middling talents, is about 46 years old. Heister of Pennsylvania is about 45 to 50 yrs. old, tall & slender, very dark complexion, has a sour look, and I have not yet seen enough of him to know whether his heart corresponds with the acidity of his look or not.

Rogers of So. Carolina is a General in the militia, tolerable good looking man tho rather plain & modest in his dress & appearance, is about 42 years old, rather tall and large, and as to talents, I have had no particular means of judging yet, but I suspect nothing extraordinary. Towns of Georgia is a lawyer and about my age, middling size and very dark complexion. Judging from conversation with him & from his remarks in Committee I should think he was a man of considerable talent. Vanderpoel I have described before, tall, large, fine personal appearance, tremendous voice, a great debater, but not a very great man, nor a very small one. His vanity is great, and his ballast sometimes too small. On reviewing this, I must say it is somewhat indefinite, and if you can make anything out of it, you are welcome.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. I enclose you an invitation recd. today to give you an idea of the idea here entertained of time, &c.—dinner 5 o'clock! Have also recd. an invitation today to attend a party at Mr. Forsyth's next Tuesday night; Thursday night go again to Mr. Cass's.

## While John Quincy Adams Speaks

Washington, Jan. 22, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I commence my letter today in the House of Rep. and while J. Q. Adams is speaking. He introduced a resolution providing for the appointment of a Special Committee to take into consideration that part of the President's message relating to the causes of the loss of the fortification bill last winter which contained the appropriation of three millions for the defence of the Country. He has accompanied the motion by a speech in answer to one made a few days since in the Senate by Webster. He has been very severe and caustic on Webster. He has proved that the loss of the Bill was owing to the Senate, and pronounced Webster's assertion to the contrary to be utterly destitute of truth.

There has been a good deal of excitement from the commencement of the speech, and Mercer, Reed and some of the old federalists have been trying to trig and obstruct Adams, but without success. He made one remark which excited much applause by clapping and otherwise—a thing that the Speaker said had not occurred before for ten years and others said it never had. The Speaker was much excited and did the best he could to preserve order. I did not join in the applause, and trust we never shall have another instance of it. The remark was this: Webster had said that he would not have voted for the appropriation even if the enemy had been thundering at the walls of this Capitol. Adams said that a man who would do that had but one step more to take, and that was to go over to the enemy.

Adams has also very severely & successfully attacked the Senate, denounced them for insolence to this House at the last session, this House, the representatives of the people. Wise<sup>1</sup> has followed Adams. He is smashing away at a great rate, but it is more like "a tempest in a teapot" than anything else.

I wrote thus far before the adjournment of the House. The debate throughout today has been of the most exciting character, sometimes the scene was tumultuous. Wise was guilty of the grossest violations of the rules & orders and of decency. Among other thing he said that many of the members of the House at the adjournment last year on the night of the third of March, were drunk. Lane of Indiana, like a simpleton, got up & asked him to call names. Wise replied that he



should be sorry to do it for it might make the gentleman from Indiana unhappy. Wise also charged the Speaker with certain things which he considered wrong; that he, Polk, did when Chairman of Com. of Ways & Means & called upon him to admit or deny. This was outrageous in the extreme, I think. But the Speaker replied, the House consenting to it. The matter charged was this: That during the pendency of the appropriation bill last year a member asked Polk if the President wished the appropriation made; that he replied in the affirmative, but did not wish anything said about it. Mr. Polk remembered the conversation, but did not remember the last part.

In too much haste to write more now. The House does not adjourn until 4 o'clock. We then come home & dine, and have a little while after dinner and a little while after tea to do our writing.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Henry A. Wise.

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### A Dinner with Van Buren

Washington, Jan. 24, 1836.

Yours of the 17th is at hand. I rejoice at your ability to go abroad so much, and that you are disposed to exercise it. I am strongly in favor of action, good health cannot be preserved without it. I am also strongly in favor of keeping bright the links of that chain which binds us to society. I am persuaded our happiness is essentially promoted by it, so keep it up, go abroad as much as is convenient for you, when your health and the weather will permit, until you find people begin to call you a gadder. You may then take in a little sail, if you please, or lay by in Port a while.

Yesterday, agreeably to invitation, I went and dined with Vice-President Van Buren. We had a capital time, and I came away better pleased with the great Magician than I ever had been before. He is altogether without stiff formality and stately ceremony both in his personal deportment and household arrangement. He is very easy in his manners, plain, direct, straightforward in all his remarks, and very social. I walked and got there about 1/2 past 5. In all, I believe there were 15 of us, viz.: Mr. Roane, Col. Barton and Mr. Morgan of Virginia; Judge Lansing, Judge Backee, Genl. Fuller, Doct.

Mason, Doct. Taylor, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Doubleday, Mr. Gillet and Doct. Lee of N. Y., Mr. Toucey and Doct. Phelps of Connecticut, and myself. Col. Hall was invited but was sick. Mr. Roane is an old gentleman and was elector of President in 1801. He was and is an old Jeffersonian democrat. Judge Backee is the one who wrote to Duff Green prior to the election of a printer to Congress inquiring whether he would support the re-election of Genl. Jackson.

About 6 o'clock we sat down to the table. There were very few eatables on it, but the things were brought on separately by the servants. Before each one was a plate and napkin, a small decanter of water with a tumbler turned over the neck, a wine glass on the table, and another in a glass vessel of water to keep cool, I suppose, besides a long glass of champagne. And besides all this, a blue glass about twice as large as a wine glass but similarly shaped, which I suppose was a place of deposit for the slops.

In the center of the table was a long, oval waiter, reaching  $\frac{2}{3}$ ds. the length of the table. The sides were of brass and I believe the bottom of polished steel, of this, however, I am not sure; it was very brilliant. In this waiter were three stands for lights, each stand bearing about 8 or 10 candles; between them stood two wine coolers with two bottles in them, which I supposed to be claret, they were not broached.

I cannot recollect all the courses, but I believe they were something like the following: 1st, soup, very rich and delicious; 2d, turkey; 3d, beef smothered in onions, as I thought, the technical term I know nothing about; 4th, a la mode beef; 5th, most superb mutton, which you know is a favorite of mine; 6th, ham; 7th, a bird, the name of which I could not understand; 8th, pheasants, and 9th, bass. I am wrong in the order, for I now recollect the bass followed the soup. I may have otherwise erred in regard to the order in which they were sent on. At each of these our plates were changed and I believe I had a taste of everything, but the bird more out of curiosity than any other motive. After this came ice cream, then jelly, then two articles the names of which I could not understand, but very delicious, they resembled ice-cream somewhat, but were not cold & had a different flavor—then almonds, raisins, apples and oranges.

During the eating of all this they were drinking each other's healths with pale & brown sherry, two kinds of

madeira, one Tinto madeira very superior, and champagne. About half past 7 the V. P. said: "Come fill your glasses for the President of the U. S. and we will adjourn for a cup of coffee." Returning to the room from which we came, a strong cup of coffee was handed around. After partaking of this we very soon shook hands with the V. P. and took our leave, reaching home a little after 8 o'clock.

There, what do you think of that? Am I becoming dissipated? Whatever your answer may be, I must say I never enjoyed a dinner party so much before, and notwithstanding the great variety, and the tempting shapes & taste & smell which everything assumed, I had so much self-control as to eat no more, or very little more, than I do upon ordinary occasions. At all events, I suffered none in consequence of it, and am able to write this long letter to you & subscribe myself

Your scribbling Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Several Speakers Described

Washington, Jan. 26.

Dear Wife,

The House sat from 12 to 5 today, after which we came home & crammed. Upon the whole I don't know but by this term I do injustice to myself, for notwithstanding the change in mode of living requiring so long an abstinence from food, I don't know that I have eaten too much, or at all events so much as to make me feel uncomfortable.

Very early in the session today Mr. Mason, Chairman of the Com. of For. Rel., introduced a Resolve to appropriate each day after one o'clock to the consideration of the appropriation bills until they finally pass. It was attacked by Bell, Ben Hardin & others, and sustained principally by Sutherland & Mason, the latter of whom is a very fine speaker. He has not much action, though he often speaks with much animation. His voice is sweet and its modulations excellent. He is a man of considerable talent and from his known kindness of disposition, and from the handsome specimens of elocution he almost always gives us, he is listened to attentively and with respect.

Bell has a strong, harsh voice, speaks with a good deal of fluency, and is a man of good talents. I do not entertain a very

exalted opinion of Sutherland. He mouths it too much, and thinks too much of himself. The vote on adopting Mason's resolution was carried by a majority of 100, I think.

After that was disposed of, Cambrelling, Chairman of Committee of Ways & Means, reported a bill making additional appropriations to carry on the Seminole War (which word, by the way, is pronounced here in four syllables, Sem-i-no-le.) I suppose you perceive by the papers what terrible slaughter there has been of our folks in Florida by the Seminole Indians. Two companies entirely cut off and destroyed with the exception of three men. Some think here that the utter extermination of this tribe of Indians will be the consequence of it. The inhabitants of that quarter will feel like taking heavy vengeance.

Yesterday we recd. the good news of the election of Nicholas to the Senate from Louisiana and today we have recd. the capital news of the election of Walker from Mississippi. Now if McKean & Hendricks will go right, and many think they will, parties will be equally divided in the Senate, Mr. Van Buren having the casting vote. This news elates our friends here very much, particularly those in the Senate. Our friends there have had a hard time of it.

There is to be a party at Mr. Forsyth's tonight, but I believe I shall not go, the travelling is not good, and it is rather cold and uncomfortable. The snow remains on the ground yet and sleighs are flying about briskly. I believe I told you that a grate had been set in my little chamber in which I burn coal; so far it has done pretty well, though it will not be long before it will prove too warm; by that time, however, I hope to be able to change my quarters—i. e., so far as regards rooms. Love to the children and everybody else.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Jan. 27, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I take some credit to myself for my self-denial in not going last night to Mr. Forsyth's party, and probably today I feel as well, to say the least of it, as if I had gone. Today we have done nothing in the House but hear two speeches, one from Cambrelling of N. Y., and the other from Reed of Mass. upon Mr. Adams'

resolution instituting an inquiry into the causes of the loss of the three million bill last session. This is most contemptible business, instead of acting now, to be spending the time in inquiring why they did not act last session. It, however, all goes to show that the President was right in asking of the Com. of Ways & Means the appropriation, and so far may be of some use.

Reed made rather an acrimonious speech, directed, a good deal of it, against Mr. Adams. He has been taking notes and I suspect will demolish poor Reed when he can get the floor. Old Hardin got the floor after Reed, and then moved an adjournment. He is apparently about 60 years of age, rather tall, light hair & red beard & whiskers. He is rather coarse in his dress and still more so in his manners. He is not a pleasant speaker, but is a strong debater, and oftentimes deals around the most cutting, or mangling perhaps I should say, sarcasm. He abounds in anecdote drawn from his experiences in the backwoods, and has a good deal of wit, though of a coarse character. Cambrelling got angry with him the other day and said hard things, and now I suspect Hardin intends to repay him with usury.

The Supreme Court commences its session each day at 11, one hour before the House, so whenever I am not engaged in Committee, I spend an hour there. I have already had the pleasure of hearing Webster, Livingston, Sargent, Butler, Clayton & Jones. This is a treat that Mr. Haines would like much, but I can assure him, most of these diminish in size as you approach them. They, or some of them, at least, are great men, but I believe most of us expect in all such cases more than we realize. Livingston is not an interesting speaker. He is not rapid in utterance, hesitates somewhat for words & oftentimes makes (like Mr. Shepley) a very bad sentence. However, you cannot listen to him without feeling you are listening to a man of strong intellectual powers.

I was very much disappointed in the appearance of John Sargent. He is a small man, not quite so thick as myself, and about as tall, certainly not more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch taller. His head is large and well formed. He dresses very plain & seems to be far behind the fashions. He wore a blue coat, with velvet on the collar, and a white cotton cravat. His voice is small and a little nasal, and very much resembles that of Increase Sumner Kimball, with whom Mr. Haines is acquainted. He is per-

fectly cool and unimpassioned, and appears to have perfect confidence in his own powers. His manner is very plain & unpretending, but he argues with great force.

Clayton is the last man in the world you would select for an intellectual man, or one of considerable talents. He is very fleshy and very ill-shaped. His head and face are quite large, his hair grey, his eyes light blue or grey and very dull and unexpressive. His body is large (not portly) and his legs not very graceful in shape and hardly large enough for his body. His neck, if he have one, is very short, and head stooping, complexion very white but not pale, I have not yet heard him in the Senate. In his argument in Court, which was in reply to Sargeant, he appeared to be wide-awake, and argued with a good deal of power and some eloquence. He is manifestly not a small man. I heard Gen. Walter L. Jones this morning, and must say that I can find ten men at our bar and perhaps more who could do better. It was not, however, a good case for a man to show himself to advantage.

Since I have been writing this Mr. Ela came in who was formerly of N. H., now resident of this City. He says Randolph once said of Hardin: "Oh, yes, H. is a man of genius, but then it is coarse. He is like a common case knife whetted on a brick." This you will perceive accords with the ideas I have already expressed.

Granny White<sup>1</sup> has been spouting in the Senate today: "The King of France with 20 thousd. men," &c., you recollect the rest. If this letter is too long you may console yourself with the expectation of my letters being shorter very soon, i. e., when the Judges send me some work which they have promised.

Thy Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Hugh Lawson White, called "The Cato of the United States" in his day. He was a senator from Tennessee for many years, succeeding Gen. Jackson. Gov. Fairfield disliked him, doubtless because he had broken with President Jackson over the Bank, fought Jackson with a bill to limit federal patronage, pursued a most independent course; harrassed the administration continually and fought Van Buren's succession to the Presidency by running himself, carried Tennessee and Georgia and got 26 electoral votes. He refused to vote to expunge resolutions censuring President Jackson and in 1838 became a Whig. He was a man of unblemished rectitude.

## Anxious to Speak

Washington, Jan. 28, 1836.

Dear Wife,

We have had in the House today a continuation of the discussion on Adams' resolution, proposing an inquiry into the causes of the loss of the three million bill. Ben Hardin & Evans have occupied the whole day at the close of which little Bynum of N. C. got the floor and moved an adjournment, so to-morrow we must have a continuance of this unprofitable debate, when we ought to be devoting all our energies to putting the Country in a proper state of defence. I heard but a small part of these two speeches. Evans, it is said, made a very good one, and both were very severe upon Mr. Adams. I divided my time between the House, the Senate and the Supreme Court, which is directly under the Senate Chamber. In the Senate I heard Mr. Benton thunder and lighten (?) for about ten minutes at poor Ewing. Grundy made an excellent speech of an hour or more in length upon Benton's resolution for appropriating the surplus revenue to the defences of the Country. Isaac Hill also made one in which he lashed the Senate not a little, bringing up to their recollection many facts which I suppose they would prefer not to remember.

There is a very strong disposition to speechify in our House, so much so, that when a member closes a speech upon any of the general exciting topics of the day a half a dozen & sometimes many more strive to get the floor. Under these circumstances it will require a good deal of assurance in a new and young member to enter the lists—more I am afraid than I possess. If I make a speech it must be upon some private bill, or matters of a less exciting character than the subjects now before Congress.

Smith has been trying to get the floor some days, but has not yet been able.

The weather is quite cold here now and has been so for several days. The snow remains upon the ground, and it is very tolerable sleighing.

You inquire about Mrs. Cutts' school. I believe she has a very small one, but entirely inadequate, I apprehend, for their support. He has been besetting me and some others of our delegation to get a clerkship for Samuel in the Post-Office department, that he may help support them. We have not been able to effect it, and probably shall not.

Tell my dear boys that I shall very soon look for some more letters from them. My good little Sarah can now and then add a word to yours. Kiss her and my sweet Augusta for me, as well as the little great homely boy, Hampden.

Thy Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### His First Writing with a Steel Pen

Washington, Jan. 29.

Dear Wife,

I have recd. nothing from the North for three days except a pamphlet from Prof. Hall and an Age from Mr. Haines, which by the way, he need not send me again as it is sent to me from Augusta. I apprehend the making of the ice in the rivers, and the great quantity of snow south of Boston is the reason that I have reaped so poor a harvest from the mails. The daily Argus I have recd. very irregularly since they first began to send it to me.

Today we have had the first part of Byrnum's speech on Adams' resolution. He has been paying very particular attention to Wise of Virginia, and many think that before he finishes he will say enough to make matter for "a very pretty quarrel" as the Irish Major says in the Rivals. He has fought, I believe, several times, and is one of those men who would as soon fight as eat, certainly when the passions are up if not at any time. And Wise, too, has fought his duel. Byrnum is a small man, a little taller than myself, and very slender. He looks pale and appears to be a man in rather feeble health, but he has courage equal to any undertaking, and is a sterling democrat.

Adams gave notice today, that after gentlemen had poured out all the vials of their wrath upon him, he had something to say in reply. I suspect he will make something of an effort, and will let some folks know that he can give as well as receive blows. But knowing the inconsistency of the man & his course, it would not be very strange if he undid what he has heretofore done. The Senate have no session today and tomorrow.

This is my first attempt to write with a metallic pen and it minds me of what the countryman said of Van Buren on returning home from Washington. He was very free in giving



his opinion of all whom he saw here until he was asked what he thought of V. Buren. Why, as to him, said he, he is such d—— fine print I couldn't read him. Now you may find a difficulty of the same kind in this letter, and if the point of my pen don't very soon become blunt and make a large mark, I'll go to the quills again.

I believe I told you yesterday that we were having very cold weather here. With unlisted doors, loose windows, and open-mouthed joints, I find my coal fire just the thing. The snow lasts yet, and there is pretty good sleighing, but now I think of it, you were told of the same thing yesterday; well, my Dear, what can you expect of a man who writes every day. I suppose you would not consent to let me exchange, and open a correspondence with some other member's wife & he with mine, therefore the least you can do is to let me occasionally preach an old sermon.

Good night,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### On His Birthday

Washington, Jan. 30th, 1836.

If years were stripes, I could today,  
With good old Paul, th' Apostle, say,  
With no less truth, but more of fun,  
That I've had forty, saving one.

There, dear wife, what do you think of that for a specimen of birthday poetry? I wish I had thought of it earlier, I would have endeavored to have extended my rhymes through the whole letter, but I have a special invitation to attend a meeting tonight at the Capitol, of the American Historical Society at which Mr. Secretary Cass is going to deliver an oration—and so I haven't time to make poetry if I had the power. Maybe, however, on my return, I will sit down and write a few more stanzas.

Most of the time was taken up in the House today, discussing a resolution introduced by White of Florida, authorizing the President to cause the suffering inhabitants (said to be 500 families) who have had their property destroyed and been driven from their homes by the Indians, to be supplied with food from the public stores until restored to their homes or so

long as the President should deem necessary. White, Holsey of Georgia, Harper of Penn. & others spoke in favor of it, and Parks Parker of N. J., Patton of Virg., Granger of N. Y., and others spoke against it.

White is a very fine looking man, and is a handsome speaker. His voice is very musical and his manners very courteous. The vote was taken by yeas and nays and only 14 found in the negative. It is strange that upon such an occasion, men having a particle of human sympathy and kindness in their bosoms should set their ingenuity to work to hunt up possible objections.

The hour of meeting has arrived and I must go, stopping only long enough to say I hate these metallic pens.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Hears Secretary Cass

Dear Wife,

Not being moved by the spirit of poetry, I cannot do what I promised, and must therefore perform my daily ministrations in plain prose as I have been accustomed to do. When I arrived at the Capitol last evening I found our seats wholly occupied by ladies and their beaux, so I pushed up the gallery, the ladies' gallery, which is the farthest from the Speaker's chair, though in front of it.

Mr. Cass has rather a small voice, and husky, so that I could not hear all. I, however, heard enough to satisfy me that it was an address of great merits, both as regards the matter, and the felicitous style in which it was written. I hope it will be published, when I will endeavor to send you one. A young lady, very tonish, and who talked French occasionally, sat next to me. After the first half hour, she slept more than half the time. I wanted to jog her, but I was afraid if I did that her big-whiskered beau sitting behind us would want to jog me. He didn't sleep, I'll assure you, but finding his property thus exposed kept a sharp look-out.

Today I attended meeting again at the Capitol with the expectation of hearing Mr. Stockton, but was disappointed. I do not think, however, that I lost anything. Mr. Higby is very far superior to Stockton I think, and with the exception of the

Trinity it appears to me that his notions are very commonsensical as well as scriptural.

I believe I was the only one who went to meeting from our House, so you see what an atmosphere I live in; I should, however, say that it snowed and rained a little and was very uncomfortable walking, and that Mr. Shepley was not very well. Mr. Isaac Hill has just called to see me. I like him very well. He is a man of good sense, and of warm feelings. He is to be the next Governor of N. H. I hope I shall have a letter from some of you tomorrow. Got nothing today but three old newspapers.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. There is a rumor here that England has offered to mediate between us & France & that dispatches from that Government have been recd. I suspect the rumor is well founded, and that we may expect to hear from the Prest. soon in regard to it. I do not see, however, what good it will do, unless the mediation shall consist in advice merely to France to pay and us to accept. We certainly never shall consent for England or any other Power to have authority to decide that the Prest. shall apologize. Never—peaceable as I am, I would resist “even unto blood” any attempt to coerce an apology.

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### Slavery Question Discussed

Washington, Feb. 1, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Only think of it—two months have passed since I left home—long enough to have made a voyage to the West Indies and back.

Nothing has been done in the House today but to receive and refer petitions and hear a speech from Hammond of South Carolina on the slavery question. He is about my age, a good looking man, has a very pleasant musical voice, is a good speaker, and possesses considerable talent. I did not hear the whole speech, but in what I did hear, he appeared to be reiterating the aristocratic sentiments of Pickens. I think the South Carolina delegation is talented and most of them are eloquent, bold and daring. The two from that state who are on our side

in politics, Manning & Ropes, do not seem to be debaters, but are plain, substantial men and men of good sense.

In the Senate I understand Mr. Buchanan has been making a very fine speech on the subject of our relations with France. If I had anticipated it I would have gone and heard it.

The Globe of this morning states the fact of the arrival of a British Sloop of War bringing dispatches to Mr. Bankhead, instructing him to offer a mediation. What is to be the result, we have yet no means of knowing. The Telegraph & Intelligencer speculate about it, but they know nothing.

I have just recd. an invitation from Mr. Cass to supper on Friday evening next at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7. So about the time that you are reading this letter, I shall be partaking of the luxuries of Mr. Secretary Cass' table. I called last evening to Mr. Woodbury's for the first time, except at his first party; to his second I had no invitation. I spent a very pleasant evening. Isaac Hill, Commodore Morris & two other gentlemen were there. Coming home it was so slippery & windy that we could hardly keep on our feet and so cold that we could hardly keep from freezing. And, by the way, the weather is excessively cold to-day & night, it is seldom we have colder even in Maine.

I had, last night, a grand coal fire, but before morning it was so far burnt down that I was obliged to get up and put my wrapper on the bed.

Having performed my pleasing task, i. e., spun my daily skein, I'll now leave it for you to reel off—so good night, taking with you my love.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Listens to Eloquence of Buchanan

Washington, Feb. 2d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I ran into the Senate chamber a few minutes, and heard Buchanan close in an eloquent manner what was said to have been a most eloquent speech upon the subject of our relations with France. He was followed by Crittenden of Kentucky. I staid long enough to hear his voice, see his manner, and form some slight opinion of him, this being the first time of his speaking. There is nothing remarkable in his appearance, a common sort of a man, but I should think a man of good talents. Although from Kentucky, he did not seem to have any of the

stump eloquence that we often hear from that quarter, but spoke much more like our Northern logical, matter-of-fact men. He undertook to compliment the Senate, and spoke of its past efforts, as probably hereafter constituting one of the brightest pages in our history. A man who could do that seriously I regard as a hypocrite, or as laboring under a delusion of mind.

Webster looks as black as a thunder cloud, and is, I think, rather chop-fallen. Clay's nose is about as brilliant as ever, but does not contain quite a sufficient amount of choleric to dry the moisture of his eye. The opposition in the Senate are in a truly pitiable condition. They do not know which way to turn without meeting disgrace and defeat. I don't know but this is too harsh, if so, you can soften it by reflecting that my words are always harsher than my feelings.

I suppose Mr. Haines is thinking about going to court, for if I am not out in my reckoning it sits a week from yesterday. I presume he has not a great amount of business. It is not usual for Feb. term. I hope, however, he will have some trials, and meet with abundant success. If this reaches you before he leaves, tell him I shall be glad to hear as soon as he returns from Court, a full history of matters and things.

No information yet whether the offered mediation of England is accepted or not. I have an invitation for a supper party at Mr. Cass' on Friday, and an evening party at the President's on Thursday, the 11th. I have cards from J. P. Van Ness, former Mayor & Genl. Macovent, but I believe I shall not return the call. With my present acquaintance I shall go abroad full enough.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Gives His Opinion on Dancing

Washington, Feb. 3d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

With regard to the boys going to the dancing school, I might as well as not skulk from the responsibility, you having sent them before receiving my advice. But I do not hesitate to say, I approve your step. If I had been at home I should have permitted them to attend if they had desired it. In dancing, there is no harm, I regard it as a pleasant and healthy exercise.

It also serves to form the manners, and aids in the right development and expression, if I may so speak, of the body & limbs. But it may be abused, may be connected with dissipation, or indulged in to excess. For this I am no advocate.

I hope the boys will take some interest in it, and strive to become graceful and elegant dancers, rather than clumsy & sprawling dancers. Oh! the rogues, I wish I could see them taking their steps!

You ask who "Reis Effendi" is. His name is Paine, and is from Boston, a man about my age, less than my size, and does not look much like the author of such letters as you see in the Argus. He is a fellow of real genius, but a little odd. About 4 weeks ago he was in at Col. Hall's room with me when we got entangled in an argument. Each maintained his side spiritedly and as well as he could. My vanity led me to suppose that I had the better of it, and that Reis Effendi had the worst of it. At all events he went out rather shortly, and I did not see him again for weeks, except by meeting him in the streets when it was difficult to get a nod from him. He now, however, occasionally comes to my room, and is apparently on good terms with himself and me. Who "Reis Effendi" is, is now no secret here, all know him. Many of his letters published in the Argus I presume you find very amusing. The one today comparing Wise to a bottle of spruce beer has a good deal of humor in it.

This day has been taken up with a debate on the question, which committee, Calhoun's executive patronage bill should be submitted to, whether judiciary or select, and the House adjourned without coming to a conclusion. Oh, what a monstrous waste of time is committed here. Sometimes I have no patience with these eternal gabblers, and wish they had their mouths full of hot water. I don't know what they have been about in the Senate. Tonight I have an invitation to go up to Chs. Cutts' & suppose I must go, but it is awful cold, and I had rather not. I forgot to name to you some time ago that I had been admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of U. S. It is a mere honorary matter and costs nothing. I presume I never shall have an engagement in it. Love to all.

Your Husband &c.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. My Lord Coke says that "there is much excellent learning in all the &c. of Littleton."

## Patriotic Speech by Clayton

Washington Feb. 4, 1836.

Dear Wife,

One thing done today in the House which caused some little fluttering in certain quarters was to raise a committee of 24, one from each State, to look into the matter of mileage, i. e., the number of miles' travel for which the members receive pay. The course always has been for each member to fix his own distance from home, and in consequence some—those who have little conscience united with great developments of the bump of acquisitiveness—receive much more, it is believed, than they ought. White of Florida, it is said, draws pay for 1800 miles. How he makes it out I can't conceive and no one else I suspect but himself. But he is not alone.

I went into the Senate a few minutes and heard Clayton make a very patriotic speech. He said he was willing to vote for appropriating whatever was necessary to put the Country in a complete state of defence if it took every dollar in the treasury and every dollar that we could borrow, and said moreover that France nor any other foreign Power had a right to interfere in any way with the communicating between the different departments of our government and that for one, he never would consent that the President should apologize or even explain.

Last evening in pursuance of an invitation I went up to Mr. Chs. Cutts', Mr. Shepley was too unwell to go out, as he thought. Judge R. was under engagements to go to the theatre & Col. Hall wouldn't go. So I went alone. I met there a Mr. Sherburn, formerly of N. H., now in one of the Departments, and his two sisters, a Miss Van Zandis, sister of Dolly, our old acquaintance, a Miss Evans formerly of Portsmouth, a Miss Mills, formerly of S. C. and whose father I believe is now in one of the departments, and some others. Also Mr. Atkinson, editor of the Casket, a periodical published at Philadelphia, and for which Miss Stros is a writer, poetry & prose.

I had rather a pleasant time but liked to have frozen to death. I waited upon Miss Mills & Miss Evans home which was all on my way. I left them at the door supposing that their knock would be answered and that they would be let in at once, but, as far as I could see, after leaving them, and it was a very bright moonlight night, they were standing at the door outside. Whether they got in at all or not I have not yet heard,

but they probably did not freeze to death, otherwise we should see an account of it in the morning papers. With nothing more to add I subscribe myself

Forever yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Describing the New Vapour Baths

Washington, Feb. 6, 1836.

My dear Wife,

I expected to have recd. a letter from you this morning, but was in some measure consoled for my disappointment by receiving a long and interesting one from Mr. Haines. It was all about business, to be sure, but I have not been long enough at Washington yet to extinguish my love of business, and on reading Haines' letter I felt as if I wanted to put the professional harness on again and go to work. It seems he has been doing very well in the office, and I am glad of it for his sake if not for my own. When this reaches you, I suppose he will be away at Court.

Today we have no session of either branch of Congress, so I have nothing political to communicate. Last night I went to Mr. Cass' supper party. There were 23 of us and though it may sound ungrateful, I must say we had rather a cold and cheerless time. In the first place it was an awful cold night and all the fires that could be made in his small fireplaces were insufficient to warm the rooms. We went at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7 and sat shivering from that time till 10, some playing whist and some talking politics.

At 10 we sat down to supper and rose at 11. The table was most splendidly decorated, and we had everything and a little more to eat and drink. But, after all, I cannot say it was equal to the Vice-President's dinner party, and other considerations aside I should say so of all suppers compared with dinners. Mr. Cass is a very religious man and President, I believe, of the American Temperance Society. He drinks nothing himself, but keeps his glass of wine before him, and is every few minutes inviting some one to take a glass with him, when he puts his to his lips and goes through the form without drinking any. This is one way to cheat the "Old Fellow," which I don't like. I should, however, add that he keeps no spirit in his



house, except some "Port Wine" which those who tasted said came so near to brandy that it was not worth disputing about.

Mr. Shepley could not go, having a bad cold. I have tendered my services to cure him of it, and he is inclined to accept, but don't seem to have quite faith enough. By the way, in connection with this subject, I would remark that a gentleman has two vapour baths exhibiting at the Capitol, for which he is asking the patronage of Congress. It is in fact an ingenious way of practicing on the Thompsonian principle under new names. In this case, however, they generally use sulphur, though you may use spirits or water. I like the machine very much, and should like to have one of them. One is portable. It may be folded together and put into a case 2 feet square and 6 inches thick.

You can form some idea of it by supposing a cross-legged bedstead, with a silk gum elastic canopy over it with sides falling down round the bedstead so as to keep in all the vapor. The patient lies down, puts his head through a hole and lays it upon a movable cushion. The vapor or steam is then caused by burning the sulphur or spirits in a tin vessel at the foot, which is conveyed by a pipe in under the canopy or covering to the patient. Another pipe leading into the fireplace carries off the irrespirable vapor after it has done its office on the patient. This will give you some idea of it. I may, however, add that instead of the canvas, you may suppose a wooden frame or box a few inches deep, and some webbing extending across & back from one end to the other a few inches above the wood, on which the patient lies. Into this box or hollow frame, the fumes are first introduced, from which they come up through a hole to the patient, and after doing their office, as I before observed, are carried off by a pipe into the chimney.

Mr. Haines says in his letter recd. today that Danl. Merrill wants to know whether I want him to work with me next summer. You may tell him when he returns from Court to bargain if you please, if he will work for \$120. He asked me \$132. This, I think, is too much. I presume I can get enough for \$120. The commencement of the year, I suppose, would be between the 1st of April to the 1st of May, I couldn't say precisely now.

Well, how do the boys get along in dancing?

Your husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

Steel pen again, you perceive.

What do you think of my seal? It is my old watch seal, and is, I think, a very pretty one. I suppose it is the emblem of Pleasure, but don't know. At all events, it is a female dancing.

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### The Maine Delegation on Slavery

Washington, Feb. 8, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Our session continued today until after 5 o'clock, by which time you may well imagine we wanted some dinner. The whole time with the exception of two short speeches has been taken up in voting by yeas and nays on certain resolutions introduced by Pinckney of South Carolina as a sort of compromise. The resolutions refer all the petitions upon the subject of slavery with all the resolutions heretofore introduced and pending, to a select committee of nine with instructions to report that it would be unconstitutional to legislate upon the question of slavery in the States, that Congress ought not to legislate upon the subject in the Dis. of Columbia, because it would be a breach of public faith, unwise, impolitic, and would tend to dissolve the Union, &c., &c., &c.

I found no difficulty in going for all but the breach of public faith to legislate upon the subject for this District. However, I did go for it. For all admit that it would be a breach of public faith to meddle with slavery in the States. If, then, by legislating upon the subject here, it should vitally affect the question of slavery in the States, render their property less secure, as well as endanger the lives of the owners, it would seem to me to be a breach of public faith, it would be doing indirectly what we admit we have not the power of doing directly. The Maine delegation all went for it but Smith.

The President sent in a message today, stating that England had offered a mediation between us & France, that he had accepted it, and recommended that we should not act upon his former recommendation of non-intercourse until it be seen what course France takes with regard to this proposition of England.

This, I apprehend, will, as well it may, put to flight all apprehensions of war. I have no doubt England will advise France to pay on the ground that the explanation in the President's message should be regarded as satisfactory, and France will

yield to the advice. I rejoice at this prospect. I am inclined by principle and feeling to peace, as you well know, but I would prefer fighting to degradation.

Mrs. Cass is out with another invitation to a party for Thursday, the 18th. He is very rich, worth from 500,000 to a million of dollars, and is very desirous that his wife should spend freely. To this neither she nor her daughters are very much inclined. The daughters are very plain and simple in their dress and manners, & are called rather superior girls.

Last night I went to hear a Mr. Mussey at the Unitarian Church. He was pretty fair, or a little better than that, perhaps. Mr. Palfrey has left here and I believe has gone North. He is a man of excellent sense, great purity of character and a polished writer, but is wanting, as most ministers are, in animation. Mussey is here, I believe, only for a few weeks, whether they mean to break up or not, I am not informed. Their society is very feeble.

This steel pen on hard polished paper enables me to write upon the gallop.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### In Regard to Wife's Birthday

Washington, Feb. 9, 1836.

Dear Wife,

On Monday you say you was 31. I had forgotten the day of the month, but I know the relative difference of our ages. You feel like 50, or rather as others appear at 50, you say. You feel, then, very differently from what you appear. No one, I think, would take you to be over 25 by your appearance. And as for myself, you know my looks belie me very much—or rather it is so said. The other day I set our boarders to guessing my age. One went as high as 37, one as low as 27, but most of them, I believe, about 28 to 30. Up at Mrs. Cutts' the other evening I was supposed by one to be 25 only, and "so we go," as you say.

Your remark that unless we alter our course we shall have the opportunity next winter to inquire into the causes of the loss of another fortification bill, has as much truth as wit in it.

We have spent the whole of this day in discussing one item, in one of the appropriations, for one of the harbors of our coast. When we shall get through at this rate "the Lord only knows."

In the Senate, Leigh has been making a speech about the lost bill, relations with France, &c. I did not hear him, but I understand he went almost as far as Calhoun in putting his own Country in the wrong and France in the right. The Lord preserve us from such patriots, say I. There is an illiberality and narrowness of views and feelings about the opposition that astonishes me, if it does not lessen my estimation of the dignity & worth of human nature.

And my dear boys, how do you get along? How do you like going to dancing school? Have you learnt your steps yet? How many go, and who are they? Who are the best dancers? How do you get along at Aunt Cutts' school, too? For I hope you do not neglect that. Very soon I trust I shall get letters from you. I believe you are good boys, study your lessons, for school, get lessons for Sunday, obey your Ma in all things, are good natured & try to make everybody happy.

My love to all,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### CHAPTER III.

(LETTERS OF 1836, CONTINUED)

Washington, Feb. 10, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Another day has been spent in the discussion of one of the items in the bill making appropriation for the repair and improvement of the Navy Yards, and the adjournment was moved by Dutee J. Pearce, who will probably spend a large part of the morrow in a boisterous speech if nothing more. From attacks on the amount proposed for the repair & improvement of the Navy Yard at Portsmouth, some of them have commenced attacks upon the station itself, and Pearce, though an administration man, will probably attempt to show the vast superiority of Narragansett bay over every other part of the Country, & propose that all other stations be dropped for Narragansett.

Last evening I went up to your Uncle Richard's. I did not see Dolly, or Thomas' wife and Mary was just rigging off for a party, so I spent the evening with the old gentleman & Thos., of whom I have before spoken in my letters.

Tomorrow night we go to the President's and I would give all my old shoes if you were here to go with me. But, for the want of you, I shall take Mrs. Mason, if I can get her, i.e., when there, for one feels awkward & lonely without a lady to promenade and chat with. I have been to the President's but a few times since I came here, and, indeed, have been about very little. Just before commencing this letter I finished franking 200 of Isaac Hill's speeches and so feel somewhat fatigued. I am

In love and law, Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The Bankruptcy of the City of Washington in 1836

Washington, Feb. 11, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I have spent the whole of today in the Senate listening to a debate on a bill for the relief of the District of Col. I took a particular interest in the bill as it went from the Committee to which I belong, although I opposed it in Committee. Or rather

the two committees, Senate & House, had two joint meetings & they finally agreed on the bill reported, accompanied by a long report, myself alone dissenting. It seems that some few years ago, the Cities of Washington, Alexandria & Georgetown subscribed about a million & a half of dollars to the stock of the Ohio & Potomac Canal, Congress authorizing them to hire the money for that purpose. Mr. Rush, who was then Secretary of the Treasury, was sent to Holland by the Corporations for the purpose of effecting the loan which he accordingly did.

For the security of the creditors, the President of the U. States was authorized to issue his warrant and cause the property of the cities to be sold whenever they were delinquent. They have struggled along and paid the interest until now, when they find themselves unable to do it any longer. This City is literally bankrupt, and the warrant has issued for a sale of the property. Under these circumstances what shall be done? The Committee proposed by their bill to assume the debt & refund to the corporations what they had already paid! A proposition which I considered monstrous, a gift, an absolute gift, of about \$2,000,000! Instead of this, I proposed in Committee that we should pay the debt now outstanding & no more; and that not by way of gift, but that we should take a conveyance of the canal stock to trustees or Sec. of Treasury, and that it be held as security for the repayment to the U. S. of the sum advanced for the Cities. After a whole day's discussion of the bill in the Senate, it has been re-committed for the purpose of having the very amendments made in it which I proposed.

Tyler<sup>1</sup>, Clay, Benton, Southard, Leigh, Davis, Shepley, Goldsborough & Niles took a part in the discussion. Tyler in his speech said that a different ground was taken in the Committee from that assumed in the bill, but was afterward abandoned. That was a mistake, to call it by no harsher name. I expressly dissented, and stated my reasons and never abandoned them.

In the House the discussion of the Navy Yard bill was continued by Pearce, Hardin & Cushing<sup>2</sup>. I understand there was some pretty sharp shooting between Cushing & Hardin, and that one man in the gallery undertook to clap Cushing, whereupon the galleries were cleared. A few days ago Judge Underwood of Kentucky broached the subject of our mileage and on resolutions introduced by him for the purpose of equalizing the travel a Com. of 24, one from each State, was raised, on which

you perceive I have the honor to be placed. I suspect it will not be a very thankful job if we are obliged to cut down some of the Western members.

Last night, for the first time, I wrote a letter to my old friend in the East, Rogers of Bangor, and while it lay upon my table this morning whom should I meet in the street but Mr. Rogers himself, he having arrived last night. A young man from Maine is also here by the name of Browne, son of the husband of Elizabeth Titcomb, also a Capt. Eastman of Fryeburg and Tom Abbott has also been here, but I believe he has returned home. Little Vose of Augusta is also here.

It being now time to dress for the President's party I must "haul taut & belay" as the sailors say.

Ever yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD

<sup>1</sup>John Tyler, afterward President.

<sup>2</sup>This introduces a most interesting personality, Caleb Cushing, of vast erudition, rare ability, imposing in person, forcible in argument; an author of a one-time widely useful book on Political Economy, of numerous histories, reminiscences, historical reviews and a master of parliamentary practice. Mr. Fairfield was hearing a great man in Cushing. He was about 35 years old at this time and had been a wide traveler, graduate of Harvard, and had been practicing law at Newburyport, Mass. John Tyler, who participated in this debate, appointed Cushing first Minister Plenipotentiary to China. His service there was historical. He became a brigadier-general in the Mexican War, Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, Attorney General under Pierce. He was minister to Spain when 74 years of age.

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### No More Parties for Fairfield

Washington, Feb. 12, 1836.

Dear Wife,

If I do not change my mind, I shall go to very few more parties. The fruits of my last night's party are a cold, a headache and much stupidity. The jam was tremendous, and when the door of the supper room was opened, there was a rush and a scramble disgraceful to the last degree and such an one as I rejoice will not again occur, for Maj. Donelson said there would be no more suppers given. We (Niles, Ruggles, Toucey & myself) got ready to leave about 12 o'clock, but it was full 1 o'clock before we could get our carriage to the door or could find it.

To know where to lay our hands on our coats & hats, they were left in the carriage, in consequence of which I had to go out without either and after I had been perspiring freely, to hunt up our carriage, which was no easy job among hundreds,

the drivers of which were all quarreling and pushing for the next turn to drive up to the door.

In this way I caught a little cold which, added to my imprudence in partaking so freely of the good things provided for us, causes me today to feel as if I never want to go to another party. I would undertake to describe this one to you, but it would be no more than a repetition of what I have said before, except that this was larger than the prior one, and more strangers were present.

Today we have been discussing in the House a bill for the relief of Jesse Smith & others, the same which was discussed last Friday, involving an appropriation of about 20,000 dollars. If I had felt well enough I think I should have had a word to say upon the subject. It excites much interest and has called forth two or three of the best speeches I have heard in the House particularly Whittlesey's for the bill & Williams, of N. C. against it. In the Senate Calhoun has been making an anti-abolition speech and was particularly abusive of Mr. Hill as I have heard, and also of Mr. Pierce of the House. Hill also attacked Calhoun with much acrimony and I suspect pretty fairly balanced the account. Considering all things I know you will pardon me for writing no more at present.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Home Folks in Washington

Washington, Feb. 13, 1836.

Dear Wife,

The Senate did not sit today, and the House have done nothing but receive resolutions, memorials, &c., and refer them, so I have but little to say.

We have a considerable number of Maine folks here, which is a very pleasant thing for us, say Mr. Rogers & Genl. Veazie of Bangor, John D. McCrate of Wiscasset, Mr. Cooley also of Bangor & wife, who I believe are coming to Mrs. Hill's to board, Mr. Vose of Augusta, Mr. Eastman of Fryeburg and Mr. Norton also of Bangor.

You will undoubtedly see by the papers that France has accepted of the offered mediation of England, and that consequently all apprehensions of war are entirely dispersed.



The Bank's operations in the Legislature of Pennsylvania seem to be attracting as much of the public attention now as anything else. There is no doubt entertained now, I believe, of the success of the Bank through bribery the most foul and disgraceful, in procuring a charter. The people are holding public meetings there, and expressing their feelings in the strongest manner, but I don't believe it will prevent the charter, and once obtained I see no way of getting rid of it.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Chapter of Politics

Washington, Feb. 13, 1836.

Dear Wife,

At the opening of the session today Frank. Pierce obtained leave to make an explanation of a statement made some weeks since that not one in 800 of his constituents were abolitionists and to repel an attack made upon him in the Senate by Calhoun. It seems that on Friday last when one of these abolition petitions was under discussion, Calhoun, in order to show that Pierce's statement was not true, introduced and read a scurrillous article from a scurrillous paper in New Hampshire.

Pierce replied with a good deal of feeling and vindicated himself from the charge of having stated what was not true, and as he had been called in the article alluded to "a dough face," he took occasion to say that if any gentleman was disposed to take that statement for truth, he would then inform him, that "he was ready at any time, and in any way, to test it with him." And I presume there is no doubt but that he would make this declaration good and fight if any one should challenge him.

After this matter was disposed of, Briggs of Massachusetts introduced another abolition petition, which under the resolution introduced the other day by Pinckney, should have gone to the Select Committee without debate, but the Speaker made an erroneous decision & said the question of its non reception might be made & debated.

Whereupon Wise got on his tall horse & rode off, splashing the mud all over the House. He was soon, however, called to order for a gross personal attack on Pinckney, and before he could get under way again, Vinton of Ohio appealed from the

decision of the Chair, that this question was open to debate. And upon this question of order a debate ensued which lasted the whole day, and had not terminated when the House adjourned. I think the Speaker's decision was wrong & that it will tomorrow be reversed, the effect of which will be to stop the mouths of these Southern fanatics, upon the petitions of the Northern fanatics.

The news from France this morning is, that Louis Phillipe has sent word to England that she, England, need not trouble herself about a mediation, for that she, France, is ready to pay without further delay. From Virginia, too, we not only have the good news that the instructions to their Senators to vote for the expunging resolutions of Benton have passed,—but the Richmond Whig, an opposition paper, says that it is the wish of the Whig party at home that the Senators should resign, & that they cannot with any propriety hold their seats. They must resign, they cannot stand against all this, and then we shall have Mr. Rives back and another democratic Senator.

Glorious! Soon the expunging resolution will pass and the day that sees that matter accomplished should be observed as a day of general jubilee throughout the Country<sup>1</sup>.

If this dish is too highly seasoned with politics for your taste, you can hand it over to Mr. Haines.

Affectionately Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>The expunging resolution was the cause celebre of the day—the resolution to expunge from the records the resolution of censure passed on Pres. Jackson for withdrawing United States deposits from the United States Bank. A censure of the President was unheard of until then. In 1837 the vote was expunged from the record. But around these votes waged bitter warfare. Feuds were started that never ended. It brought the differences between Clay and Jackson to a head. And Old Hickory stormed about Washington declaring that he would “cut off the ears” of his opponents, especially Clay's ears.

### A Maine Private Squabble

Washington, Feb. 16, 1836.

Dear Wife,

We have had another rather exciting time in the House,—the circumstances of which were thus: Some time since F. O. J. Smith of Maine introduced a resolve that Maj. Barry's (the old P. M. Genl.) letter sent to the House last session, but too late to be acted on, be now printed. The letter contradicted the statements of a report of a special committee who had been appointed to investigate the affairs of the P. O. Smith's motion

was laid over & came up regularly today. At the time of its introduction Hawes of Kentucky, who is a good democrat & who was moreover a warm friend of Barry, told me that if Smith persisted in his motion, he and others of the Committee would in vindication of themselves denounce the letter of Barry said to be written by Frank (F. O. J. Smith of Portland) & a clerk in the P. O. as a tissue of falsehood and would moreover show it to be so in point of fact.

Whereupon I went to Smith & endeavored to persuade him to withdraw his motion and so did Hall & Doct. Mason. But he would not. So today when the matter came up Hawes took the floor & said at the commencement of it that he should go as far in his attacks on the gentleman from Maine as the rules would permit. He is very inflammable and one of the greatest declaimers in the House and had not, therefore, made much progress before he pronounced a letter which had been written & published by Smith during the vacation upon the subject of the report of Hawes' committee, to be absolutely and unqualifiedly false.

The Speaker here called him to order and then a scene of much confusion commenced, a great many striving to get possession of the floor, and those who did get it, arguing with much vehemence & feeling that it was or was not out of order, an appeal having been taken from the Speaker's decision. Wise & Peyton also embraced the opportunity to be very saucy and run into the political topics of the day. Finally a vote was taken and the decision of the Speaker was sustained by a large majority.

In the meantime, however, Smith in speaking on the question of order had pronounced the statement of Hawes to be false and he was called to order & made to sit down. After the decision of the question of order, Cambrelling moved that we proceed to the orders of the day, which was carried.

The New York bill providing for the relief of the merchants who had suffered by the fire by extending the credit on their bonds to U. S. for duties, came up, and Phillips, a merchant of Salem, got the floor and made a long and able speech in favor of the bill, after which the House adjourned.

There is much combustible matter in the House, and I am expecting every day to have it blow up. Not time to write more now.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## One of Judge Shepley's Speeches

Washington, Feb. 18, 1836.

Hon. R. McIntire,

Dr. Sir, I went into the Senate chamber about half an hour ago and found Mr. Shepley (Judge Ether Shepley of Maine) making a speech, on Benton's resolutions, I suppose, but in which he noticed some things that took place in the Senate yesterday, and I think very happily and with much effect.

Yesterday Calhoun used very harsh language in regard to the President and in substance denounced him as guilty of falsehood and also used very uncourteous & ungentlemanly language of Mr. Van Buren. Wall of N. J. upon the spur of the moment, and in an indignant manner, answered him and said substantially that no gentleman would use such language. Niles of Conn. in a very spirited speech pretty distinctly called in question the honesty of Calhoun & Co.

Today when I went into the Senate, Shepley was saying that such matters, i. e., the course of denunciation pursued by the gentlemen from South Carolina, gave him no trouble—for he had always found that denunciations were harmless, except so far as they acted by way of recoil on the actors. If, he said, you found many political carcasses along the political highway, they were not the carcasses of men who had been killed by denunciation either on this floor or in the newspapers or elsewhere, but of those who were the authors of their own mire—i. e., it was the result of their own doctrines and course of conduct, &c., &c.

He said that the gentleman from N. Y. (Wall) would, after he had been there a little longer, learn to sit coolly & philosophically & hear the system of denunciation & abuse pursued. He said that gentleman probably had some mistaken notions of the Senate, of its nature, organization, duties, &c. That he had probably looked into the Constitution to ascertain those matters, but that he should recollect that in practice the Senate, instead of being what it was designed to be, was four days out of five resolved into a great central electioneering committee. And that in this committee the parts were all regularly assigned; that is to say, to the gentlemen from S. C. and one from N. C. (Mangum) was assigned the part of denunciation and abuse; to the gentleman from Mass. (Webster) to be the guardian & protector of the Constitution, though he didn't think he was very successful in that object when he took the Constitutional powers from one

department of government & transferred them to another; to the gentleman from Kentucky (Clay) to originate matters for electioneering; to the gentleman from N. J. (Southard) to deal out the sops by way of increased salaries, &c.; to the gentleman from R. I. (Robbins, I suppose), to distribute the various matters concocted in committee, &c., though he never was heard to give a reason for anything he proposed, &c., &c., &c.

This slight sketch is perhaps erroneous in some things, and I hope you will see his speech published.

Mangum answered him, in good humor, & Shepley replied in fine taste and so humorously that the whole matter went off in good nature.

In too much haste to add more,

Very truly Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Almost Breaks the Sabbath

Washington, Feb. 21, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Here you have Mr. Benton<sup>1</sup>, the noble, heroic old Tom, the veteran democrat & the probable successor of Mr. Van Buren. I have been to meeting today at the Unitarian House where I have hired half a pew, for which I have to pay at the rate of \$26 per year for the whole pew, or \$13 for my half. This is enormous but I could do no better. I am tired of running about to meeting and I am loth any longer when I don't run about to be dependent upon first one & then another for a seat, and upon those, too, who have had to hire their pews.

Mr. Farley preached and is to continue here, I believe, some weeks. He is a very sound, substantial preacher, but appears to be a little cold & artificial. Mr. Stockton, I think, has lost some of his popularity, he is not much run after this session.

Last evening I was up at Mr. Chas. Cutts' again. There is no resisting their invitations, for, if you stay away, they are apt to attribute it to their poverty, &c., &c., and I would submit to a good deal rather than have such a notion imputed to me. Indeed, there is no great sacrifice about it, except that the idea is constantly present to your mind that they are not able to have company.

Last evening I had a very pleasant time, more so than at any party since I have been in Washington. There were Uncle

Richard, Thomas & Dolly, Miss Evans & Miss Mills, of whom I spoke once before in my letters, Doct. Mason & wife and Mr. Harlan, a member from Kentucky. These, added to Miss Stros, Mrs. Cutts & family, made a very pleasant little party. Dolly is really quite social, agreeable and sometimes humorous. How came I to be so mistaken in her at first?

You may be surprised that I should go Saturday evening. It is strange how soon we become accustomed to the habits and manners of those with whom we happen to be placed and how readily we slide into their views and modes of thinking and feeling, however adverse to them we might formerly have been. In this case, however, I sacrifice no principle, nor are my views or feelings in any degree changed. In regard to Saturday evening and the Sabbath I have always entertained what I deemed to be rational views, but I made the remark as a general one. It is, however, certainly true that the influences here are of an anti-religious character, and though I came here fully aware of that fact, I suppose, with all others, my feelings may have been in some measure affected by them, but I trust in the goodness of Him who has hitherto protected & sustained me, that I may be enabled to cherish religious principle, if I cannot always have religious fervor. Wishing you an abundance of happiness, I am

Very truly thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>This is probably another of Mr. Fairfield's pen sketches which he was fond of making. It was then planned by the Democrats that democratic succession should be Van Buren following Jackson and Benton following Van Buren.

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### Clay Is Impudent and Envious

Washington, Feb. 22d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

There being no session of the House today, I went into the Senate Chamber. The President sent in his message in relation to French affairs accompanied by a letter from the English Minister stating that France had given them notice that the money would be paid without anything being done by way of mediation.

After the reading of the message & documents Clay got up and made an impudent and envious speech. He congratulated the Senate & the Country on the happy termination of this difficulty but particularly the Senate for what they had con-

tributed toward it; charged both countries with being in the wrong and then went on to show wherein our Country was wrong, saying nothing about the errors of France.

He intimated an opinion that France had a right to call for explanations of a President's message to Congress, therein differing from Clayton and several others of the opposition. He tried to hit Van Buren for his instructions to McLane when the latter was minister to England, abused the President, the party & almost everybody else. No one answered him, at which I was much disappointed.

As, however, in the present state of affairs, Clay can do nothing but growl, perhaps it is but fair to let him retain that privilege. It was rumored this morning that Clay was about to resign, and I went into the Senate Chamber with the expectation of hearing him make a farewell speech. I was quickly undeceived, however, on getting in & finding that there were very few ladies in the gallery. It is rumored that he will resign soon, whether with or without foundation, time will show.

The weather here is beginning to be spring like, and they say we shall have no more uncomfortably cold weather.

I enclose you a likeness of Chief Justice Marshall<sup>1</sup>, said to be a very correct one by those who had seen him much. I wish I could shade it, it would appear much better, but I cannot.

Robert J. Walker, the new Miss. Senator, took his seat today. He is about my height, if anything, under, and more slender, but he has a fine head and countenance. I was surprised to find a man who had acquired so much reputation and whom we have regarded as a great man, so small a man. I only had a moment's look at him. I will tell you more of him by and by.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>John Marshall died July 6th, 1835. Mr. Fairfield must have sent a picture that he obtained elsewhere of the distinguished jurist who died in his 80th year. In other words it was not one of his own sketches from life.

### Inklings of a Duel

Washington, Feb. 27th.

My dear Wife,

The Senate has not been in session today and in the House we have been at work upon private business, i. e., the claims of individuals upon the government. This generally is not very

interesting, though now & then a claim comes up which excites a very good debate!

A day or two since we had an inkling of what, perhaps, you have been long expecting, viz. a duel. It seems that Hannegan of Indiana, who is about my age & size & a good deal wilder, when coming on, fell into the company of a Lieut. in the army, with whom he had rather an angry dispute. A few nights ago they again met at the theatre, accidentally falling into the same box. The Lieut., it is said, punched Hannegan with his elbow, whereupon H. drew his pistol and threatened to shoot him—the quarrel making a good deal of noise. The next day, it is said, the Lieut. challenged Hannegan and the government thereupon immediately ordered him (the Lieutenant) off, and there the matter rests. For most of these facts I am indebted to Doct. Mason and I suppose in the main they are correct.

By the way, did I ever tell you who & what Doctor Mason<sup>1</sup> was? I presume you may have heard of a letter he wrote home to Stephen Emery last winter, which, by hook or by crook, found its way into the newspaper. It must be confessed that in a literary point of view the letter was a wretched affair, and did no great credit to the literature of the State. But it would hardly be fair to judge the Doctor by that. It is true that his early advantages were small, and that he is somewhat illiterate, but no one would suspect it by personal intercourse with him, i. e., a casual intercourse I mean. He is a man of good personal appearance, indeed, there are few handsomer men in the House, and has a good share of common sense. He seems also to be a man of good principles, and of a kindly disposition. Upon the whole, I like the Doctor very well.

His wife is a real, clever, good Yankee woman. In former days, she was a school mistress, and of course is pretty well educated. She dresses well and appears well, though a Calvinistic Baptist<sup>2</sup>. By and by I will say something of the remainder of our delegation when I have more time. But for the present I only add

Good night,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Moses Mason of Bethel, Me., a physician, member of the House with Fairfield.

<sup>2</sup>"Though a Calvinist Baptist." This alone is worth the price of publishing these memoirs.



**Tyler Resigns**

Washington, Feb. 29, 1836.

Dear Wife,

As was anticipated, today Mr. Tyler of Virginia sent in his resignation to the Senate. Leigh remains, though I think he will find his seat rather uncomfortable. This being petition day in the House, but little has been done other than receiving and referring petitions. On the presentation, however, of some Virginia Resolutions upon the subject of slavery, Wise continued to give us another tirade—but after squirting his small beer as Paine says for about half an hour, the Speaker called him to order, directed him to take his seat. A motion was then made that he have liberty to proceed, which did not prevail, so he has been fairly choked down once, if no more.

In the Senate Mr. King of Georgia, has been making a very sound speech upon some questions growing out of the abolition petitions. Since writing the foregoing Mr. Ela, a fine fellow, a Clerk in the Treasury Department, & formerly from N. H. has been in and says that he heard today that Leigh had concluded to obey instructions and vote for the expunging resolutions—but I doubt it. If he do, it will be swallowing a bitter pill.

Have you got any weather at Saco? We have a plenty of it here. Yesterday and today the sleighs have been flying briskly, though I think tomorrow, the first day of March, will put a stopper on them.

One word as to matters at home. If you conclude to move the 1st of May I will, by and by, take measures to have a horse bought, that is, a farm horse, which, upon the whole, I suppose I shall have to buy whether you move or not, for I have concluded that it would be better for me to have one yoke of oxen and a horse to work before them, than two yoke of oxen. So, having a horse, we must borrow Uncle William's chaise, or somebody's else, until I return, when I shall buy one or something that will do as well. By and by, however, when the weather is suitable, say in April, you had better go down and see the House, and ascertain whether your courage is equal to going into it to live before it is repaired. I shall write to Mr. Haines tomorrow and enclose him a draft for \$500 and ask him to do some errands for me touching the farm, &c. &c.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**Mr. Fairfield Moves Down and Up**

Washington, March 11th.

Dear Wife,

I have got the start of you in one thing at least, to wit, I have moved and you have not. I now write from a room one story lower than my old one. It is about—stop & I'll jump up and pace it—say 18 to 12 feet large, is on the front and has a pleasant aspect, burns wood instead of coal, has shelves & other conveniences that the old one had not. On the whole my location is very pleasant. There is one slight drawback, I have to pay \$10 a week instead of \$8.

Among the pleasant things, however, connected with this important event is that Hunt, the only heretical fellow in the mess politically, has changed his quarters, leaving this very room. I suspect he began to find his position at our table beset with too many perils, or at all events rather uncomfortable—for we have not been much in the habit of restraining speech.

A somewhat curious & novel case was presented to the House today, and one which elicited a good deal of discussion. It seems that last session an act passed the House directing that two individuals, naming them, be placed upon the pension rolls, and was sent to the Senate. By the Journal of the Senate it appears that the bill, or the report of the Senate's committee thereon, be indefinitely postponed. And yet by accident it was signed by the Secretary of the Senate and sent to the President who also signed his approval.

The Secretary of War on being informed of the fact by the Secretary of the Senate, declined paying the pensions, and today the matter was presented to the House. Underwood of Kentucky, Hoar of Massachusetts, Vinton & Storer of Ohio, took the ground that the law was valid to all intents and purposes and that the Secretary was bound to execute it. Beardsley and some others, that it was to be regarded as valid by the Judiciary and the Secretary of War, but not by Congress, and this latter was the ground I took when the question was first broached—i. e., to the little squad immediately around where I sit, for though I don't make public speeches, we very often have quite a discussion among ourselves. It is a question of some difficulty—and where so many good lawyers differ, I cannot feel confident. Shepley is inclined to think that though the Judiciary could not go behind the law and show that the

legal forms had not been observed in passing it, yet that the Secretary might. So there you have it.

Good-night,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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“Calhoun is Crazy”

Washington, March 14th.

Dear Wife,

As I have engaged to go out tonight and have but little time to spare, I believe I will take for my letter to you an extract from one I have just finished to Stephen Emery: “Well, how do you like Washington?”

That is a very natural question of yours—but in answer I am obliged to say I don't know. There are so many things to please & so many to displease that I find my opinions constantly balancing—or in other words my mind is like a piece of India rubber, fastened in the centre while various characters, scenes, events, interests and objects are pulling at the circumference. Sometimes the tension is more one way than another, and sometimes equal, and—but I must leave it to your better imagination to carry out the figure—”

In giving him a brief description of some of the Senators my letter goes thus: “Calhoun is crazy and malignant as a demon. Preston is imagination personified. Clay is ebullient with egotism, envy & eloquence. Leigh is an old school Syllogism, an absurdity with Reason's great coat on. Mangum is vain, vaunting & vituperative. Wall is a sort of ‘sleepy David,’ give him whip and spur enough and he'll run like Eclipse. Benton is a Seventy Four, and woe betide the barque that receives his broadside,” &c., &c.

In love and law Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, March 18th.

Dear Wife,

I went last night to Mrs. Woodbury's party. The company was more select than her former ones. There was all the beauty & fashion of the City, and some besides. In regard to dress of ladies, manners, modes of enjoyment there, eatables and drinkables, they were about what I have before described.

Perhaps I should except the dress of one lady said to be the fashion latest from Paris. It was a gown minus the bishop sleeves. The sleeve was short, reaching a little more than half way to the elbow, snug, and three or four rows of shoal ruffles at the end, say something like this. (Here sketch is made.) I hope I was correctly informed, and that the bishop sleeves are soon to be among the things lost on earth. I never thought they were graceful or added in any way to the beauty of the form. If I recollect rightly, your Mother's dress in her portrait will be all the go, though I don't feel very positive about the dress in the portrait.

I do not intend to go to any more parties. I have had enough of them for one winter.

By the way, Mrs. Tooley gave me an invitation to visit Col. Tooley and herself during the session. I believe it is about 60 miles from here. She planned the route and appeared to be very cordial in the invitation. Doct. Mason & his wife are going, & the latter seems to be a great friend of Mrs. Tooley. However, I suppose I ought to tell further, and not lay my invitation to the score of her partiality, that I have been talking of going to Harper's Ferry during the spring, which I believe is only about ten or fifteen miles from Tooley's plantation.

I have spent the whole day in the Senate hearing Mr. Benton on the expunging resolutions. He is making a powerful speech, and I presume is not half through.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Almost Makes His Speech

Washington, March 25th.

Dear Wife,

I came pretty near making a speech today on the North Carolina contested election. I made two attempts to get the floor and failed in both. The last time Graves of Kentucky succeeded and after he had proceeded a few minutes, I rose to a question of order and claimed the floor on the ground that Graves had spoken once before upon the same question, but the Speaker decided that it was too late to take that ground after the member from Kentucky had been permitted to proceed in his remarks.





HAMPDEN FAIRFIELD  
Third Son of John Fairfield

So there's my luck, and who knows but what it may have been in fact good luck, for if I lost the opportunity of making a good speech, I also lost the opportunity of making a poor one, so I'll study to be content. But I felt pretty well for a speech just then.

Wise had been giving us one of his tirades and I wanted to answer him from the impulse of the moment, and while my feelings were warm. I believe I shall not renew the attempt tomorrow as we have stinted them (the opposition) with three days, closing with tomorrow, for the settling of this question, and the regular speakers, those to whom parts have been assigned, will want the whole day, probably.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### His Religious and Political Duties Conflict

Washington, March 27.

Dear Wife,

This is Sunday, and what will you say when I tell you that I did not get home from the session of the House until daylight this morning. The session was from 11 o'clock, forenoon, to ½ past 4 next morning, say 17½ hours. It was such a night as I hope never to be obliged to pass through again.

I felt determined with the rest during the whole day to sit the opposition out and take the vote, not dreaming that there was danger of going into Sunday. But when 12 o'clock arrived I was in a quandary. I hesitated about my course but finally concluded that I would stick to my post, a post assigned me by the people. But then, being satisfied that more injury would result to the public morals by the example set, than political good from continuing this session into the Sabbath, I felt inclined to adjourn.

But my political friends were opposed to adjournment. What then, should I do? I finally concluded to stand by but take no part except under imperious circumstances. Accordingly there will be three lists of yeas & nays when my name will not be found. I declined, or rather omitted to vote, nothing, of course, being said about it. So my vote will not be found recorded among the nays on the questions of adjournment where-by I should have contributed to keep the House in session &

compelling them to act on the Sabbath, nor will it be found among the yeas, whereby I should appear to be acting with the opposition. And on the whole, considering what scenes transpired after 12 o'clock, I feel somewhat satisfied with my course, though I felt a little troubled about it at the time.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Michigan in the Senate

April 2d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

The House today has been engaged except the first hour, in private business, and I have been passing my day in the Senate where the Michigan question<sup>1</sup> has been under discussion.

Yesterday we dined and took our tea without our Senators, after having waited for them a reasonable time. About ½ after 7 in the evening I went back to the Capitol and found the Senate in session, and our friends manifesting a determination to have the vote taken at all events.

The opposition were maneuvering just as they did in the House last Saturday, moving adjournments, and other questions, to take up the time of the Senate, weary our Senators out, and prevent the question being taken. When they found that they could not accomplish their purpose in any other way, most of them went away, to destroy a quorum, but seven of them, it seems, were afraid to carry matters this length, and remained & voted. The bill was carried by 24 to 7. Today the question is on its final passage.

One of the principal questions raised is as follows: The constitution of Michigan permits "inhabitants" to vote, and Clay & the opposition contend she may, under this. permit aliens to vote (indeed as a matter of fact they do), and thereby defeat the naturalization laws of the U. S.

Preston broke from his party, and made a very able argument in favor of Michigan. He maintained that the qualifications of voters was a matter entirely for the States to settle, each State for itself; that the constitution of U. S. requires that the electors of members of Congress shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State Legislature but don't say what those qualifications shall be, leaving it for the State to settle. He said that if Con-



gress should go farther, they might as well add to the constitutional qualifications of members of Congress, to wit, 25 years of age, 7 years residence, &c.

Clay replied to him, making one of his best arguments. The question is a doubtful one, though I am inclined to think our folks are right; indeed, on reflection, I am satisfied of it. The Senate have not yet adjourned. I suspect they are determined to have the vote tonight.

Since writing the foregoing, finding that our Senators did not come home to dinner, I have been up to the Senate. They have just adjourned—say  $1\frac{1}{2}$  past 7, having passed the bill admitting Michigan and also the bill admitting Arkansas through all its stages but the last, which I suppose will be done on Monday.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

The admission of Michigan as a State was a celebrated issue in Jackson's day. Benton's "Thirty Years View" contains many pages of this debate.

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Washington, Apr. 3d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

For want of something better to write you, I send a letter recd. from Judge Mellen this morning, with my answer, which was as follows:

"Dear Judge,

Today your letter came, Bro. Pond,  
Like most men, being rather fond  
Of seeing his watery name in print,  
Inclines to think the deuce is in't,  
That his great case, Adams & Rowe,  
Should e'er by me be treated so;  
And left as if 'twere useless lumber,  
Upon the dusty shelf to slumber.  
In answer, now, I have the pleasure,  
In rickety, disjointed measure,  
To say that Adams versus Rowe,  
Will be in "Fairfield" volume two:  
"And fuddermore"\* 'tis now in press,  
And soon the legal world will bless.  
My "printed speech," Oh dear, Oh, Oh,  
Existing but in embryo,

I cannot send you; and the best  
 I can do, is, of your request  
 To take the other branch; & so I'll try,  
 To send some "staves of social poet-wry."  
 Your wish falls sweetly on my ears,  
 That I may live a thousand years;  
 And in return, from my heart's core,  
 I wish for you a thousand more.  
 Respectfully & truly yours,

J. F.—"

(\*Parson Webster)

There, what do you think of that? "Hain't I going to be a Poet?" as Hodge said, when he wrote:

Sweetly the breezes  
 Blow thro' the treezes;  
 I send by the muses  
 A new pair of shoeses

Or as the Vermont Poet said, when he began his poetical career with,

The sun to bed began to hitch  
 And everything grew dark as pitch.

Your opinion is respectfully solicited, and "the smallest favors gratefully acknowledged."

There, if this isn't nonsense enough for one letter, I think it's a pity. In love & fun

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The Expunging Resolutions Again

Washington, April 4, 1836.

Dear Wife,

In the Senate Leigh has occupied the day in answer to Rives on the expunging resolutions. One side say it is a very able speech, and the other side say that his arguments, many of them, are very good only they had no application to the case. I did not hear it myself.

In the House Hawes of Kentucky occupied the time till one o'clock in answer to Chilton Allan on the Kentucky resolutions in favor of dividing the moneys arising from sales of the public land. He didn't leave Granny Harrison in the shape of anything human. Went into his war history, and among other things introduced some of his correspondence.

Hawes is naturally a man of very good powers—but he is a real ranter—speaks as loud as possible, and as low as possible and speaks not merely with his tongue, but with his hands, feet, head & whole body.

After one o'clock Jarvis<sup>1</sup> took the floor on the Naval appropriation bill and made what I suppose will read as a tolerable good speech. He has a voice which is very feeble, and seems to come from a tomb, or the bottom of a well. No, I now recollect what it is like,—the voice of one in a chest with the lid shut down. He spoke to a beggarly account of empty boxes. I counted his audience at one time & found only 46 members there out of 240, and no one in the gallery.

Robertson of Virginia got the floor after him & then moved for an adjournment. Now we shall have some gall & worm-wood. He sits directly behind our tier of boxes, and I, of course, hear a good deal of his talk. He is regarded as a good lawyer, has been Atty. Genl. of Virginia, but he is as full of acrimony as talent, according to my way of thinking.

I have pretty much abandoned the idea of making a speech, unless it should be impromptu upon some fit occasion. The prejudice against speech making is getting to be rather strong, and I'm glad of it.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Leonard Jarvis, Republican from Maine, resident of Surry.

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### Discussing Old Economies

Washington, April 18, 1836.

Dear Wife,

We have been discussing in the House today a motion to strike from the appropriation bill \$20,000, a part payment to Clark & Force, two old federal printers, for what is to be called the Documentary History of the Revolution. The work, it is supposed, will cost half a million of dollars. I regard it as cheating the people to reward pet printers, and to appropriate property to the members which they have no right to, so I went against the appropriation, but the book folks carried it by 8 majority.

In the Senate they have been debating Mr. Grundy's project of buying the use for the Govt. of all the railroads established

in the Country, and to be established, instead of paying a yearly compensation for carrying the mail, &c. Jno. Hartley & Moses had a fine opportunity of hearing the lions of the Senate. The following Senators, I believe all of them, had more or less to say: Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Leigh, Benton, Grundy, Walker, Buchanan, King of Georgia, &c. They were highly delighted.

I have two invitations before me. One for a party at Blair's tomorrow evening, which I think I shall not attend, and one from the Proprietors of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Co. to take an excursion on the Canal to Wheeling. To start Saturday the 30th inst. at 5 o'clock in the morning, reach Wheeling the same day & return again on Monday, and this invitation I think I shall accept.

It will be at the time when the House has agreed to adjourn over for 3 days in order to have the carpets taken up and straw carpets put down. This will be a very great improvement and promotion of health. Now, when the sun shines across the Hall in a line of rays of light (if that is proper) you can see that the Hall is full of dust.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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April 27th, 1836.

Dear Wife,

The trees are all leaving out and peaches, apricots & some others in bloom.

This will be a beautiful City in a few weeks, for about all the public buildings and the whole length of Pennsylvania Avenue much attention has been paid to the planting of trees. I see but little shrubbery about the private houses compared with what we see at the North.

We begin to find our situation rather uncomfortable in one respect, to wit, the great quantities of dust continually floating in the air. Pennsylvania Avenue was McAdamized a year or two since, but was done with so soft a stone that it grinds into dust which is between one & two inches deep at all times when dry, and after a rain we have that depth of mud. I wish, therefore, that I was now on Capitol hill, but having been with Mrs. Hill during all the cold weather when much wood was burned, perhaps it would be hardly fair to leave her now when we can obtain board a little cheaper elsewhere, and when she begins to make a little profit.

In the Senate today after much discussion, Clay's land bill passed by a vote of 25 to 21, which is, I suppose you know, providing for the distribution among the States of the proceeds arising from the sale of the public lands for five years.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.





LUCY FAIRFIELD DODGE  
Daughter of John Fairfield





## CHAPTER IV

(LETTERS OF 1836 CONTINUED)

### A Trip to Harper's Ferry

Washington, May 3d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I returned from my excursion to Harper's Ferry last night, but not in season to write you. It was a great treat & afforded the most unbounded satisfaction to all who went, constituting about 60 members, & some half a dozen other gentlemen. We were absent three days and the whole treat was gratuitous, even to the passage in the hacks from here to Georgetown & back, that being the place from which the boats start. The distance is something over 60 miles, and is accomplished in a day, the Canal boats being drawn by 3 horses and a part of the time by four. The topmost piece is a canvas awning, an open space constituting a long, commodious and comfortable dining hall. There were three boats, the largest being what I have sketched, the others not so large and having no awnings. I kept in the large boat, which afforded a fine opportunity of viewing the scenery in our progress up the canal, which we found to be really worth seeing. After getting up about ten or a dozen miles, we found the land rich, pretty well cultivated, and exhibiting some of the most beautiful landscapes that I have ever seen.

In some places the Canal runs along the side of a mountain, there being say a precipice 100 feet high above us on our right, & 100 feet below us on our left. From Georgetown up there are 33 locks, which, if you understand, you can explain to the children. There were also several aqueducts, one vastly superior in every respect to anything of the kind I have ever seen. It carries the canal over the river Manocasin (I'm not sure that I spell it right). It is about 500 feet long & has 7 arches. It is built of large, square blocks of a very white kind of granite, and is nearly as handsome as marble. It is a noble specimen of mason work.

For a considerable distance the Baltimore & Ohio railroad passes side by side with the canal, and in one place I recollect we had an aqueduct & viaduct beside each other, the first being the conducting of water over a river or over a road, and the latter

being a road built over a river or road. The scenery grows more sublime as you approach Harper's Ferry, and when you get there it is truly wild. There the waters of the Potomac and Shenandoah meet, and seem once to have constituted a vast lake which had forced its way through the mountain, and that I believe was Mr. Jefferson's opinion. (See his notes on Virginia.)

The tongue of land in the centre rises precipitously from the water for about 300 feet and is incapable of occupation by buildings except a narrow strip round its base, near the water, a narrow piece in the center, where I have placed a meeting house, and a Masonic hall, which are about half way up the hill. Much of the way you ascend by steps hewn into the solid ledge which seems to be a kind of slate rock. The bank on the Potomac side is 1100 feet high, and 500 of it nearly perpendicular. The sides also of the tongue of land in the center are very precipitous & are entirely impassable except in one narrow, winding, & dangerous footpath, which I descended though in some places it was really frightful.

All of our Company but about half a dozen went on the railroad to Winchester about 30 miles & spent the day. Mr. Shepley & I with some others remained and visited Capt. Hall whom Mr. Haines will recollect as the man from whom I recd. some communications before leaving home on the subject of his patent rifle. We found Mrs. Hall to be a fine looking woman & quite polished, & surrounded by 7 children, one, a fine girl of about 19. Whom do you guess Mrs. Hall was? One of my constituents, almost, she was an old Yorker and the sister of no less a personage than Judge Preble.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, May 4, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I have just stepped into the Library and taken down Jefferson's notes on Virginia; I find there a description of Harper's Ferry which is much better than anything original I can give you, and therefore I transcribe it:

"The passage of the Potomac through the Blue ridge is perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in nature. You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain an

hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their Junction they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea.

"The first glimpse of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion that this earth has been created in time; that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place particularly they have been dammed up by the Blue ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley; that continuing to rise, they have at length broken over at this spot, and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base. The piles of rock on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of this disrapture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborates the impression.

"But the distant finishing which nature has given to the picture is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small patch of smooth blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass beneath the breach and participate in the calm below. Here the eye ultimately composes itself; and that way, too, the road happens actually to lead. You cross the Potomac above the Junction, pass along its side through the base of the mountain for three miles, its terrible precipices hanging in fragments over you, and within about 20 miles reach Frederic town and the fine country around that.

"This scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic. Yet here, as in the neighborhood of the natural bridge, are people who have passed their lives within half a dozen miles, and have never been to survey these monuments of a war between rivers and mountains which must have shaken the earth itself to its center."

There, what do you think of that? It is poetical at least, and if I had placed my hand on it before today, perhaps you might not have had the letter I wrote you last night.

After this extract, perhaps I ought to say no more upon this subject, but I cannot help enclosing you a little pencil sketch of what is called Jefferson rock, which I made while standing near it. It is situated on the tongue of land between

the Shenandoah and Potomac, perhaps 50 rods up the Shenandoah side from the end of the tongue. It is on the top of the main ledge which rises nearly 200 feet and almost perpendicularly, and stands on the outer edge of the main ledge, so that by standing on the little flat rock, as I did, which looks like a cap, and looking over, it will almost make your head whirl. To give a better idea of it, I would add that the topmost piece is about 7 or 8 feet across.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### He Makes a Speech

Washington, May 5, 1836.

Dear Ann,

Our session was continued until a late hour today and I did not get my dinner until near 7 o'clock. We have been discussing the bill proposing relief to the Cities of this District from the Dutch loan. The Dutch creditors now have a warrant issued for selling the City for the payment of the interest of the debt, which the City cannot do; I am for avoiding the national disgrace if possible; I shall go for the bill; I have made a little speech today, which perhaps you will see in tomorrow's paper.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### They Experiment with Mulberry Trees

Washington, May 10, 1836.

My Dear Wife,

After tea Mr. Shepley came in & staid until about five minutes before the boy came with his bag, and as soon as he went out Judge Ruggles came & challenged me to a game of chess and staid until 12! Thus you see I could not write. I beat the Judge three games, and indeed I believe I beat all who play with me. It is a great game in this City, and they have one, Col. Gardner, Deputy Post Master General, who beat the automaton chess player. Doubleday has beaten Gardner, and I beat Doubleday. What a brag! say you. Never mind, it is only to my wife.

I thank you for your letter of yesterday, though it was merely a business one. Perhaps you had better, as suggested by Ellis, buy some of Mr. Calef's Spanish potatoes. I should like, however, to have many of our kidney potatoes planted, & perhaps all we have. Don't recollect the quantity.

You think if every mulberry seed produces a tree we shall have enough to cover the whole farm, but you must recollect that I don't intend to make a regular orchard, placing the trees a rod apart, but to set them in rows a few feet only from each other, keeping them all down into shrubs, except one tree at the termination of each rod. I am glad that on experiment you find the seed so good. As for the pear trees & cherries I suppose it is of no use to say anything about them now, for they are in the ground long ago, but I gave to Mr. Billings, according to present impressions, written directions where to set them out. By the way, did Sinnott cut off the tops of the maples before setting them out, or any part of the tops? Such was my direction. How much gravel & butter & cheese have you sold? The first, at least, is to be a staple production of our farm, I presume, and by and by it will be silk & gravel.

I am glad that the boys find amusement, but let me caution you about keeping all the children from the well. You know they are very much inclined to be playing about such places, and have no discretion. When I return I mean to have the boys learn how to swim. I suspect we have a grand place for that amusement down at our shore.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Sees the First of the Steam Navy

House of Representatives, Washington, May 15th.

Dear Wife,

As we may have another night session, I will drop you a line from the House, though I have nothing in particular to say. The opposition are occupying the whole time in speeches, while our friends are obliged to be silent, for while we charge them with a gross waste of time, consistency forbids our following in their track.

Biddle having about one o'clock commenced a speech which bid fair to be of no moderate length, four of us jumped into a

hack and went down to the Navy Yard to see the steam frigate which arrived here a few days since from New York. The officers received us very politely and shew off the lion with considerable pride. I was much pleased with her, and found confirmation of my opinions that the best defense for our harbors will be steam batteries.

On our return we found Biddle still speaking and sweating like a pitcher of cold water in a warm room. As soon as he closed John Bell got the floor and is now hammering away like a blacksmith, but with the stunning clatter of a tinman. I believe you heard him in September.

J. F.

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### Hears Taylor Preach

Washington, May 15, 1836.

Dear Wife,

This morning, as I have for several preceding mornings, I rose early and had a long walk, getting back in season for breakfast. Found it cold as Greenland, almost mitten cold, and after my return ascertained, I suppose, the cause of it, to wit, an eclipse of the sun. Did you see it? Here they say, for I did not see it myself, the sun was  $\frac{3}{4}$ ds. covered. I have had a fire in my room all day, and for a whole week past we have had as cold weather, almost, as I ever witnessed at the North at this season of the year. You don't complain in your letters, so I suppose you have it pleasant enough.

Today I have attended meeting at the Capitol to hear Taylor<sup>1</sup>, he who preaches to the sailors in Boston. He evidently was not at home and did not preach so well as I once heard him to his own congregation. He must have an opportunity to go to the Ocean for his illustrations, and then he can certainly be very forcible, but these would not answer quite so well for members of Congress as for sailors.

He prayed very heartily for the President and said his sun was about setting but not diminishing. I thought this was saying a good deal for a Boston minister & one who I had supposed was a federalist. In his sermon however, he shew himself no narrow & bigoted sectarian. He regarded with contempt all the theological religion. He wanted the plain, practical heart religion and if we must have sects, said he, at least let us live like families of the same neighborhood. Let us love

each other like Christians, though we happen to differ somewhat in our speculations.

He preaches this evening at the Wesleyan Chapel and perhaps I may try him again.

I bought some time ago Dewey's volume of sermons and have been reading it. Many of the sermons are excellent, far superior, I think, to Fox's, a volume you will recollect Tom Lane lent us, and which were quite celebrated. For this half a dozen last Sundays we have had to preach for us at the Unitarian house young Cranch, a son of Judge Cranch of this city. He is a fine looking young man, and I should think of pretty fair talents, but he is too bashful to look his audience in the face, much more to scold at them, and reprimand them for their sins. He may make something ten years hence, but is not fit for a minister now. Stockton, our Chaplain, has fallen very much in the estimation of the members so far as relates to his talents. Now, everybody entertains the opinions I expressed the first time I heard him.

Only think, I have now been absent over 5½ months. I hope we shall never be so long separated again. Next session, you know, is a short one, even if you should not come on with me.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

"Father" Taylor, the celebrated mission-preacher of Boston.

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### Trouble on the Texas Border

Washington, May 16th.

Dear Ann,

Today there is great rejoicing here among those who are particularly interested for Texas, and all feel some degree of pleasure at the news from that quarter. By a handbill issued from the Telegraph office, it appears that Houston with 600 Texans met Santa Anna with 1100 Mexicans and in the contest killed one-half the Mexicans and made prisoners of the other half, including Santa Anna and all his principal officers.

It is said further that a Council of War was held and that Santa Anna & his officers were shot. The last step may be wrong, but no one having a human heart can cry at the death of such inhuman, fiendish monsters in human shape. The massacre of 100 or more of Texan prisoners in cold blood after they

had surrendered upon a promise of protection, I presume you have not heard.

On a bill being called up today making an appropriation to carry into effect a treaty which has been concluded between us and Mexico, which provides for a survey & settlement of the line between U. S. and Mexico, Wise, Peyton & others of the nullifiers embraced the opportunity to make long harangues in favor of Texas and among other things avowed their object to be, to obtain by & by the annexation of Texas to the U. S., and thereby enable the slave-holding States to balance the power of the North. I think they will meet with a few obstacles before they accomplish that object.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Wednesday, May 18th.

Dear Wife,

This morning when I went out to take my walk I found the front of our building almost literally covered with a yellow fly somewhat resembling our miller and about as large. Vast quantities were also dead upon the sidewalk and in some places were swept into quite a windrow. It was a great curiosity to me, but I am told they have the same occurrence every year, only the flies are not usually so numerous as now. They appear to be perfectly harmless & are ephemeral in their existence.

The news today about the battle between the Mexicans & Texans is doubted, and by some papers contradicted. We shall know certainly soon. Today also we have news, authentic news, coming from the U. S. Officer commanding Fort Mitchell that the Creek Indians have made war upon us, and are making serious & disastrous inroad upon the population of Alabama.

We have today appropriated half a million & authorized the President to accept of volunteers not exceeding 10,000. I am really afraid we are to have desperate times on our frontier—there seems to be some prospect of a general Indian war.

But enough for this time.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.



Dear Wife,

Recd. your letter today. Think upon the whole you have done about right in not taking the Mixer chaise. It was rather old and rather heavy.

I wish I could have dined with you upon head and pluck last Monday for, though we occasionally have that dish here, it is not cooked as it is at home and not so much to my taste. It seems that you don't conclude to raise any stock this year. Well, just as you say. Am sorry that the Livingston cow doesn't turn out to be so valuable as you expected, perhaps she may improve, for if I recollect Bro. William's statement, she is a young cow.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Attends a Boat Race

Washington, May 21.

Dear Wife,

After the adjournment of the House this afternoon most of the members, including myself, went to the Navy Yard to witness a boat race. The assembly of people was quite large, a good deal of enthusiasm prevailed among the betting gentry and I suppose much money was lost and won. There were 5 boats—four of them manned by six oarsmen and one of them by four. The latter was a small white boat, and won the race. A long, low black boat belonging to the steam frigate came out next. The winning boat belonged to Alexandria.

The moral influence of the thing, I presume, you will not consider as much promoted by the fact that many of the ladies present participated in the betting as well as the men. After the race, ladies and gentlemen repaired to a hall at the Yard for a dance, but not feeling in the mood, I came home.

I was up to Mrs. Woodbury's a few nights since, and she said she should look to me to chaperone her at the race, but I didn't see her there, so I had nothing to do but look at the boats. I am so clumsy that I am a poor hand to gallant the ladies.

Yours ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The Small-Pox Epidemic

Washington, May 22d.

Recd. a letter this morning from Mr. Haines, by which, and the papers it seems that the small-pox is raging up at Hollis—that Tom Lane had it and that Mr. Bradbury and his daughter died of it. The alarm and consternation up there must be very great, for I suppose but very few of them have ever been vaccinated. Mary Lane, too, it seems has got it; poor girl, I hope it will not terminate fatally with her.

By the way, how many of our family have been vaccinated? All, I suspect, but Augusta and Hampden. Had you not better let them be vaccinated forthwith?

I heard yesterday for the first time that we have several cases of the small-pox in this City. I hope it will have the effect to frighten the members into doing what they ought to have done before, to wit, doing the business of the people and then going home. If it have no worse effect, I should not regret its appearance here.

Today it is said by some of our boarders who have seen the hand bill just issued, that the first news recd. of the battle between the Mexicans and Texans is confirmed, and that Santa Anna is a prisoner. It is said he offers, if they will spare his life, to have the independence of Texas acknowledged & to pay the expenses of the war.

After the recpt. of the first news it was contradicted, the letter of Rush, Sec'y of War, pronounced a forgery and a variety of reasons set forth why it could not be so. I was the only one of our mess, except a young man on a visit here from Lowell, who still believed in the truth of the first report. We had several controversies about it and I was almost sneered at for my credulity. But to my mind it bore the impress of truth, which it turns out to be.

Whom do you think I have been hearing preach today? None other than Mr. Lothrop. I saw him in the gallery yesterday and went up and had some conversation with him. It seems he is journeying with Amos Lawrence who is sick. His sermon today was of the first order, and made the Washingtonians prick up their ears. Among the congregation I observed Mr. John Q. Adams & Mr. Woodbury.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Daniel Webster Plants Mulberry Trees

May 26, 1836.

Dear Wife,

By a letter from Mr. Haines today, I learn that the small-pox is abating at Salmon Falls and that no alarm prevails there now. I am very glad to hear it, but am compelled to say that if you are escaping there, we are just getting into it here. Doctor Mason says he was in at Doctor Sewall's today and that he told him there were 20 cases existing here, and among them Mr. Whittlesey of Connecticut, who has lately come on as the successor of Judge Wildman, who, you will recollect, died the first of the session. Many of the members, I believe, are about being vaccinated, and I don't know but I shall try it.

I see by the papers that Danl. Webster has been planting mulberry trees on his farm at Marshfield, and that he intends quitting politics & to devote himself to the culture of silk. So you see we have magnificent company in some of our projects.

But I must break off—as there is a bill now under discussion, on which, if I can get the floor, I intend to make a short speech.

Yours in much love,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## A Trip to Mt. Vernon

Saturday Morning, May 28.

Dear Wife,

I have just (i.e.  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour ago), jumped out of bed and drop you a line at this unusual hour because I am going to Mount Vernon today and don't know that I shall return soon enough to write you again. Doctor Mason & wife & myself constitute the party. We expect to go from here to Alexandria by steamboat, where we take a carriage & drive to Mount Vernon, about 11 miles.

I expected to have made a little speech yesterday, but in discussion of the bill organizing the Post Office department we did not quite reach the section to which I am opposed; the bill having been postponed to Monday, perhaps I may then have a chance to say a word or two. The bell has begun to

ring for breakfast, and so, my dear wife, good morning to you, if you are up, say  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

Doctor Lee has just been in & says he'll go, too—so making four of us—just a hack load.

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Washington, May 29, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday morning at 10 minutes before 9 o'clock Doctor Mason & wife, Mr. Miles, a Mississippi planter, and Miss Latoo (that's the way it's pronounced) and myself (Doct. Lee having backed out) stepped into a hack which carried us one mile to the steamboat wharf. In a few minutes we cast loose and had a pleasant sail down to Alexandria.

The distance, I believe, is only about 6 or 7 miles. The Potomac here is broad, and on both sides is presented very pretty scenery. At one or two points you have very rich landscapes indeed. Alexandria is pleasantly located, but seems to be laboring under the effects of old age or want of stimulus. In some of the streets I noticed that the grass was literally growing up among the pavements. And in these streets the buildings looked old, moss covered, out of repair and forsaken.

In other streets, however, I found the buildings good, handsome, and the shops well filled with goods. It was once a place of great trade. Indeed, I believe it was the first City in the State of Virginia. It is possible that it may be resuscitated and restored to its former activity and standing by the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which is soon to be extended to it—though I doubt it, as the principal trade will go to Baltimore, the canal being about to be tapped by the Baltimoreans above Georgetown, and a branch carried to their City.

At Alexandria Doctor M. & wife & Mr. M. & Miss L. took a hack, and I took a saddle horse, with which we set out for Mount Vernon, leaving word with the landlord to have dinner for us at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3. The distance is about 9 miles, to pass over which took us two hours, as the road was very bad. Their neglect of roads in this part of the country is shameful. The horse I rode was the best for the saddle that I have ever known. He would walk at least 4 miles an hour, and when I wanted to go

faster than that I could set him into a pace of six miles an hour which would carry me nearly as easy as the walk.

On arriving at the Mount Vernon estate, or rather the entrance to it, we found a gate, at either side of which was a porter's lodge, small building, perhaps 12 or 15 feet square, covered with mortar rough-cast. Entering here we pursued our way to the mansion house which is about a half a mile from the road, through a noble grove of oaks, and by a way winding & undulating enough to make it very romantic and pleasant.

The house is 2 stories and large upon the ground, but by no means handsome. Its style is old, of course, particularly in regard to the windows and doors. Upon the top and in the centre is a sort of cupola or rather steeple, which gives it the appearance of a public building.

As to the tomb itself, or its peculiar location, I saw nothing to excite the admiration or even particular notice of anybody. And the whole plantation has been eulogized, in my opinion, far beyond what the truth would warrant. I can find hundreds of places in Maine excelling it in every respect, except that of containing the remains of the great Father of his Country. Indeed to this last circumstance is to be attributed much of the fame which this spot has acquired.

The garden, however, is magnificent. It is well laid out, and is filled with everything to delight the eye, and indeed to regale all the senses. I saw many rare plants, such as I have never seen before or read of, and what was particularly pleasing to me, orange and lemon trees heavily laden with fruit. The trees were about 10 or 12 feet high, and stood in boxes about 3 feet square. They are kept under cover during the winter months. After spending nearly an hour in seeing what was to be seen we returned the way we came & arrived at Alexandria within five minutes of the time we had set. And here we sat down to a most excellent dinner, composed of roast lamb, green peas and asparagus, boiled ham, veal cutlets and fried sturgeon. The latter is considered a great dish here, & I tasted of it as a matter of curiosity merely. It has the taste of veal, indeed, I could hardly tell it from veal, but don't like it very much. After this we had custard pudding & old Dutch Cheese and a dessert of strawberries and cream.

We finished our dinner just 5 minutes before the hour for the starting of the steamboat.

Upon the whole it was a very pleasant excursion and I would have given very much if my wife could have accompanied me.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Made a Short Speech

May 31, 1836.

My dear Wife,

I have made a short speech today on the subject of establishing "express mails." I took ground against them on the ground that they would in their effect be for the benefit particularly of the speculator. But the majority was against me, and the P. M. Genl. is authorized to establish the express mail for letters & slips from newspapers at triple the present rate of postage.

Perhaps my remarks may be published in tomorrow's Globe, if so, I will send you one.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### World Loses Another Speech

Dear Wife,

I was very glad to receive a letter from you today after waiting for it nine days. I was beginning to be alarmed, when, yesterday morning, came a letter from Mr. H. and you will judge of the shock to my feelings on reading the first line which was as follows: "It is melancholy, but must be told." The letter almost dropped from my hand, before I could read the next line, which, when read, afforded me entire relief & unbounded pleasure—to wit: "The Imogene is lost—not a plank of her is saved."

We have had a rain storm here which has lasted over a week. Everything seems to be afloat here and I have just heard that about 60 feet of the Potomac bridge has been carried away.

In the House today we have had the Post Office bill under consideration, upon its last stage. I tried three times to get the floor to make a speech upon another part of it from that on which I spoke 'tother day. I wanted to answer Wise and Underwood upon some legal questions they had raised. But the

last time I tried Speight of N. C. got the floor and moved the previous question, which was carried and so the world lost another speech of "the gentleman from Maine." I feel very grateful to Mr. Thacher for having willed me his Krout machine, as much so, probably, as you do for your new hens.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, June 3d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

We have just taken up and passed a most important bill sent down to us from the Senate. It provides that Congress shall meet on the first Monday of November instead of December, and that the first session of each Congress, i.e., the long session, shall adjourn the 2d Monday of May, the other session, you know, being limited by the constitution to the 4th of March. I went for this bill very heartily. It will be much pleasanter coming on here in Nov. than in Dec., at the same time will have me at home to attend our May Court. I am glad, therefore, that while I think the bill will very much promote the public interest, I regard it as very promotive of my own.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. I feel rather easy, as you well suppose, under the loss of my Brig,—she having been fully insured.

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Washington, June 4th.

Dear Wife,

It was with deep & heartfelt regret I learned by your letter of this morning that Mary Lane's disease had taken an unfavorable turn & resulted fatally. Poor girl, how early her hopes have been cut off—and prospects blasted!

I should be glad to learn the particulars of her death. Whether she retained her reason and whether she was resigned to her fate & died in hope of future happiness. I have nothing in particular to communicate, and if I had, I would prefer to postpone it to another letter.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Spends His Sabbaths Profitably

June 5th, 1836.

Dear Wife,

We had no Northern mail today, and I'm thinking it is owing to the extraordinary fall of rain that we & probably you have had for a fortnight past. I am dreading to hear from our rivers, particularly Penobscot and Kennebeck. There must have been great freshets there, and perhaps the logs all swept away in consequence, a few days will confirm or contradict my apprehensions.

We have Mr. Fox of N. Port here preaching. He gave us an excellent sermon today, and is a first-rate writer, but I do not think he delivers his sermons remarkably well.

The people here are not churchgoing people and I am afraid that very few members of Congress are in the habit of attending meeting on the Sabbath. Most of them, I suspect, stay at home to write speeches, letters, &c. I believe you joked me once about writing letters on the Sabbath. But I have two things to justify me—1st, your own example; and 2d, I do not in consequence neglect other duties. Now, for instance, today I have read the whole of Paul's 2d epistle to the Corinthians, one of Dewey's sermons in the Christian Register and been to meeting expecting also to go again this evening. And I should have added, taken a long walk, which I am obliged to do every day, Sunday not excepted, when the weather will permit, for my health's sake. Do you keep your Sabbaths better than that?

Your Husband,

J. F.

June 7th, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Tomorrow has been assigned to take up the bill providing for the admission of Michigan & Arkansas into the Union. Both, I suppose, will be warmly opposed, particularly the latter on account of a provision in her constitution prohibiting the Legislature from ever abolishing slavery. It is, to be sure, a bad provision, but then we have nothing to do with it, each State has a perfect right to form its own constitution uncontrolled by Congress.

Love to all, and so—good night.

J. FAIRFIELD.



## A 25-Hours Session

June 10, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I intended to have written you yesterday, but the cause of my omission was a session of 25 hours in duration!

The reason of our long session is this: By an unexpected decision of a question of order three or four days ago the bills for the admission of Michigan & Arkansas into the Union were committed to a "Committee of the Whole House." It was a hard struggle on both sides. Several times in the night we found ourselves without a quorum, i.e., 120—half the number of members & of course could not proceed until we called in enough to make a quorum. But at 3 o'clock this morning we had a call of the House, and sent the Sergeant-at-Arms with his assistants to take the absentees from their beds & bring them into the House. And then followed an hour or two in hearing causes of absence and granting excuses. At 11 o'clock today, however, the opposition perceiving that we were not to be wheedled or intimidated, gave way & let the committee rise and report the bills to the House. So now they will come up again on Monday.

I hope the report will prove true that D. Webster is about to take Martha Freeman. He will make a good husband for her and she a good wife for him.

Sarah's messages were very pleasing to me, and I thank her for them. I will endeavor to buy her something on my way home. I have sent you the two first Nos. of the Silk Culturist and today 2 more. I shall continue this until I have sent you the number I now have, viz., 14. In good time we will have them bound.

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## A Quarrel in the House

Washington, June 11, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Soon after the commencement of the session this morning, we had quite a stirring event—that is to say, a personal rencontre on the floor of the House between two reporters and hired letter writers for the federal newspapers in New York. I understand they are both Englishmen and named Wheeler &

Codds. The former undertook to cane the latter, in return for a caning the other way yesterday. I felt very much about it as Jack did when he saw the skunk & hedgehog fighting, he said he didn't care a fig which licked.

They were both taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms and a select committee appointed to inquire into the matter and report. The result, I suppose, will be a reprimand and expulsion from the floor of the House as reporters. And this will be quite mild, considering how indignant the members were at the outrage.

It is also said here by many that there is to be a duel between Bynum of N. C. and Jennifer of Maryland on account of some words that passed between them during the night session. The words, as near as I can recollect, were these: Jennifer, having been at home nearly all night in his bed, after being brought in in the morning, undertook to make a long speech. The members were rather impatient, and some of them cried "question" pretty loudly, and made some noises to express their disapprobation.

After it had subsided Jennifer went on, and in the course of his speech denounced the course of the administration party in the House as ungentlemanly. Bynum sprang to his feet & said that it was ungentlemanly in him to say so. Said Jennifer, "You must take that back." Bynum replied that he wouldn't take it back, but would repeat it.

There, what a great matter for men to cut each other's throats about! To my mind it is supremely ridiculous, if such a word may be used upon so grave a subject. I am clearly of opinion, however, that if the difficulty is not healed by the interference of friends, a duel is inevitable. I know some things which I cannot now state.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Michigan and Arkansas Make 26 States in Union

June 13, 1836.

Dear Wife,

We took up today in the House the two bills providing for the admission of Michigan & Arkansas into the Union. Old Adams' made a speech of four hours long on the first, and as he sat down some one moved the previous question & it was car-

ried. Arkansas was carried in the same way, and both are now among the United States of America. We have now in all 26, just double the original number.

The select committee who were appointed to inquire into the case of contempt of the House by Wheeler & Codds, reported last night in favor of Codds & he was discharged. They are also now ready to report upon the other & will probably tomorrow morning. I understand they will report in favor of his being excluded from the Reporters' privilege in the House & imprisoned for the rest of the session.

The duel between Bynum & Jennifer has not been fought yet, but I suspect will be tomorrow morning, unless the quarrel be settled by friends, which I hope will be the case.

Mr. Cushman has just come in and invited me to walk with him to Charles Cutts', so I can write no more.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>John Quincy Adams.

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### Duel a Farce

Washington, June 14th.

As I suspected when I wrote you last night, Bynum & Jennifer had a meeting this morning at 7 o'clock, and after six ineffectual shots, a reconciliation took place. Pickens of South Carolina was the second of Jennifer, and Sevier of Arkansas the second of Bynum.

The shots were strange ones considering the reputation that both of them have, particularly Bynum, and that they stood only 30 feet from each other. The sixth shot, Bynum's pistol went off before the last word was given. The signal is one, two, three—the firing to be at the last word. Bynum's pistol went off at two, altogether by accident, no doubt, but Pickens immediately levelled his pistol at him & was about to shoot him down, which is according to the laws of duelling. Sevier & Jennifer, however, cried out for him not to shoot and he desisted. After this Jennifer fired and missed. A Captain Somebody, who was present, then interposed, and made a proposition which was accepted & a reconciliation took place.

What a farce! to give it no harsher name. Nothing is more contemptible and but few things more wicked in my eye than this practice of duelling. At the same time I am free to confess

that if a few of the opposition should get peppered a little, it would mend their manners very much in the House.

Well, after so long time I am enabled to say that the day of adjournment is fixed, so far, at least, as regards the House, the Senate, I presume, will concur. The day fixed is the 4th of July, three weeks from yesterday, so I shall now begin to count days.

I recd. your letter of the 9th this morning giving some account of farming operation, growth of children, or rather of Hampden, &c. I should think he was a noble fellow as to size, at all events quite middling. Sometimes I think I can see just how he looks.

How do you get along for a chaise? I presume Mr. Calef would lend you his occasionally. I write this from the House in the midst of dull speeches, &c., &c.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The First Beet Sugar

June 16, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I write today from the Hall of House of Representatives fearing that I shall no longer have any evenings to myself, the House having today agreed to take a recess each day from  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 to 4, thereby giving time to go home to dine. Heretofore, I understand, Congress has always been afraid to have a session after dinner, on the ground that the members would be rather too winy and of course too talkative. But I think the present Congress (and that is the general opinion), is much more temperate than any preceding one, and therefore I do not fear any great increase of talkativeness.

I shall return home about in as good case as I left. Have heard nothing further today about the additional duel, hope it will blow over.

I saw today a piece of sugar made from beets. It came from France, was as white as snow and as sparkling & clear as any sugar that I ever saw. They make vast quantities of it in France and I believe it is recommended to our folks in this Country. I hope you won't engage in it until after we have made a little silk, or at all events until I return home.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**A Satisfying Vote**

Hall of House of Representatives, June 22, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I have been dreadfully puzzled for near a week past to know how to vote on the subject of the depositer of the public money and a distribution of it among the States. I thought of it by day & by night, asleep and awake, but I came to a result at last and found myself on voting to be in a minority of 38. Notwithstanding which I never felt better satisfied with a vote in my life. I voted against the bill and there is more than one among the majority who would give a great deal to change positions with me.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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**Killed in a Duel**

Washington, June 23d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Yours of the 17th inst. is just recd. Your views and mine in regard to the kind of carriage exactly coincide and I shall endeavor to get such an one as you describe, though perhaps it is very doubtful whether I shall be able to find one ready-made, and if I don't, I shall wait until I return home before I do anything more about it. I doubt whether Doctor Green's will answer our purpose because the wheels are too near together to admit of another body being placed upon them large enough for our purposes, and the present body is entirely too small.

I have just learned that a duel was fought yesterday between two midshipmen here—young Keay, a son of Francis S. Keay, the U. S. District Attorney here, and young Sherburne, either a son or brother of Sherburne who is a clerk in one of the departments & formerly from Portsmouth, aged about 17 or 18. The second fire Sherburne shot Keay through the body and he expired in a few minutes.

It is a terrible affliction to Mr. Keay's family and the first intimation they had of it, the deceased was brought home dead. They, the combatants, had sailed together and returned from a cruise only about a month since and had been fast friends. The quarrel, it is said, originated in a dispute a few

days since as to which of two steamboats would sail the fastest. It is a shocking case, and I hope the seconds and physicians will be punished with the utmost severity of the law.

I suppose I ought to let the President know that you approve of his veto of the bill fixing the time of adjournment for future Congresses, for he will be glad of all the support he can get, since he has been attacked by Webster, Clayton & Leigh in the Senate. I voted for the law myself, but I suppose I must give up that it is unconstitutional, though I didn't think so at the time.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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#### Last Letter Before Adjournment

House of Representatives, June 29, 1836.

Dear Wife,

The House has just passed an act providing for the meeting of all future Congresses on the first Monday of November instead of December, leaving out the time of adjournment.

We are driving on pretty rapidly now with the business, and I am in hopes it will be so far disposed of as to permit me to leave on Saturday, or at all events on Monday morning. My impression now is that I shall be at home on Thursday or Friday of next week. I will, however, write you once more before I set out, if no more.

Nothing new.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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#### Back in Washington

Washington, Dec. 3d, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Here I am once more in Washington. Made no stop in Boston, but was detained one day in New York, the boat not arriving there in time for the Philadelphia boat. Nothing new. Have not taken quarters yet; board is rizzer and they say is to be rizzer, from \$12 to \$15.

Excuse this hasty scrawl.

Ever Yours,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

## A Room Third Story Back

Washington, Dec. 5, 1836.

Dear Wife,

Though this is the first day of the session I write you from my own chamber, having taken permanent lodgings at Mrs. Pitman's in 3d street. It is regarded as about No. 1 in the City. So far I am very much pleased. It is an excellent building, and is elegantly furnished, and what is, if not better than all, certainly not to be disregarded these times, my price of board is very low. Generally through the City, I believe, the price is \$12, while here I pay only \$9. The reason of this is, that I take a small room in the 3d story and in the back part of the house. The room is 12 feet square and for furniture has a table, 3 chairs, bed and a wash stand. It is not quite what I should like, but then, \$3 a week is a very pretty little sum to be saved, and when I think how much good I may do with it, for myself and friends, I feel willing to put up with a few inconveniences.

We have an excellent mess, composed at present of Brown, Wardwell, Chapin, Page & Lee of New York, Lyon of Michigan, Lane of Indiana, Buchanan of Pennsylvania, Whittlesey of Connecticut, Toucey of Connecticut & wife, Peirce & Hubbard of N. H. with their wives,—I know them all but one and anticipate much pleasure from the association.

We have had our first meeting, organized and adjourned. I suppose it will take two or three days to get fairly under way. There is a great deal of shaking hands to undergo the first day or two and really I did not anticipate quite so much pleasure as I have enjoyed from meeting my acquaintances of last session because I did not suppose so many would be glad to see me.

The President's health has improved a little, but he is quite feeble yet, and does not see company.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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News From the Farm

Friday, Dec. 9, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I thank you for the letter recd. today, though it contained the melancholy intelligence of the death of three pigs. The fourth, I am glad to learn, is doing well through your kindness

& fostering care. But what a picture! a pig in the parlor, and an egg incubating, I won't say where, for I suppose you may have been trying experiments with the little, long, curious egg we found just before I left home. Really, I think you enter into the spirit of our occupation with commendable zeal, and are a complete farmer's wife even now. If I can keep up with you on my return, I think we'll make the thing go very well.

I hope you will be successful in saving your pig for he will be a kind of curiosity. How much did the old hog weigh? Was he fat? &c., &c. I am glad the old horse is gone. How much did Milliken give for him? Fifty dollars, I suppose.

In answer to your inquiries I would say that I did not buy the curtains or the pump, both through forgetfulness. But I shall write your brother James today on business, and will ask him to buy a pump for me.

Among the papers furnished me this session by Congress is the Metropolitan. It is miscellaneous and literary in its character, and I shall send the most of them to you if you would like them. The President remains in feeble health and does not see company yet.

I have called at your Uncle Richard's. They were all out but him & we spent a very pleasant evening together. He has moved, you know, from Mrs. Madison's house. Dolly is with him, but Mary is with Mrs. Madison.

Thine,

J. F.

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### The Women of the Mess Described

Washington, Dec. 11.

Dear Wife,

I find I have forgotten a few things in leaving home & among them my clothes brush & hymn book. The want of the latter I found today on going to meeting and of the former every morning, as the servants do not attend upon us regularly with their brush, as they did at my old boarding house. However, I continue to like the house very much. Mrs. Pitman appears to be an excellent, motherly sort of a woman, and disposed to make us all as comfortable as possible. Our mess (with perhaps one exception, Lane of Indiana), is composed of the best stuff, and if I only had you here I think I should feel as comfortable and happy as if I was at home.







JOHN W. FAIRFIELD  
Youngest Son of Governor John Fairfield  
Resides in Stryker, Montana

Night before last I had a bad coughing spell, founded, I believe, upon a slight cold. As a cure, I have resorted to abstinence—eating no meat, but living principally upon bread and butter. I have also begun the practice, which I hope I shall be able to keep up, of bathing myself all over in the morning. I have bought a tin thing with an iron handle holding about 2 quarts, which I have placed on the fire after a servant has made it before I get up and the first thing on rising is to bathe all over. It would probably be better for me to use cold water, but I can't quite go that.

Mr. Brown of New York, who is of our mess, and by the way a fine lawyer, a man of good talents, and a companionable fellow, says he has long practiced it, and has thereby made a very weak constitution, strong, and keeps himself in good health.

I have been to meeting today and heard Mr. Burton. How long he is to continue here I know not. His manners are not very much in his favor, but he gave us a pretty good sermon. I sat with Mr. Hubbard and family, but shall hire a seat before next Sabbath.

The President's health is improving, and he now sees a few select friends. The party-giving folks will probably lose something by the President's illness and by Mr. Cass' absence.

I called up one evening to Mr. Woodbury's and passed an hour very agreeably. Mrs. Woodbury is a very pleasant woman but I was sorry to hear one or two suppressed sighs, while her face was clothed in smiles. I also called at Mr. Polk's and spent part of an evening very pleasantly. Mrs. Polk is not by any means handsome, but she appears more like our northern women than any that I have met with here. She dresses with much simplicity, and is easy & familiar though not inelegant in her manners. I like her much, as well as Mr. Polk, and should go there oftener, if they did not have so many callers, particularly among the members.

Of our mess Mrs. Toucey is quite handsome, has considerable wit, and is very agreeable. Mrs. Chapin is not beautiful, but has a sweet face & is rather diffident in her manners. I have conversed but little, but am rather pleased with her.

Mrs. Hubbard I have not spoken with. She is not handsome nor is she very remarkable for anything, I suspect. Rather silent and reserved. Her mother, Mrs. Lee, is also with her. I never heard her speak & know nothing of her. She appears well enough. Mrs. Peirce we have seen little of, she being

confined to her chamber by a cold. She seems to be in very delicate health, and wanting in cheerfulness. But here I am at the end of my sheet before I know it—so farewell.

Good-night.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

December 13, Tuesday.

Dear Wife,

To begin with the smallest subject first, how do you get along with your pig? I have some curiosity to know whether his squeals could overcome your benevolence and love of pork both, and induce you to thrust out poor piggy to the cold charities of an unfeeling world. What a chorus you must have sometimes with the children making such a noise as we have many a time heard them make, and piggy in the wood box also piping away at the top of his voice. Oh, the thought of it is enough to make my ears tingle.

Have you had snow yet? Is it cold? Look out for your cellar. If I lose my potatoes I'll—let me see—yes, I'll kill your pig. Nothing new here of consequence. Wise made one of his violent and ranting speeches today, but I suspect his own political friends were not over pleased with it. The President's health is improving and he will probably see company soon.

Good-night,

J. F.

### The Post-Office Burned

Washington, Dec. 16.

Dear Wife,

I am sorry to communicate another public loss here by fire. This morning between 3 & 4 o'clock the great building occupied as Genl. Post Office and Patent Office took fire and burned to the ground. Most of the papers in the post-office were saved, but all the papers, models of patents, &c., were consumed with the building. It is believed by many that it was the work of an incendiary, but no one knows anything about it. The Com. on Post Offices has this morning offered a resolution authorizing an inquiry into the circumstances.

Electioneering speeches have been commenced with great violence and fury. Yesterday we had one from Wise, today

from Pearce and Peyton. I am "agin 'em all" and in favor of business.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### A Little Romance

Dec. 19, 1836.

Dear Wife,

There was a little piece of gossip going at our breakfast table this morning, relating to a marriage that has lately taken place in Philadelphia, I think. A Capt. Reed, I think his name is, saw an article of poetry by a lady in one of the annuals, which pleased him much, so much so that he said if he knew who the author was he would marry her if he could. He subsequently ascertained and wrote to her, asking her for a poetic description of some natural scenery near where she resided. She answered him, complying with his request. He then sought some pretext or other for writing her again, and again, in his letters making known his feelings for her. She seemed also to have fallen in love with him, and at his request sent him her slipper and belt, that he might judge of her waist and foot. They also exchanged miniatures and after carrying on a courtship for a considerable time through the mail in the manner described, Reed at last set out for Philadelphia to see his espoused & to get married.

When he went to the house where she resided, she met him at the door and embraced and kissed him. He was somewhat shocked at her forwardness and told her that he was not exactly pleased with her manners. She thought he would be on further acquaintance, or at all events, she was willing to conform her manners in all respects to what he wished. On further personal acquaintance it seems he did like her and they were married. They are now in this City, and related all the particulars last evening to Mr. Lee of New York of our mess who related them to us. They also shew Mr. Lee their correspondence and I understand make no secret of all their little billing and cooing. Upon the whole, I presume you will conclude with me that they are two great fools; notwithstanding which I have some curiosity to see them and I understand they are to call at our house today.

After such an interesting story you can't expect me to touch any common matter, so I close with the usual assurance that I am

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Wednesday, Dec. 21, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I wrote you day before yesterday, and now sit down to write you again under a sort of mechanical impulse, rather than because I have anything in particular to say.

If you have read the "Heart of Midlothian" you will probably recollect "Dumbedikes" whose happiness seemed to derive its sole nourishment from his going daily to the house of Jeanie Deans and silently watching or contemplating her as she moved about the house in the discharge of her domestic duties. It is with a similar feeling that I often sit down to write you, but if I should carry out the comparison farther, perhaps you might regard this as little too much of a love letter.

There are very few members in the House, most of them having gone into the Senate to hear Webster. Lane of Indiana is now making a speech to us on the subject of Wise's resolution. He roars like a cataract, & sometimes with about as much sense.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### One of His Messmates

Tuesday, Dec. 27, 1836.

My Dear Wife,

Having just finished a political letter to one of my constituents of four pages, I find myself now with little time before me to write you.

My wrapper has two holes in it—one on each hip like this I—torn on passage to this City. I intend to mend them soon. Brown who lodges upon the same floor with me, thinks I must have a paragon of a wife, when I shew him how you put up a box of needles, thread, scissors, buttons, &c., for my own use, together with the materials for playing chess and checkers. He is a man of excellent habits and great economy, but he never tho't he could do anything of his own mending.

In some respects his circumstances are like my own. He is a lawyer, & has been in practice about as long as I have. Lives on a farm just one mile from his office. Has a wife and 3 or 4 children, is exceedingly attached to them, and is longing for the time to arrive when he shall retire from public life, to his farm, his profession and the society of those he loves. I wish the parallel could be carried farther. He is worth over fifty thousand dollars, and has a farm which he gave \$15,000 for, though containing only about 30 acres, situated on the bank of North river about a dozen miles above West Point at the village of Newburg. He has been offered for one-half of his place, what he gave for the whole, and I believe has engaged to let it go. He is a good lawyer, a man of fine talents, and very companionable. How do you like him?

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. The moose, alias the great hog, I suppose has gone the way of all the earth before this. I want the particulars about him.

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Friday, December 30, 1836.

Dear Wife,

I intended to have written you yesterday, but got engaged after dinner in a game of chess with Mr. & Mrs. Chapin and let the whole of letter time slip through my fingers. He beat me and I beat her, so you see I am not so much of a crack player as I thought I was. After tea I went with Col. Hall to visit Judge Parris. It is almost the only evening I have been out yet. I have an invitation for Mrs. Forsyth's party next Wednesday evening and am hesitating about making up my mind to go to no parties this winter.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE LAST DAYS OF JACKSON; 1837

"The second and last term of the Presidency of General Jackson expired on March 3d, 1837. The next day, at 12, he appeared with his successor, Martin Van Buren, on the elevated and spacious eastern portico of the Capitol, as one of the citizens who came to witness the inauguration of the new President, and in no way distinguished from them, except by his place on the left hand of the President-elect."

Thus writes Senator Benton in his "Thirty Years View," unconsciously reflecting the common attitude of homage to General Jackson that the times required of all true Democrats. With fine rhetorical fervor he describes the day with its clear sky, balmy, vernal sun, tranquil atmosphere, the "vast crowd, riveted to their places, and profoundly silent, until the ceremony of inauguration was over."

To the great Missouri champion of General Jackson, there was no question as to the central figure of this scene of March 4, 1837. "There was no room," declares he, "for mistake as to whom this mute and impressive homage was rendered. For once the rising was eclipsed by the setting sun. Though disrobed of power and retiring to the shades of private life, it was evident that the great ex-President was the absorbing object of this intense regard."

President Jackson retired from office at the climax of his power and in the full tide of popular approval. The early portion of the year 1837 had been taken up with the passage of the expunging resolution, which was the only stain upon his official life. The tactics of the Democratic senators led by Benton of Missouri, Senators Wright of New York and Allen of Ohio, who were leading the fight to expunge from the Senate records the resolutions of censure against General Jackson for his procedure in the matter of the United States Bank, were developed at a secret meeting at the then "famous restaurant of Boulanger, where the meeting was given the air of a convivial

entertainment." It continued until midnight and required all the tact, moderation and skill of the prime movers, to maintain the union upon details essential to a success. They did not underestimate their adversaries, among whom were Clay, Calhoun and Webster. Serious differences arose among the "expurgers" over the form in which the expurgation should be effected. This was finally determined and it was then decided to call the resolution immediately after the morning business of Monday. Expecting a protracted session, these doughty friends of General Jackson provided for an ample supper of cold hams, turkeys, rounds of beef, pickles, wines, liquors, cups of hot coffee, to be ready in a certain committee-room near the Senate Chamber by four o'clock of the afternoon of Monday.

The motion to take up the matter was made at the appointed time and a debate, with long speeches, immediately opened. The three great leaders of the opposition, Clay, Calhoun and Webster did not join in the opening, but effective speeches were made by their friends, Preston of South Carolina, Richard H. Bayard and John M. Clayton of Delaware, Crittenden of Kentucky, White of Tennessee and Ewing of Ohio. That was practically the team that had led the opposition three years before, now reinforced by Judge White of Tennessee, Jackson's own state, a powerful opponent with a strong following. Darkness came on and the chandeliers flung a brilliant light over the Senate Chamber, crowded with members of the House. The galleries were filled to their utmost capacity with visitors and spectators. It is to be regretted that Mr. Fairfield had no occasion to describe the scene in these letters; but, as indicated in the following chapter, Mrs. Fairfield was with him and doubtless they were both in attendance. But few spoke for the resolution, chiefly Rives, Buchanan and Niles. There was no occasion. They had counted noses and knew that the resolution would carry. It was high-tide of Jacksonian democracy. The Maine Senators were hand and glove with it, while Fairfield and his friends in the House gloried in the victory about to be won against the Clay-Calhoun wing of the democracy. Cal-



GRANDDAUGHTER OF GOVERNOR JOHN FAIRFIELD  
The Youngest Daughter of Annie Fairfield Perkins of New York  
Photographed in the Hallway of the Hamilton House in Saco and  
Wearing her Great-Great-Grandmother's dress.  
Old Cutts Clock in the corner



houn spoke finally—in anguish at the serious condition in which the party found itself.

“But why do I waste my breath,” cried Mr. Calhoun in his matchless style, “I know it is utterly vain! The day is gone; the night approaches and night is appropriate to the dark deed we meditate. \* \* \* This act originates in pure, unmixed, personal idolatry. It is the melancholy evidence of a broken spirit, ready to bow at the feet of power. An act like this could never have been consummated even by a Roman Senate until the days of Caligula and Nero.”

Mr. Clay also closed his argument with similar words. “Why,” cried he, “should I detain the Senate? The decree has gone forth. It is one of urgency. The deed is to be done—that foul deed which, like the blood-stained hands of the guilty Macbeth, all ocean’s waters will never wash out. Proceed then with the work and, like other skillful executioners, do it quickly. \* \* \* And then, go home and tell the people that henceforward no matter what daring or outrageous act any President may perform, you have forever hermetically sealed the mouth of the Senate. Tell them that he may fearlessly assume what power he pleases, snatch from its lawful custody the public purse, command a military detachment to enter the walls of the Capitol, overawe Congress, trample down the Constitution and raze every bulwark of Freedom, but that the Senate must stand mute, in silent submission, and dare not raise an opposing voice.”

Mr. Webster spoke last and, presaging the passage of the resolution, closed by saying, “We collect ourselves to look on in silence, while a scene is exhibited which, if we did not regard it as a ruthless violation of a sacred instrument, would appear little elevated above the character of a contemptible farce.”

After Mr. Webster closed, no one else arose. A dead silence ensued. The vote was taken; carried; the expunging was done amid hisses, denunciation and demands that the “bank ruffians who hissed this act” be brought to the bar of the Senate—altogether the most dramatic scene perhaps that

ever was enacted in the United States Senate. History does not bear out as a whole the estimate of Clay, Calhoun and Webster as to the "foulness" of the deed, nor were the "conspirators" of the school of Caligula and Nero. Today, it is regarded as much ado about nothing and the expunging as a considerate kindness to a patriotic but hot-headed President who did things as he saw them to do.

In the year 1837 Roger B. Taney was appointed to succeed Chief Justice Marshall who had died. His confirmation was opposed by the same group that fought the expunging resolution and Taney went on to the bench to do the bidding of his masters and to serve the slave-holding states by his rulings in the case of fugitive slaves. Maine Senators voted to confirm Taney, but Webster, Clay, Calhoun, White, Preston and others voted against confirmation.

The new administration retained very nearly the same Cabinet as that of President Jackson—Mr. Forsyth, Secretary of State; Mr. Woodbury, Secretary of Treasury; Mr. Poinsett, Secretary of War; Mahlon Dickerson, Secretary of Navy; Amos Kendall, Postmaster-General, and Benjamin F. Butler, Attorney General, Mr. Butler soon resigning to be succeeded by Henry D. Gilpin of Pennsylvania. Hardly had Jackson passed on to his home at the Hermitage and Mr. Van Buren and his Cabinet assumed control of affairs when the storm that had been predicted burst with all its fury in the financial panic of 1837, the most serious period of depression that ever was known in the United States. The John Fairfield type of Democrats were in for a season of distressing experience. The old-fashioned aristocratic leadership that had spoken with pretensions of infallibility, unwittingly suffered its severest blow when Jackson himself became the head of the democracy. Unaware of itself, the very career of Jackson seemed to increase the ascendancy of pure democracy and enhance the power of general opinion. Such newspapers as the *New York Herald* and the *New York Sun*, papers of a new type, had sprung up, asking impertinent questions and prying into public affairs.

The upturning which General Jackson had brought upon government was beginning to be noticed equally in every-day life.

Most of the sad stories of political jobbery, malfeasance in office and incompetency of years long past and yet continuing were disclosed while President Van Buren was in office, and the discredit of what Jackson had done fell upon him. The "spoils system" which Van Buren's party in New York State was believed to have originated and perfected under General Jackson was made the subject of rabid and unceasing attack. Van Buren shielded no one and excused nothing, but got no credit for that. His administration, clouded by panic, disrupted by disclosures of discreditable service under predecessors, soon became difficult of defense and may have led even the most faithful followers of Democracy to look about for preferment elsewhere than in Washington and in Congress. Suspension of banks, insolvency of the Federal Treasury, widespread unemployment, actual want and suffering, absolute derangement both of commerce and of industry, made the year 1837 memorable in our national annals. Washington must have been an uncomfortable residence for John Fairfield, Democrat. Small wonder that he was listening acutely and with new interest to the frequent requests from his political friends in Maine to come home and become a candidate for Governor.

The situation in Maine, so far as the Democratic Party was concerned, was somewhat unsettled. Governor Dunlap had declined a nomination and the field was open. The friends of the young Saco Congressman were beseeching him to enter. He probably saw the situation better than they. There was a revolt against Jacksonianism and against the Democrats. He kept out of the fight in Maine. His party nominated Col. Gorham L. Parks of Bangor for Governor—a fine, conciliatory, able man, who happened to be unfortunate in his enemies. Six years previous he had quarrelled with F. O. J. Smith of Portland and Mr. Smith was one of those who never forgot an affront. The historic campaign "when Maine went hell-bent for Governor Kent" was by no means so emphatic as the words

would signify. In reality it was settled in Penobscot County, the home of each of the candidates. Into the Maine campaign were interjected the affairs of a Bangor sheriff whom Mr. Parks had defended as counsel. F. O. J. Smith attacked Mr. Parks as a Federalist and produced letters tending to prove his charge; and on these two counts, chiefly, Edward Kent ran ahead of the ticket in Penobscot and defeated the Democracy by a small but significant majority that aroused the country and brought consternation to President Van Buren.

In the session concerning which Congressman Fairfield writes, the fate of Texas was hanging in the balance and the war with Mexico was brooding. The re-establishment of credit and of business was brought about with little credit to the Democrats as a national party. Mr. Van Buren handled diplomatic matters with wisdom and good judgment, but with the loss of Jackson, the Democracy lost initiative. With these facts in mind the letters of Governor Fairfield take on new interest. It is to be added that in point of sheer ability the Congress of 1837 had not been hitherto excelled. In it was one man who had been President and four who were to be Presidents, viz. Polk, who was Speaker; Buchanan, Fillmore and Pierce, while ex-President Adams was in the House for Massachusetts. Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Silas Wright and Wm. C. Preston were men of power and of vision. The Maine Senators were John Ruggles and Reuel Williams. George Evans of Gardiner, Maine, was in the House, a great financial expert and master mind! Other Maine Congressmen were John Fairfield, F. O. J. Smith, Timothy J. Carter, Thomas Davee, Jonathan Cilley, Joseph C. Noyes and Hugh J. Anderson. "In my long service," said Senator Benton in his "Thirty Years View" in 1856, "I have not seen a more able Congress. It is only necessary to read the names and to possess some knowledge of public men to be struck with the number of names which would come under the description of useful or brilliant members." Of the Maine Congressmen Evans and Noyes were Whigs, the others were Democrats. Mr. Carter of Paris died



in mid-term and was succeeded by Virgil D. Parris, Democrat, of Buckfield. Jonathan Cilley was killed in a duel and was succeeded by Edward Robinson of Thomaston, a Whig.

This Congress, the 25th, met the first Monday in September and chose James K. Polk Speaker of the House. Mr. Fairfield's correspondence is silent on these scenes, as Mrs. Fairfield was with him. He resumed correspondence with Mrs. Fairfield, in November, 1837, after an intermission of several months.



## The Burglar Hunt

Boston, Nov. 29, Wednesday. (1837)

Dear Wife,

I arrived here safely last night, though pretty thoroughly chilled, having rode outside more than half the way. At 12 o'clock today I leave for New York but shall be obliged to go round Point Judith in the steamboat as the Stonington cars run only every other day. I find here Mr. Williams & family, Messrs. Davee, Cilley & Anderson, all of whom are going on today, but Mr. Anderson.

Last night between 11 & 12 o'clock some one knocked at my chamber door & asked me to turn the key & let him in. "Who are you?" said I. "The landlord," said he. "What do you want?" "Some goods have been stolen," said he, "and we are searching the rooms." "Well," said I, "why do you come here? Why not go to the other rooms?" "I have searched all the rest." "I know better," said I,—"if you had I should have heard you." "Well," said he, "I must come in, and now I am pretty well satisfied that you are the rogue who has gotten the goods." "Well, now," said I, "you don't come into this room without having others present—so clear out." "Oh nonsense, open the door," said he, "this is all in sport, I am McCrate." I jumped out of bed, unlocked my door & who should enter but my old friend, John D. McCrate of Wiscasset.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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## Arrival in Washington 1837

Washington, Dec. 2, 1837.

Dear Wife,

Here I am Saturday night, in my little 7 by 9, seated in the old chair with a changeable bottom and back, you know, at the same table we had last session, once more writing to you. I feel rejoiced that I am settled down.

I found here on my arrival Judge Prentiss of Vermont & wife & Mr. Allen, your old acquaintance. No others have arrived yet, and it is doubtful whether many of them take quarters here; McClellan, Parker, Prentiss & Birdsall engaged before leaving. The rest, I believe, did not.

We dined today with the mess on 'tother side. They were all, Mr. & Mrs. Berry, Maj. Hall, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Caster & others, full of inquiries about you & Augusta, and gratified me much by the respect & kindness which they really, I think, & not piquedly, manifested for you both.

Mrs. Barry is not as big as an ox, nor could she crawl through an alderman's ring, but somewhere "betwixt and between." Mr. Duncan eats enormously as usual & complains of a weakness in his back; Mr. Caster's face is constantly radiant with smiles and Mr. Frenchtilkman, otherwise Fleshman, looks grave, talks queer & plays on the fiddle as he used to do. Mrs. Pitman was full of her kind remembrances of you & seemed very much to lament that you had not returned.

As ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Describing His New Quarters

Washington, Dec. 3d, 1837.

Dear Wife,

Our mess now stands: Judge Prentiss & wife, Mr. Fillmore & wife, Mr. Birdsall & wife and Mr. Allen, Mr. Anderson & myself. It is to be of a very mixed character as to politics, but I hope a pleasant one. Mrs. P. is a prim, neat, Quaker-like old lady, and, I suspect, a clever, so-so sort of body. Mrs. F. is rather plain, something of a talker & a woman of good sense. Mrs. B. I mean to like the best, but having been merely introduced & passed only a word or two with her you must wait for further developments.

I found all my things here that we left except my Bible, frock coat, shoes and box of chess men. Perhaps they are still in our old room which is now occupied by Judge Prentiss & wife. I have been trying to ascertain, but have not made out yet. Where did you put them? I don't see why they were not removed to this room with the other things. Shelves have been put up against the middle door as I directed, and my books make quite a show upon them. There are 6 shelves & under the lower one stands the large trunk and it is quite out of the way.

Between the shelves & the window stands my wash stand & under that a most capacious and well constructed keeler, for washing feet, I suppose. Against the window stands my table and under it the small trunk. On the other side of the window

hangs a very respectable sized mahogany framed looking glass, and under that stands a chair. Then comes a closet, then the fireplace, then another closet, then a chair, then the door, then another chair, and then my bed.

In the middle of the floor, before the fire, stands the arm chair occupied by his honor and thus you have the whole paraphernalia of the room (if I have spelt it right, look & see, tomorrow I mean to buy a dictionary.) Oh, dear, I can't bear to think that I am doomed to be from you half a year. When I see so many bringing their wives it makes me feel desolate, indeed.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The President's Message

Washington, Dec. 5, 1837.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday Congress met, 163 members were present, the usual committee was chosen to wait on the President and we then adjourned. Today at 12 o'clock the President sent in his message which was read & 20,000 copies ordered to be printed. It is a masterly document, and everything that his friends could wish.

I called up to the White House last evening with Col. Prentiss & Mr. Loomis of New York, and passed half an hour with the President. He appeared remarkably well. The New York election did not seem to disturb his equanimity in the least. He seems to have no doubt of the ultimate success of our party everywhere because it is based upon just principles and has for its object the maintenance of the rights of the many against the encroachments & usurpations of the few.

Our mess is now nearly full; Parker McClellan & Buchanan have arrived and Mr. Loomis of New York has joined us. All goes on pleasantly, notwithstanding our differences in politics. I had much rather have those who differ with us totally, i. e., the Whigs, than those who pretend to be of us & yet differ with us in many things, the conservatives.

Today Rachael brought in my frock coat, shoes, Bible & chess men, so now I believe everything has been found that we left. Nancy has made her appearance, and says she will mark everything so that there shall be no mistake. But I have chosen to set down in a memorandum book the pieces she takes, and will give her credit for them when returned.

Among the papers I ordered yesterday was the N. Y. Mirror for the benefit of you and Martha these long winter evenings, and when I arrived here I found three or four numbers sent by the publishers to connect the two sessions, I suppose. I take also the Daily Globe, Boston Courier, N. Y. Evening Post, Saturday Courier (Phil.), & Richmond Enquirer. Probably, I may also send you occasionally the Saturday Courier which is a great bed blanket of a thing and not political, I believe.

Good night,

J. F.

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### Mess Is Increased

Washington, Dec. 6, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I have taken on going to bed, 2 Wistar's lozenges, and have found that they are a perfect preventive of my cough, which troubled me a good deal for a few nights. I find my little chamber very comfortable except that Sam don't keep me so well supplied with wood as he ought to. For servants we have Sam and Nat and William. The last takes the place of Robert, but is not half equal to him.

Today Gov. Knight & lady from R. I. have joined our mess. He is a Senator, Federal in politics, but a clever, inoffensive sort of man. His wife has not made her appearance yet at the table. Col. Pratt has his fourth wife. She is apparently much younger than he is, dresses very much and is something of a talker. Our mess has now got to be large, numbering, I believe, about 17, including ladies.

Carter brought his wife as far as New York, and will have her here in a few weeks. He goes to Berth's who keeps, if you recollect, nearly opposite to us. Peirce & wife, & Williams & wife, and Cilley, board there also.

Today I put on my old frock coat & really it looked so smart that I have concluded to wear it awhile as my day coat instead of confining it to my chamber. I have also been contemplating buying a new surtout, but have given that up for the present; the old one will do, perhaps, till spring or longer. Your old friend, the Major, has recd. an order to repair forthwith to Portsmouth, N. H., where he will be attached, I suppose, to the Navy Yard. Yesterday he dined out and, I believe, got a little corned. He was exceedingly talkative when he returned, and

it was late at night before he could be persuaded to go to bed.

Mr. Caster has improved somewhat upon both the flute & violin, though he does not play so much as formerly.

I have played one game of chess with Mr. Loomis and beat him. Birdsall says his wife is a whole team at it. I shall try her soon.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Buys Bancroft's History

Washington, Dec. 7, 1837.

Dear Wife,

Today we met, spent about 10 or 15 minutes in business & then adjourned over to Monday next, giving us 2 leisure days. I hardly know what to do with them, but if I felt better I would take this opportunity to visit Norfolk & Richmond. I stepped out just now and bought Bancroft's history of the United States, 2 vols. These will afford me both pleasure and instruction, I think. He is about the best writer of the day and is a particular favorite of mine for more reasons than one.

Do you hear anything of your quillapi?

I hope, if you have good sleighing, that you will improve it. You must go abroad more, ride more & enjoy yourself. But I must go out and take a walk before dark, so good-night.

Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### He Beats at Chess

Washington, Dec. 8, 1837.

Last night I called up to Judge Parris'. Found them all pretty well, though they were well acquainted with all the medicines for coughs, &c. I borrowed Doct. Sewall's lectures against phrenology and am willing to be convinced by them though I doubt their having that effect. After my return I played chess with Paine and beat him one game, at which he was very angry, laid it all to "that ass" as he called him, that sat beside him, Mr. Loomis, when Loomis did nothing & said nothing but look on with great earnestness. Paine is, I think,

the most incitable man I ever met with & consequently he must be among the most unhappy. I have also played one game of chess with Mr. Loomis, and one with Mrs. Birdsall, both of which I beat.

Tomorrow I think I'll call at Mr. Chas. Cutts' & then I shall have completed my circle of calls. Today I left cards with Mr. Forsyth, Sec. State, Mr. Woodbury, Mr. Poinsett, Sec. War, Mr. Dickinson, Sec. Navy, Mr. Butler, the Atty. Genl., Mr. Kendall, P. M. Genl., Mr. Fox, the English minister, & Mr. Pontois, the French minister. So that when the parties come round I shall probably have an opportunity to attend if I have the inclination.

Your affectionate Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Dec. 9, 1837.

Dear Wife,

It did my heart good to get a letter from you this morning. You are very smart to be at the breakfast table, and to have finished every morning before 8 o'clock. Do persevere. I am well persuaded you would feel better for it.

In regard to Walter's riding, I would suggest that you try him again. Don't get him dissatisfied and cross, we had better let him ride too fast sometimes, or err in some other respects. We must show him that we have confidence in him & get him to have a confidence in himself and a respect for himself. But it's of no use to preach to you, you understand the matter as well as I do.

Would you believe it, we are determined to nominate Mr. Johnson, a Unitarian, for Chaplain, and with some hopes of success. He had letters from Mr. Peabody of Portsmouth to Mr. Parker of New York, who married sisters. Parker, although an Episcopalian, takes a warm interest in the thing, and he & Mr. Allen have waited upon Mr. Johnson who consents to be nominated. We have begun to make a little interest for him today with the members & find that the thing takes pretty well.

We have had another added to our mess since writing you yesterday, a Mr. White of Indiana. He is Whig in politics, but appears very well at first sight. Judge Ruggles has arrived and has had a talk with Mrs. Pitman, but don't conclude to come here, her lowest price for the unoccupied room being \$13.00.

Your Affectionate Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.



## Appointed on Committee on Foreign Relations

Washington, Dec. 11, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I enclose you the card of Mrs. Kendall, left here for you today. I trust you will be polite enough to return the call. Parties have not commenced yet, but I suppose they will soon. Some of our ladies are ill. Mrs. Fillmore has a bad cough and has been confined to her chamber for several days, I fear she is verging towards consumption. Mrs. Birdsall was not at the dinner table today, though I suspect her case is not very serious.

Our mess thus far proves to be a very pleasant one, notwithstanding the different complexion of our politics. Mrs. Knight is a very handsome, stately and dignified old lady.

Today we have done little in the House except to choose Chaplain and appoint the committees. In the latter I think Maine has been very liberally dealt by. I remain on the Committee on Foreign Relations tho' it has somewhat changed in other respects. It is now as follows: Howard, Cushing, Jackson, Dromgoole, Claiborne, Fairfield, Patton, Legare, Hoffman. Saying nothing about myself, I think this is a splendid committee & will compare with any other in the House.

We had four trials, I believe, for Chaplain before a choice was effected. It finally resulted in the choice of Mr. Reese of this City and, I believe, a Methodist. Mr. Johnson, the Unitarian, had 50 votes the first two trials; after these the number fell off to 30. But though defeated, we feel gratified at having obtained as many votes as 50. This is far beyond what was ever done before, and augurs well for the growing good sense of people at the South.

I have not seen any of Mr. Dummer's folks since a week ago yesterday when I walked up there. Today I met two of the Misses Parris on the avenue. They had been a shopping, and were carrying home their purchases in large bundles. It reminded me of good old New England independence.

Your affectionate husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## A "Thrashing" in the House

Washington, Dec. 13, 1837.

Dear Wife,

At the House today we have had one of Adams' violent & intemperate speeches. The question was upon referring the

petitions on subject of Texas to a select committee or to the Committee on Foreign Relations. He dragged in the subject of slavery and among other things the affair at Alton and the death of Lovejoy.<sup>1</sup> This brought the Southrons to their feet. Much excitement prevailed among them & a few were very anxious to answer him, but Wise, who was as cool as a cucumber, got the floor and moved to lay the whole on the table. This, you know, cuts off debate, and the motion prevailing, put the whole matter at rest.

We have also had one other matter up today which excited a good deal of interest. It seems that Fletcher of Boston, after the special session, made a speech in Boston, in which he stated, or the report of his speech in the Boston papers made him say that all the bills reported by the Com. of Ways & Means of which he was a member, were procured by Cambreling, the Chairman at the White House, were ordered to be reported by the committee without examination, and were passed by the House without the alteration of a word, letter or comma.

He also said many other things touching that Committee of the same character. This morning there appeared in the Globe a statement signed by 5 or 6 of the members of the Committee contradicting & proving to be false nearly every assertion made by Fletcher & lashing him a little for his course. As soon as the House met, F. asked leave of the House to make an explanation in regard to it, which was granted him. He then said that he did not publish the speech himself, nor examine the proof, nor did he see it until he saw it in the Boston papers, that some of the things there reported by him to have been said were not said, &c., &c. Cambreling made a short and somewhat cutting reply.

Atherton of New Hampshire thrashed him pretty soundly, and then Jones of Virginia took the floor and gave Fletcher a terrible castigation. He said there was no difference between Fletcher's writing out the speech himself and not contradicting what was erroneously written by others. He denounced the speech as false, calumnious and base, and bore down upon poor Fletcher with all his power and in a manner that made me feel for him. But Fletcher took it all in silence and did not attempt a reply. You will probably see it all in the Globe.

I am writing now in a sort of gown which I bought yesterday. It is half way between a gown & a surtout. I like the fashion much. It is a real comfortable affair & will save coats not a little. With the aid of this I think I can make my old

frock coat last all winter. Have not called on Mrs. Madison yet, but mean to in a few days.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Elijah Parish Lovejoy, known as the first Abolitionist martyr. He was born in Albion, Me., and graduated at Waterville College. The "affair at Alton" referred to was the destruction by a mob of Lovejoy's newspaper press, and the shooting of Lovejoy while trying to protect it. The wrath of Alton citizens had been aroused by the strong Abolition sentiments in the paper.

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Washington, Dec. 15, 1837.

My Dear Wife,

The House today have adjourned over to Monday, so tomorrow will be a play day for most of the members,—but for myself I mean to work hard, having a good many matters on hand requiring my attention. Last night I went by invitation to Mr. Charles Cutts' where I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Madison. I was engaged so that I was unable to get there until nearly 9 o'clock, & consequently did not see much of her as she left about ½ past 9. She is rather tall and large, of a commanding figure and dignified and graceful in her movements. I had a few minutes conversation with her only. She made particular inquiries after you and said that she had heard much of you, regretted that she was not to meet you here, &c., &c. I think I shall not be satisfied with this, but shall call upon her one of these days.

Holsey of Georgia is just added to our mess.

Affectionately Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The Day's Routine

Washington, Dec. 17, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I am as comfortably situated as a man can well be who is 600 miles away from those he loves better than all the world beside. Sam comes very early, oftentimes as soon as daybreak, and makes a fire. After dressing and shaving, I read regularly two chapters in my Bible. Then go down & read the Globe and Intelligencer in the parlor until breakfast time.

My breakfast, as of old, is principally made upon buckwheat cakes and molasses, with a tumbler of milk substituted for coffee. I have drank but one cup of coffee, I believe, since

I have been here! and think I improve upon it. Once in a while I take a cup of black tea, which, by the way, I have just found out is much better than green tea. The latter almost always makes me thirsty and feverish. Suppose you try the experiment of black tea at home.

I have been to meeting today & heard Mr. Berry of Framingham, Massachusetts. He gave us an excellent sermon, and in good style. Text, "I am the light of the world." I suspect that it is the same Mr. B. who was once settled at Lowell & whom I tried to get down to Saco.

I have changed my seat in our house here, now sitting in a body pew the 3d one from the front, with Reed & Hastings of Mass. & Noyes of our State. It is cushioned & carpeted & is very comfortable. Yesterday, I went to the Capitol to hear Wolff, the converted Jew. The Hall was crowded and as I could not obtain a seat I staid only about 15 or 20 minutes. During that time he was relating his adventures, a part of which was quite humorous and a part of it rather tedious & dull. He has a rich voice and imitates the Persian singing admirably. He was once taken by the Turcomans or robbers among whom he had a variety of adventures. Once he hallooed to a company passing not far from them in the night for the purpose of procuring his release. They said to him: "You fellow, if you make any more noise we'll shoot you like von dog," "and," said he, "I was quiet all like von mouse."

The Intelligencer contains Mr. Adams' short speech on asking for the use of the Hall. He was quite eloquent & repeated some dozen lines from one of Bishop Heber's hymns in fine style.

Mrs. Fillmore was down to breakfast this morning, but Mrs. Birdsall is really quite sick.

My dear wife, good night.

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Dec. 19, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I commence this letter in the House, with Mr. Holsey of Georgia making a speech in the seat directly behind me. Doctor Duncan of Cincinnati has just closed a real slang-whanging speech, but it was in answer to speeches of the same kind on the other side, particularly one made by Wise. Duncan is a fearless fellow and just fit for an opponent of some of the Federal

Whigs here. Some of them on both sides are beginning to wax warm, but for myself I am as cool as a December morning, and more than that, mean to keep so.

I intend soon to call up to Mr. Dummer's and leave them some franks which I forgot when I was there before. The only visiting I have done, since I have been here, is once to Judge Parris', once to Mr. Dummer's, twice to Chas. Cutts' & once to Uncle Richard's. But I mean to go about a little more by & by. Of your Uncle Richard I bought the other day his share of the Uncle Dominic Scamman estate, not because I wanted it, but because he wanted the money very much and could not sell it to anyone else.

You forgot to put up one of my woolen waistcoats or guernsey frocks. When I came to change on Sunday morning I could not find the mate of the one taken off and so put on one of the blue & whites, which I find is not as thick as the other kind and has shorter sleeves. However, it will do well enough for this mild region.

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### Abolition Speech Excites House

Washington, Dec. 20, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I did not intend to write you again until tomorrow, but as an event has occurred here producing considerable excitement I thought I would relate it.

Slade of Vermont presented several petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and moved their reference to a select committee with instructions to bring in a bill for that purpose.

This gave him a right to discuss the question, so this morning at it he went. His speech was of a character calculated under existing circumstances to produce excitement among the Southern members, as it did in fact. He was very frequently interrupted, but nothing could stop him. Finally, Wise rose and said that as the gentleman had begun to discuss the question of slavery in the States as well as in the District of Columbia, he invited the Virginia delegation to leave the Hall in a body and retire to one of the committee rooms. Holsey of Georgia gave the same invitation to his delegation, and some member from South Carolina, the same as to that State, and accordingly the most of them retired. Some one then moved

an adjournment of the House, on which the ayes and noes were ordered and the adjournment carried by a large majority.

As soon as the vote was announced Campbell of South Carolina invited all the gentlemen from slave holding States to meet in a committee room forthwith. And there they are now. What all this is to end in no one can tell, but I suspect it will blow over. The Northern fanatics, however, will push this matter, I fear, until they lay the foundations for a disunion of the States, if they do not actually produce it. Holsey has just returned, but don't say what they have done and we have some delicacy in asking him. Nothing new beyond this worth telling.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Dec. 22d, 1837.

Dear Wife,

In my last I believe I gave you some account of the excitement produced here by Slade's abolition speech. It seems that the Southern members adjourned their first meeting until the evening when they had a full one and had a good deal of animated discussion. They concluded to come into the House the following morning and offer a resolution similar to the one proposed last year by Pinckney & adopted by the House, viz., that all petitions, &c., touching the abolition of slavery either in the States or the Territories should be laid upon the table without being read, debated, referred or printed. This Resolve passed by a large majority.

It was different from what I should have liked, but as the previous question had been moved & carried we were obliged to take that or let the whole subject remain open for a long, violent, angry & dangerous discussion. I say dangerous because I believe the permanency of the Union would be endangered if not destroyed by it. We had another little flurry yesterday morning through the instrumentality of old Adams, but it soon blew over.

I have got an invitation to go to Mr. Chas. Cutts' on Monday, which is Christmas, you know. Today I have also recd. an invitation to dine with the President on Thursday next at 5 o'clock and requesting an answer. I shall go, of course, "wind & weather" permitting, as the sailors say. I found today in a N. Y. paper an article written by 'Judge Mellen on his 73d birth-

day. It pleased me so much that I cut it out & herewith enclose it to you.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

'Prentiss Mellen of Portland, Maine's first chief justice. He retired from office three years previous, having reached the age of 70, which was the limit for holding that office.

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### Mentioned for Governor

Washington, Dec. 24, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I received your regular Saturday morning epistle, written the Sunday evening preceding. I am glad to perceive your perseverance in going to meeting notwithstanding you have so much to encounter. I can't say much for myself, however, today, for I am spending the day in my chamber, enveloped in my gaudy calico, and toasting my shins before a good fire. For my justification, however, I have to plead a swollen face, a little out of orderish internally, and 3 or 4 inches of snow on the ground, which fell during the night. There is something a little queer about my face, swelling unaccompanied by much pain or soreness.

At tea, Mrs. Pitman & I play bo-peep and wish for you to join us. Mr. Buchanan sticks by the old place but is far less stupid than he used to be. He now talks considerably and is a very sensible man. The reason of all of which is, a great improvement in his health.

Congress adjourned over from Friday to Tuesday, as tomorrow is Christmas. Nothing new in the way of politics.

I think it will, on the whole, be best to keep Sarah at home this winter. It is too far to walk in winter. Tell my dear Sarah I think of her much, and love her more than I can express. She must be a good girl & read a good deal this winter. I shall expect, also, that she will help her mother in sewing, knitting, clearing away the table and in doing pleasantly everything that her mother wants her to do. I shall endeavor to send home to her and the rest of the children some little books as New Year's presents. My sweet Augusta, too, must be a nice girl and mind her mother in all things and learn to sew, so that by & by she can make some shirts for her Father. I hope, too, that she will soon learn her letters, for as soon as she can read I shall write some letters to her.

Dear little Hammy, I wish I could hear him say "Far" once, & have the happiness of trotting him on my knees. He is a noble boy and I love him much.

You ask if I have been at Uncle Richard's. I have been there but once and then did not see Dolly or Mary. I have, however, met them in the street, and once at Chas. Cutts'. They are just as when you knew them. Dolly, I think, a little disposed to backbite. Mary is, I believe, very clever.

A few begin to address me upon the subject of our next election, and of my being a candidate for Governor! Don't be alarmed, nothing, I think, can ever induce me to consent, even if the people are silly enough to invite me. With my small property and large family, an election would be utter ruin to me.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Adams Makes Trouble

Washington, Dec. 26, 1837.

Dear Wife,

I begin my letter in the House today, where old Adams is again making trouble for the Speaker and the House. He presented a petition the other day from a Peace Society praying that our trouble with Mexico might be referred to some friendly power. Howard moved that it be referred to Committee on Foreign Relations. Adams moved with "instructions to read, consider & report thereon," and under this motion insists upon his right to discuss the merits of the memorial, which is clearly a violation of the rules of the House. After a great many ineffectual attempts, the Speaker has finally stopped him. A motion is made granting him leave to proceed and on this the ayes & noes are being taken; I presume the motion will succeed, and then we may expect to have a pretty copious stream of the bitter waters of his heart.

Yesterday, Christmas, I spent principally in my chamber, the swelling in my face not having entirely subsided. In the evening, however, I went to Chas. Cutts'. There was nobody there but the little guitar player (whom you probably recollect), and myself. Had no great of a time. Egg-nog is the great Christmas drink here, which you know I can't drink, as it contains brandy or whiskey. My health, aside from my cheek, is very good. My cough is cured, that is, so far as a constitu-



tional ailment can be cured. I cannot, however, preserve that degree of cheerfulness which I felt at the special session.

Carter has gone to New York to bring on his wife. Anderson is troubled with inflammation of the eyes, but is still able to attend the sessions of the House. He is an excellent chum, very intelligent, friendly and social. I don't know what I could do without him. Paine & I once in a while play a game of chess. Whenever he gets beaten he swears and frets as usual. He has the most irritable and unhappy disposition of any man I ever met with. Anderson is a very good player, because he beats me as often as I beat him. This game, however, is too much of a tax upon time, and I must abandon it, partially, at least.

When I had written thus far our mess came off for dinner, leaving Adams on the floor, it then being more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3. He may speak all night now if he chooses as he will not have me for an auditor.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE YEAR OF THE CILLEY DUEL.

In the letters written in the early weeks of 1838 we find the first serious consideration of John Fairfield's candidacy for Governor of Maine. Of course his name had only been proposed by his party, but its leaders were growing more and more insistent and already he is receiving pressing letters to allow his name to be used. Mr. Fairfield was very emphatic in his refusal to consider such a possibility. He was not insensible of the honor, but believed he could not afford, with his small means and large family, to enter the campaign. The first letters give no hint that any urging would cause him to alter his opinion. He was rather hoping that Parks would be mentioned as the Democratic candidate. At the last election Parks, Democrat, ran against Kent, Whig, and lost out by a small margin. He was a Bangor man, a lawyer and a good speaker, but was more popular in other parts of the State than in his home district. It transpired, however, that Col. Parks wisely declined being a candidate again and was rewarded by the office of U. S. Marshal of Maine.

However, the gubernatorial campaign was not yet on in earnest and many things of more immediate interest claimed Congressman Fairfield's attention. Abolition was assuming a larger and more important place in the affairs of the Nation and there were some hot debates inspired by it and some unpleasant differences. Maine had already produced one abolitionist who had created a nation-wide stir and sacrificed his life for the cause. This was Elijah Parish Lovejoy, writer and editor, who had gone into the cause heart and soul. To the tragedy which resulted in his death Mr. Fairfield referred briefly, but expressed no particular concern or indignation against those who caused his untimely death. At that time Fairfield was opposed to any interference on the part of Northerners with the slave question. While of course he was opposed to slavery, he held

that the Southern States had a right to settle these matters for themselves and he feared a disruption of the Union if the North persisted in meddling.

Mr. Fairfield writes as delightfully as usual of the little doings of every-day life, and the social functions he attends, including the New Year reception at the President's.

He sends the most charming messages to his beloved children, particularly his eldest daughter, Sarah. All the hopes, so often expressed by her father for her, were realized, and she developed into a woman of strong character and inspiring personality. The Hamilton house in Saco was for many years her home, for she married Benjamin F. Hamilton, a merchant and prominent citizen of the place. Mrs. Hamilton was a prominent club woman and interested in all public affairs. Her house was a center of hospitality, not only to friends but to every good cause that needed a shelter. Here Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton celebrated their golden wedding and here, in 1909, at an advanced age, she died.

In the correspondence of 1838, is the first mention of the Northeastern Boundary question, which was to have a large part in the remainder of John Fairfield's life. There are occasional references to the subject referred to in the introduction to our previous chapter—the investigation of corrupt public servants who had flourished under previous administrations and who were being routed out by the tireless investigations of a re-awakened public press. It concerned John Fairfield closely, because in the outcome of one of the "attacks" made against the corruptionists on charge of selling influence at one of the Departments, the person routed out proved to be Senator Ruggles of Maine. There was a great ado in the State of Maine newspapers of the day, but Judge Ruggles made an explanation in the Congressional Globe, which was circulated among his constituents and which explained everything as consistent with innocence. Mr. Fairfield adds: "This outcome of the matter will give you pleasure, I think, for you would be





MRS. JOHN FAIRFIELD

sorry to see your old friend convicted of corruption and expelled from the Senate.”

The event that most concerned the nation and that did most to bring Fairfield into public notice occurred in 1838, the duel between Representatives William Graves and Jonathan Cilley, which was closely connected with the foregoing incident, of Senator Ruggles's defense.

Matthew L. Davis, a newspaper correspondent, had said in a letter to the New York Courier and Enquirer that he could prove that a member of Congress had offered to sell his influence to one of the Departments and that things did not go by merit but by the pulling of strings for suitable recompense. The statement aroused inquiry. James Watson Webb, editor of the Courier and Enquirer, vouched for the character of Davis, whom Mr. Fairfield refers to as “Old Davis,” and Congress demanded an investigation. Henry A. Wise asked for a committee. Congressman Cilley of Maine clashed with Wise and in a fiery speech severely characterized the character of Webb. Mr. Davis, the correspondent, was called to the bar of the House and said that the person referred to was not a member of the House of Representatives. This called Judge Ruggles into the affair. He published his statement that he had been informed that he was the person referred to in the charges of Davis. He said that he had given purely legal services in the drawing up of an application for a patent; that he was promised a quarter interest in the patent; that the papers, though drawn, were never executed and that he never received any compensation. Judge Ruggles was exonerated by a committee of the Senate.

Meanwhile, Webb posted off in a hurry from New York to Washington, and sent Cilley by the hand of Representative Graves of Kentucky, a challenge to mortal combat, which Cilley declined to receive. Graves took up the matter, as personal, after Cilley had refused to make any statement whatever in regard to Webb's character. Graves then sent Cilley a personal

challenge and they fought with rifles. Two shots were exchanged without injury to either. Efforts were made to settle the matter. Mr. Cilley was perfectly ready to express esteem for Mr. Graves as he had already done; he had no quarrel with him whatever. He insisted, however, that he would not be drawn into any controversy with Mr. Webb, would express no opinion as to him; would say nothing further concerning him and hence would not retract anything that he had said. At the third shot Cilley was killed, the bullet passing through the femoral artery and death ensuing before the blood-flow could be stopped.

Northern Democrats were aroused. "Murder Most Foul" was the favorite headline in the newspapers. It was a plot of the Federalists to wipe out opposition. "Those whom they can not intimidate with abuse, they determine to silence by the bullet." Fairfield led this campaign in the House as a neighbor and a friend of Jonathan Cilley. President Jackson wrote to Van Buren, "I cannot write on the murderous death of poor Chilley (Cilley). If Congress does not do something to wipe out the stain of the murdered blood of Chilley from its walls, it will raise a flame in the public (word erased) mind against it, not easily to be quelled. Chilley was sacrificed." Nathaniel Hawthorne, a classmate of Cilley at Bowdoin, wrote a sketch of his life and said that a duel was never pressed to a fatal close in the face of such open kindness as was expressed by Mr. Cilley \* \* \* Graves and his principal second, Mr. Wise of Virginia, overstepped the imaginary distinction which on their own principles separates manslaughter from murder."

Mr. Fairfield's letters carry a great deal of contemporary historical value regarding the public attitude. His letters were quoted in a number of pulpits on Fast Day, 1838, with fierce rebuke toward an attitude of mild indifference toward the crime itself. Congress did nothing but give Cilley a perfunctory thirty days of mourning, meanwhile doing business as usual; and the Supreme Court, while expressing sorrow at the



affair, refused according to custom to attend the funeral of one who had fallen in a duel.

Mr. Fairfield's efforts to make of the Cilley duel the foundation for laws against duelling are a tribute to his zeal as a Christian and a hater of such things as well as to his energy as a Democrat. The duel became a party matter. It was claimed that it was the outcome of the Bank matter, the Whigs wishing to remove a man who was to be feared for his brilliant invective and his power in debate. The Whigs replied that Senator Reuel Williams of Maine knew that the duel was to take place; that he could have had the parties arrested and that they looked to certain victory over Graves. The quarrel was bitter and endured for generations.

John Fairfield's resolution regarding duelling; his fearless advocacy of it in the face of the opposition, made him a national figure. It had much to do with his subsequent prominence in the Democratic convention when he came so near to being nominated for Vice-President of the United States.

The references to the Maine gubernatorial campaign in the letters of 1838 require little background to make them intelligible. Fairfield was practically forced to run by reason of the Cilley duel and the speeches that he had made regarding the Northeastern boundary question which was then attracting attention. The campaign for Governor, bitter by reason of the old antipathies, was marred by personalities. The Whigs declared that Fairfield was a young, inexperienced loco-foco. The Democrats declared that Kent was a Federalist; that he was without independence of character and was the tool of the "irresistible cabal of office seekers." The largest vote in the history of the State was cast on election day and Fairfield was elected Governor by a majority of 3,000 in a total vote of 85,599.

His letters from Washington close with his return to Maine in July and resume in December after he had been elected Governor.

## The President's New Year's Reception

Washington, Jan. 1, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Today being New Year's day the President's House was thrown open for visitors, and was literally thronged from 12 to 3 o'clock. On Saturday Mr. Dummer came down and requested me to take Mary with me. Accordingly today at  $\frac{1}{2}$  after 12 Mr. Dummer's carriage came for me, and after Mary & I had called on the President, Almira brought me home, so you see my gallantry cost me very little.

I suspect there were at least 4,000 people called at the President's, and as the day was remarkably fine, the ladies made a great display in dress and the officers in uniform. There was also stationed in the outer hall a fine band of musicians who occasionally struck up some noble march, drowning the hum of voices and the tramp of a thousand feet. We stayed there perhaps half an hour, promenading about the great east room and out on the balcony, viewing faces, dresses and manners and picking out the lions.

We met Mr. Carter & his wife there, he having returned from New York with her last night, after having been absent about a week. She is rather pretty & looks good. Anderson & I are talking of visiting her and our other Maine friends this evening, as we have not done it before, much to our shame, living as they do right across the street.

I send you today a beautiful likeness of Washington Irving in the Mirror. I have also had presented to me by Mr. Parker a book of over 400 pages entitled "Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin China, Siam and Muscat," by Edward Roberts. Parker & Mr. Peabody of Portsmouth married daughters of Roberts, it seems. Roberts went out to these eastern Courts as a secret agent for the government and was very successful in negotiating treaties with two of the Powers, and was on his second embassy last year when he died.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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 Gaieties Continue

Washington, Jan. 3d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I have time only to say a few words, for I have to shave, dress & get ready to go to Mr. Kendall's this evening, and it is

now late. I shall probably start about 8, and if you don't call for me before that I shall be obliged to go alone.

Another invitation was also recd. today for a party at Mr. Forsyth's next Monday, so you see the days or rather nights of frolic and dissipation are beginning.

You recollect there were several clothes cleansers along the avenue, some of them near our corner. Well, I gave one of them my blue pantaloons, and he has returned them "bran fire new"—at least, you could not tell them from such a pair. I shall wear them tonight, and keep them for my bettermosts. I have today also given him my 2d best coat. He is to color it black & cleanse it. Pants, 75c, coat \$1.50, coloring & all.

Mrs. C. & Miss S. sent for me to the gallery again today, and S. has been down tonight to know if I will introduce him to Mr. Kendall this eve. Now, I'll tell you what. I'll cut their acquaintance pretty soon, if I don't change my mind. I have my suspicions that S. has no invitation and is going to ride in on my shoulders. If so, he'll get twig'd. But more anon.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Lost Hymn Book Found

Washington, Jan. 5, 1838.

Dear Wife,

When I wrote you last I was about setting out for Mr. Kendall's where I had rather a pleasant time. It was Kendall's first, and was gotten up in very good style. There were four rooms below, all pretty well filled, and two of them with cotillion dancers. There were two chambers with tables, cards, chess boards, &c. I beat Doctor Taylor of New York, two games of chess, besides spending a considerable time in seeing the ladies dance, eating and drinking the good things provided for us, and playing at chit chat with A. B. C. & D. I left at about 1/2 after 10, and got home in good season.

Since I began this letter Nancy brought in my Hymn book & says "Here's your book, Mrs. Prentice says she's been reading it." So the lost is found. Well, I should have thought she might have informed me that she had it, even if she meant to keep it. But I suppose I ought to excuse her for she can't speak loud enough to tell anything. Her voice is about equal to the hum of a mosquito's wing. But she's very clever so we'll say no more about it.

You recollect what I told you about S.; well, he did not make his appearance there that I saw. I am inclined to think he saw I was not to be made a cat's paw of, for I made an occasion to tell him significantly that I had no authority to invite any one. Next Monday evening, which is the 8th of January, we are to have 2 parties, to wit, at Forsyth's & Woodbury's. Don't know as I shall go to either.

Your affectionate husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Abolition Debate Begins

Washington, Jan. 7, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday as I was walking Penn. Ave. whom do you think I met? Ah, guess—and as the dinner bell has this moment rung, you may have till after dinner for guessing.

Here I am again after dining on roast pig and plum pudding—pretty stuff isn't it for a dyspeptic! but I eat light, thereby showing a little self control. Well, whom did I meet—why, who, pray, but your old friend, Miss Clark! She has been here but a few days but expects to spend the winter, says she shall stay if she don't get so wild that her father will be obliged to send her home. The first thing she wanted to know was why you had not answered her letter, said she had not heard from one of you and she was pretty nigh mad about it. While we were talking, Carter came along, going her way, I having met her. She asked him for leave to walk with him. Pretty much the same as ever, I guess, as volatile as a giddy young creature can be.

We had no session of the House yesterday, and the Senate was occupied in discussing Calhoun's resolutions touching abolition, the rights of the States, &c. I am afraid no good will grow out of their introduction. The debate begins to wax warm. Calhoun is not practical enough for me, deals too much in abstractions, but I think he is now clearly a general supporter of the administration.

I enclose a little knick-knack for Walter, "Before & after the drawing of a Lottery." Tell George I received his knife yesterday, it has just arrived from England. I shall have his name put on it, like Walter's.

Love to all.

Ever yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## He Observes the Fashions

Washington, Jan. 9, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Last night being the 8th of January, Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Woodbury both had parties. I went to Mr. Forsyth's. The house was not so much crowded as usual, but still there were a great many there. The ladies were elegantly dressed and in very good taste. I perceive that the richest dresses are silk velvet; two elegant ones I noticed last night, one red and the other purple. One lady also, I observed, had a purple silk velvet head dress, ornamented with a bird of paradise. Not the tail merely, but the whole bird, and a beautiful ornament it was.

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Madison was there, and formed quite a center of attraction. She is not handsome. She is too large, and her features too coarse for that. But she is stately and indeed, I may say, magnificent. She dresses in black, with her neck ruffled up much in the style of Mrs. Storer of Kennebunk. Her head dress is a sort of turban, resembling what I have seen in prints as the turban of the Turks.

Our fare was rather light. A few cakes, light enough to blow away, a glass of wine and lemonade, ice creams and grapes, constituted the whole treat. It was all well enough, but very cheap. And so far as it may operate as an example to repress extravagance & encourage simplicity and economy, it is all well and ought to be approved.

Yesterday we had quite a war debate in the House in consequence of a message sent in by the President touching the case of the destruction of the Steamboat Caroline & murder of our citizens by British authorities near Navy Island on the Niagara. It was a gross outrage upon our rights, but I trust no war will grow out of it.

I am writing in the House where Murray of Kentucky is making a speech. He is doing pretty well, but the House is nearly deserted. Old Mr. Adams is in the chair, and has fallen asleep half a dozen times.

Love to all.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Dolly Paine Madison, widow of President James Madison. Her sister, Anne Paine, married Richard Cutts of Saco, uncle of Mrs. Fairfield.

**Maine Man Burns Up His Money**

Washington, Jan. 11, 1838.

Dear Wife,

My health is pretty good now, under the influence of Peters' Vegetable Pills.

The members are now engaged in a discussion which has arisen upon the presentation of a letter from the Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Dorsey, representing that \$27,000 which he recd. or should have recd. from the Bank of the Metropolis at the late special session fell short near \$4,000. From that time to this, he has been endeavoring to procure an examination by the Bank of the amount of specie in its vaults, but has so far been unsuccessful. It is now proposed to refer the matter to a select committee, which I suspect will be the result, though it creates some interest and much talk.

The other day we had another money case, growing out of a loss by Mr. Noyes from Maine. It seems that he recd. a package containing gold and treasury notes. He took out the gold and threw the wrapper, notes and all, into the fire. On the facts being proved, the House ordered the loss to be made up to him.

Yesterday I met Mr. & Mrs. Woodbury in the street, where she began to scold me for not going to her party on Monday night last. I replied, "Madam, I was so unfortunate as not to get an invitation from you, but having one from Mrs. Forsyth, I went there." She appeared to be sorry for the accident, and Mr. Woodbury said he placed my invitation himself in the hands of the P. Master, who promised to deliver it.

In your next give me some few items of domestic information, say, for instance, have you had your stove moved back to its old position? Is your glass mended? Does your pump and water hold out? Did Stuart bring the cider and is it good? One barrel I want to remain untouched. Do you make butter now & enough for your daily use? By the way, I think favorably of Davis' suggestion to kill the Fogg cow, and replace her next spring.

Love to all.

Ever thine, JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**Anxious About Maine Governorship**

Washington, Jan. 13, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I was much gratified to receive a letter from you this morning. The domestic scenes it painted were pleasanter than any-



Annie Payne Fairfield Perkins and Family

From an old photograph

Mrs. Perkins was the youngest daughter of John Fairfield and a baby when he died





thing I can see here. I am pleased that Walter takes some interest in his book, do all you can to keep up his interest and get him to prying into things a little. With regard to matters in mechanics I think he is somewhat inquisitive and has a pretty good understanding. I am glad also to learn that both he and George like Mr. Adams. I wish I was where I could help them get their Latin lessons. It would be of great service to myself, if not to them, and I don't think the exercise will do you any harm.

I suspect you are more than half right about my coat. The fellow brought it home tonight. It looks well, to be sure, "most as good as new," but I fear that it will smut. However, must make the best of it now.

A select committee of 5 were appointed to investigate the matter of the deficiency of Dorsey's money to the amount of about \$4,000. I am one of them, and on Monday next we go to the Bank in prosecution of the matter, expecting to find the whole riddle solved by an examination of the records & a count of the specie. The Committee is as follows: W. C. Johnson, Whittlesey, Fairfield, Thomas, De Graff.

Today has been private bill day in the House so of course we have nothing interesting. The Senate did not sit.

We are anxiously waiting to find out who is Governor of Maine. I pray that they may figure Parks in,—then he will, of course, be run again, and somebody will not be troubled with solicitations to be a candidate. This somebody has already had some pressing letters upon the subject, and one in which it is said they will have him for a candidate, nolens volens. In this instance, at least, he has more good sense than vanity, and has absolutely and resolutely refused to have his name used. After all, it may be more the partiality of a few friends than a general wish of the people. As to the result, however, it is of no consequence which. In either case he refuses. But here is egotism enough for one letter, so no more of it.

Yesterday Mr. Cleaves and two of the Misses Parris rode to the door & sent the boy in for me. I waited upon them into the Supreme Court now in session & afterward into the Senate. When I went for them an hour or two afterward, they were gone.

Have had an invite to Chas. Cutts' tonight. Shan't go. That's poz.

Yours,

J. F.

## Another Duel Threatens

Washington, Jan. 17, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday the ladies in the gallery had quite a treat, and those who were not present regret their absence exceedingly!

The case of the Mississippi election being taken up, some discussion ensued in the settlement of some preliminary question. Claiborne, who is confined by sickness, sent in an argument in writing maintaining the right of himself & Gholsam to seats in the House. Someone suggested that it should be printed. Whereupon Wise said that a statement of facts had been made by Prentiss & Word, the claimants for the seat, and had been printed at their own expense, and that in his opinion Claiborne & Gholsam should do the same.

Gholsam, who has long been confined by sickness, came in a few minutes before Wise spoke, rose and replied that he wished the House to understand that they did not ask the charity of the House but were able and willing to pay from their own pockets the expense of printing, &c., and that the insinuation contained in Wise's remarks was unworthy of the State from which he came and of his seat in the House.

Wise sprang up and said "if impudence & ignorance can make a blackguard, there is one," pointing to Gholsam. The latter then said that "no one but a scoundrel & a coward would make such a remark." The Speaker cried "order" and the members cried "order, order"—and the combatants were put down.

I am told by those who sit in the neighborhood of Wise & Gholsam that subsequent to the above they had a conversation in an undertone in which they used language very angry, profane and abusive. Under these circumstances, I do not well see how a duel can be avoided.

Old Mercer, as usual, introduced a resolve of a pacificatory character, but it did not succeed and the House adjourned without there being any adjustment of the difficulty.

Today Prentiss is arguing his case before the House. He is manifestly a talented man, and is making an able speech.

Our special committee have been to the Bank today, made some progress & adjourned to the day after tomorrow.

I received a letter from Sister Martha this morning.

Yours truly,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**A Theatre Party Planned**

Jan. 20, 1838.

Dear Wife,

We have nothing new here. In the House Mr. Foster has been making a speech in answer to Prentiss, the claimant of a seat from Mississippi. It is said he is doing very well. I have not been at the House today, but have been all day at the Metropolis Bank pursuing our inquiry. We adjourned over to Tuesday when I hope we shall bring the matter towards a close.

There is a great comic actor coming along next week, and, let me whisper in your ear, Mrs. Pitman & I are going to hear him. I gave her an invitation and she very gratefully accepted. I wish you could go with us, but though you cannot, I know you will not envy either of us the pleasure, if it shall turn out to be one, of which there is some doubt.

Good night.

J. F.

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**“Rachael” Compliments Mrs. Fairfield**

Washington, Jan. 24, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Well, how go matters at home? Rachael often inquires for you, and the other day complimented you highly. I was asking her about her work. She said she had several chambers to take care of in the front part of the house & Mr. Carter's & mine in the back part. That she had rather take care of half a dozen gentlemen's chambers than one lady's, the ladies here were so particular and required so much waiting upon.

It was different, though, she said, with Mrs. Fairfield. She did a great deal herself, in picking up things, setting the bureau to rights, and I don't know what else. You & Augusta seem to have been great favorites with Rachael. And though she is a poor black girl and a slave, is it not better to have her kind feelings and good wishes than the contrary? I think so. The promptings of my own heart are those of universal good will. I cannot, therefore, be indifferent to the good will of others, of all others, however humble they may be.

Good night.

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Fairfield "Talked of" for Governor

Washington, Jan. 27, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Our Special Committee have brought their labors to a close and will, I presume, report today. The Bank having intimated a willingness to be governed by the advice of the Committee, day before yesterday I introduced a resolution that the committee were satisfied that in the money transaction between Mr. Dorsey & the Bank on the 13th. Oct. there was an error, and that the committee advise the Bank to pay him \$3,886.71, that being the amount which I regarded as the excess found in the vaults, tho a few dollars short of Dorsey's loss. The resolution passed unanimously in the committee and I understand that the Bank immediately thereupon passed the amount to the credit of Dorsey on the books of the Bank. It was really a plain case when we had dived to the bottom of it, and I was astonished that the Bank refused for an instant to pay the money.

Almost every day some of our delegation here are receiving letters from Augusta in which it is said that Shepley and I are talked of much for Governor but myself the most. I have done what I could to stop it, but don't seem to succeed very well. I cannot for my life see why they should pitch upon me, my humble self, for such an important and honorable station, can you? I am persuaded that people think of me "more highly than they ought to think." My vanity, therefore, is not at all excited by this distinction. On the contrary, its tendency is to oppress me with a sense of my own unworthiness.

I have been contemplating, you know, at the end of my Congressional career, and I still contemplate, returning to that domestic circle which contains those whom I tenderly love and those who I believe "love me without dissimulation," there to spend the remnant of my days, estranged to some extent from the turmoil of politics, and engaged only in those employments which are more consonant to my taste, and which I believe to accord more fully with your own wishes. Phoebus! What a sentence, long, intricate and clumsy. Never mind, as old Emerson says, "you take the idea." And if you will forgive this egotism, I'll try to avoid a repetition of it.

Last evening Parker & I went up to the President's. Mr. & Mrs. Polk & Mr. Attorney General Butler were there. Passed a very pleasant evening and came home at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9.

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Fairfield Discusses Saco "Revival"

Washington, Jan. 29, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Oh, dear! lack-a-day! Tomorrow I shall be two score years and one! Who would think it on looking at me! Last evening in judging of my age, the highest I was set down was 33. I do not regard this as at all complimentary to me, for, after all, it's only calling me a boyish man. And so I'm forty-one! Something of an old man with a large family. Well, I have one consolation left, and that is, that you and I are no farther apart than we were the 5th of September, 1825. In years I mean, and would I could say in distance.

Had a line from Mr. Haines today, who says there is quite a revival at Saco & names T. Jordan, Mr. Saml. S. Jordan, 3 King girls, 2 Shepley girls, Geo. Hayes, Mrs. Saml. Moody & daughter & Mrs. Hersey & Susan. He says there is no undue excitement and all moves on well and quietly. I am rejoiced to hear it, and hope the good will prove enduring. I hope, though, that Mrs. H. has not left her own fold. Haines don't say, so I suppose she has not. The longer I live the more strongly am I attached to "our views." If a rational being cannot find a religion suited to his wants, and really & truly promotive of his happiness in the Unitarian religion, then I know not where he should go. Mr. H. names none among the Methodists. How is it with them? And who is now preaching for them? Let me know in your next, as I want to send some documents to him.

Nothing new. No vote on the Mississippi question yet. It will probably be taken tomorrow.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Calls Prentiss "Vain and Saucy"

Washington, Feb. 1, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I do not feel in very good spirits, for on a vote taken last night we were most shamefully beaten. The House rescinded the resolution passed at the last session under which Claiborne & Gholsam have been holding their seats. This unfortunate result has been accomplished by the votes of six traitors to their party, viz., Grantland of Georgia, Patton, Hopkins & Mason

of Virginia, Richardson of South Carolina, and McKay of North Carolina.

The other branch of the question however, to wit, whether Prentiss & Word are entitled to seats, has not yet been decided. Some think—indeed the general impression is, that the vote will be against them and that the election will be sent back to Mississippi. I hope so, and probably the vote will be taken tonight.

<sup>1</sup>Prentiss is speaking and I hope it will close the debate, it is now nearly dark and I feel exceedingly dinnerish. This Prentiss is the vainest & sauciest fellow I ever heard. His impudence is beyond all patient enduring. Should he get a seat here he will make a very pretty coadjutor for Mr. Henry A. Wise.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>4</sup>Sergeant Smith Prentiss (1808-50) born in Portland Me., graduate of Bowdoin at age of 19, settled in Natchez, Miss., studied law, admitted to the bar in 1839, at age of 21. One of the best of American orators of the florid style. Lived in Vicksburg, Miss., became influential, elected to Legislature in 1835 and in 1837 was sent to Congress but was unseated; re-elected the following year and this time allowed to serve. In 1840 made speeches in many parts of the country in support of Harrison. Withdrew from politics in 1843, removed to New York, in 1845, practiced with much success in that city. Some of his speeches are included in all collections of masterpieces of oratory. Only a few of them have been preserved.

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### “Wise Roared Like a Madman”

Washington, Feb. 5, 1838.

Dear Wife,

We have finally taken a vote in the case of the Mississippi election and have triumphed. That is, so far as to reject the whole four and send the election back to Mississippi. The vote stood on the question of the rejection of Prentiss & Word, 117 & 117. The Speaker gave the casting vote for us. It was a moment of intense anxiety and excitement, and when the vote was declared we “breathed freer and easier” as Mr. Webster said after the N. Y. election. The Feds were terribly disappointed and Wise roared like a madman. Old Boon answered him in a short speech, every word of which was a dagger.

Our friends think there is no danger of our failure in another trial in Mississippi, and I think so, too, as Prentiss has already thrown out that he shall not enter the contest again, but come here again the next Congress & insist upon his right under the election already made.

Since his first speech he has been losing ground, this, some of his own political friends admit. His two last speeches have been mere rant. Excuse me for dwelling so long upon this, I have been exceedingly interested in it, and should have grieved without measure if Prentiss & Word had been admitted to seats. As it is, I feel much elated & can talk of nothing else now.

This has been written upon the gallop.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### First Mention of Northeastern Boundary

Washington, Feb. 7, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Evans made a speech today on the Northeastern boundary in part, finishes tomorrow. I shall follow him if I can get the floor and am busy in preparing.

Ever Yours,

J. F.

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### Robt. Fulton's Children Given Aid

Washington, Feb. 9, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday at a little after 3 o'clock Evans finished his speech and I obtained the floor. But the House being very thin at the time and it being rather late I gave way for a motion to adjourn. In consequence, I am unfortunately turned over to Monday, Friday & Saturday being private bill days. I regret it much as I dislike to be burthened with a speech for three days, more especially when I think I have a tolerably good one, if delivered now. What it will be next week I can't say.

The House has just passed a bill granting \$100,000 to the heirs of Robert Fulton. Under the influence of the glowing eloquence of Mr. Hoffman of N. Y. I voted for it. The children, it is said, are living in penury and want. This ought not to be when their father devoted his substance, his time, and above all, his genius to his Country.

The claim has been once submitted to the Secretary of the Navy & he reported \$100,000 in favor of the children. This is enough to quiet conscience, and if I have erred I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have erred on the side of

benevolence and kind feeling. Mrs. Pitman & I have not been to the theatre, as I told you we contemplated, nor shall we, as the theatre has closed for the season, so I am spared that temptation.

The House have adjourned over to Monday. This is a most unwarrantable waste of time, considering the great amount of business now pending.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Hypnotic Demonstration

Washington, Feb. 10, 1838.

I went last night to see some experiments in Animal Magnetism by Potter from Rhode Island. He put his subject to sleep in less than five minutes. He then bandaged his eyes with two handkerchiefs and otherwise, so that there was no possibility of his seeing. He then shew his power over the mind of the subject by making him raise his hand without touching it, by mere volition and by motions of his own hands.

He also conveyed impressions of taste. For instance, Mr. Parker wrote on paper tobacco. Potter then, standing several feet from the subject, commenced chewing and imagining (as he said) that he had tobacco in his mouth. Very soon the muscles about the mouth of the subject began to twitch and soon he appeared to be sick at the stomach. Potter asked him what it was, but he appeared to be angry for having such stuff put in his mouth and refused to tell, saying in answer to his inquiries, "you know what it is." He also conveyed the taste of vinegar, and the idea of fire, as of a handkerchief burning, &c., &c. I have not time to tell you more about it now. I can only say that I believed the sleep was real, as to the rest I should rather see some further evidence.

Tomorrow you know at 1 o'clock I shall have the floor & shall endeavor to make a speech upon the question of the Northeastern boundary. If it is published I will send you one. I have some little trepidation about it though I have a pretty good understanding of the subject. But it requires much more of an effort with me to make a speech in Congress than an argument in Court.

Let me have your sympathy and I'll do the best I can.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.



## Charges of Corruption

Washington, Feb. 11, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I expected to be able to give you some account tonight of my speech, but am disappointed. This morning when the session of the House commenced, Wise introduced a subject that has occupied the whole day, it now being 6 o'clock. Oh, dear, I wish I had some dinner! The subject of our debate is this: Old Mat Davis, the Spy in W. in a letter to the Courier & Enquirer, N. Y., charges a member of Congress with corruption, with offering to sell his influence at the Departments in relation to some contract. A committee of investigation is proposed and I presume it will be carried. It is intimated that the story implicates a Senator—who, I can probably tell you tomorrow.

In haste Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Attack on Judge Ruggles

Washington, Feb. 15, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Two days more elapsed and I am still undelivered of my speech. Yesterday the whole day was taken up by the presentation of petitions, and today the House refused to proceed to the order of the day (in which my case comes up), in order to settle a bill under consideration touching the Choctaw Indians. Tomorrow and next day are private bill days, Monday is petition and resolution day and Tuesday Mr. Cambrelling will insist on having for his appropriation bill, and I fear that he will get it by a vote of two-thirds. So that when I shall get the floor, if ever, is a matter of great doubt & uncertainty. I regret this very much for I feel pretty well prepared for a speech now and I don't know how it may be by and by.

I have not been in remarkably good health for this week past, I have a cold & night cough, and my digestion is constantly getting out of order, notwithstanding I am very careful, eating perhaps not more than half as much as any other one at table, including perhaps the ladies. Last night, for the first time, I took a dose of corrective and today feel much improved from it. Think I shall try it again tonight, notwithstanding the trial and conviction of Frost in New York. By the way, what an "infernal" crusade the regular physicians are getting up against

the Thompsonians, causing them to be prosecuted, and then tried upon the testimony of the regulars. I believe it to be one of the grossest outrages ever practiced upon an unsuspecting community.

Nothing new here, except the attack on Judge Ruggles. Old Mat Davis charged a member of Congress with corruption in offering to sell his influence at one of the Departments. On Monday Wise introduced a resolution proposing an inquiry. This was debated two days, and on its finally turning out to be a member of the Senate, the matter was permitted to subside in our House. Judge R. has come out in the Globe, which you will see and explains it all, as perfectly consistent with innocence.

This will give you pleasure, I think, for you would be sorry to see your old friend convicted of corruption & expelled from the Senate.

Our dear children, my confounded speech has almost driven them from my head, nothing can drive them from my heart.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Visit From Indian Chiefs

Washington, Feb. 17, 1838.

Dear Wife,

After the hour spent in receiving Reports of Committees, the N. Y. bill came on, and a rather prosy speaker having got the floor, I pushed off into the Senate Chamber. When I went in Mr. Wright of New York was making a speech on Benton's resolutions. It was the first time I had heard him except for a word or two, and I was very much gratified. He is a very able man, and a good speaker. His voice, to be sure, is not the best, being rather husky and having no great compass. But his elocution is fine, manners pleasing, is exceedingly courteous and is listened to with much attention and apparent respect. He never speaks unless he has something to say, and when he has said it, he sits down. He was followed by Ewing of Ohio, who is a man of respectable talents, but is rather coarse in his manners, and not a very interesting speaker.

Then came Calhoun, who is up on all occasions. He complimented himself that he had originally advocated measures in regard to fortifications which some gentlemen then opposed, but now supported, and made a low, ungentlemanly, not to say

malignant, attack upon the President & Mr. Van Buren, the latter not then being in the chair. And among other things charged the President with falsehood.

He was followed by Wall of New Jersey who spoke for the first time this session. His speech was short, but very neat and spirited. He rebuked severely Calhoun, and said substantially that no gentleman would use the language that he, Calhoun, had used. This called out Preston in one of his most fiery & eloquent speeches. Then a reply from Wall, and to close the whole, Niles of Connecticut took the floor and gave Calhoun & several of the opposition leaders a pretty good drubbing. He told them that the great secret of Jackson's popularity which some of them had pretended to dread so much, did not have its origin in any of the ways described by them. His popularity came in a way not to be bought—i.e., by his honesty, &c., &c. And advised those who coveted his popularity to pursue the same course to obtain it. The speeches, I suppose, will be published, and I think Father Niles' will be found worth reading.

Last evening I called up to Mrs. Latimer's near the President's house to see Mr. Parks, and there I found a company of Cherokees and Pottawottamie chiefs. Some of them were dressed as elegantly as almost any gentleman in the room and appeared as well in every respect.

One of the Cherokee Chiefs, Ridge, is as tall, large and fine looking man as you will commonly see. He wore a frock coat and pantaloons and was dressed very handsomely. His head was quite white though he did not look to be over fifty. I understand he was educated in Connecticut & married his wife there. The Pottawottamies (I believe it is so spelt) most of them were dressed in Indian fashion, and one of them was painted and "ornamented" most hideously. The principal Pottawottamie conversed through interpreters with Ridge. His speech was animated and accompanied by many and very natural gestures.

After he had finished, a second Indian translated into English to a third, and that third into Cherokee or something else to Ridge & others. The interpreters appeared to be men of mind & intelligence. They expressed themselves with great clearness and in very choice language. The Pottawottamie told Ridge that they had moved to the Country provided for them by their Great Father, the President, that they were very contented & happy and hoped the Cherokees would do the same.

He said he hoped to meet him again beyond the Mississippi and should be happy then to cultivate his acquaintance.

In the course of the evening two of them sang an Indian song. There was not, it is true, much music in it, but much to gratify curiosity.

About 9 o'clock the Pottawottamie jumped up in the floor and made a speech. He was greatly animated & made many gestures, & once wheeled entirely round on his heel. I did not know what to make of it, but as soon as he had finished the one who had before acted as an interpreter translated it. He said he was very much gratified with his visit, thanked Mrs. M. for the entertainment, and all for their politeness to him & his brethren, and that he then wished to be permitted to go. This was the substance of it.

Their deportment was polite, and several of the ladies thought that in that respect, at least, they outdid us on our own ground. I hope you will pardon me for spinning so long a yarn, I probably shall not do it again.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The Eulogist of the Kitchen Cabinet

Washington, Feb. 18.

Dear Wife,

In the House today they have been debating the New York bill, and finally took a vote on it in committee of the whole, which is one important step in its progress. I went into the Senate and found Mr. Shepley making a speech, and it turned out to be the close of a very pointed and effective speech. In allusion to Calhoun's offensive language used yesterday, he said that he had learned to sit and hear coolly and philosophically the most bitter & violent denunciations made daily on the floor of the Senate because he had found that they did no harm, or at all events no harm except by way of recoil on those who used such language. He said that when the gentleman from N. J. (Wall) had been here a little longer he would learn the same.

Said he, the gentleman from N. J. has fallen into some error as to what the Senate was, and what were its duties. He supposed he had gone to the Constitution and found the Senate, its powers, duties, &c., there described, but then he should

recollect that in practice, about four days in five it resolved itself into a great central electioneering committee, and in which the parts were regularly assigned.

For instance, the part of the gentlemen from South Carolina and one of the members from North Carolina, was the part of denunciation and abuse, that of the gentleman from Massachusetts to preserve and protect the Constitution, tho' he did not do it very successfully when he took the Constitutional powers from one branch of the government & transferred them to another; that of the gentleman from Kentucky to originate electioneering matter; and that of the gentleman from R. I. (old Robbins) to give a direction & distribute the various matters concocted in Committee—though he had wisdom enough never to assign a reason for any of his motions.

After he sat down Mangum replied that in pursuing a similar course the other day, he had confined himself to a few of the distinguished men of the party, but if he had descended to some of the subordinate characters, he should have assigned the part to the gentleman from Maine of Eulogist of the Kitchen Cabinet. Shepley replied that his opinions remained the same of what they called the Kitchen Cabinet, but added that since he made the speech alluded to, one of that cabinet had been promoted, so that now the gentleman from N. C. would not be obliged to go into the kitchen to assail him.

This is a very meagre sketch, and does poor justice to the speech. I hope you will see it in print.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Speech Again Postponed

Washington, Feb. 20, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I am again doomed to disappointment in regard to my speech. I had just completed arrangements with Cambrelling not to interfere with me at one o'clock when Howard came in with his bill providing for the civil war in Canada, or rather to enforce neutrality on the part of our citizens, and moved that it be taken up at 1 o'clock, which was carried, everybody seeming to be alarmed lest we should get into a war with England. It is now more uncertain than it has been at all whether I shall get the floor for weeks. It is extremely annoying, but I must submit as well as I can.

Mrs. Birdsall, Mrs. Pratt & Mrs. Fillmore are beginning to talk about going home. I suspect they will go in April if not earlier. What do you think of coming on in the spring? Let me know how you feel about it. It would give me great pleasure, as you well know. My little room could very readily be exchanged for a larger one with those who are to lose their wives.

Yesterday Clay made a speech in the Senate and it was crowded almost to suffocation. I suspect the ladies must have filled the gallery long before the hour of meeting; our ladies here, I believe, were shut out. Allen of Ohio has made a great speech today. A very young, tall man with light complexion. I suspect you recollect him. He is very eloquent.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The Cilley Duel "Brewing"

Washington, Feb. 23d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

My speech yet remains unsung. Next Tuesday I hope to get the floor, but of that do not feel very sanguine.

In the way of news let me tell you that a duel is brewing, and more than that, Maine is to figure as one of the principals. The facts so far as I can gather them, are these: About a week or ten days ago when Wise moved a committee of investigation in relation to the charge made by Old Davis in the *Courier & Enquirer* of New York, Cilley opposed him on the ground that nothing appearing in that paper was worthy of notice, and alluded to the old charge of Webb, the editor, having been bought up by the Bank for \$52,000. Although this charge has been repeated a thousand times, Webb took it this time in high dudgeon and posted off for Washington to fight Cilley.

Some two or three days since, I believe, Webb sent a challenge to Cilley by Graves of Kentucky. C., it is said, refused to take it & read it, alleging that Webb was no gentleman, and moreover that he would not yield the principle in the constitution which protected him for words spoken in debate. Graves asked him to put his answer in writing, which C. intimated that he would do, but afterward thinking better of it, told G. that he would not put it in writing. Graves thereupon said he must, and that he, G., would make it a personal matter to himself, and here, I believe, the matter rests.

It is expected that Graves will challenge him, and if he does, I think there will be a fight, not with pistols, but with rifles, as the person challenged has a right to select his weapon. This is the rumor, whether true in point of fact I do not know, but I have good reason to believe that the main part of it is true.

Last night they had a grand ball here, by way of celebrating Washington's birthday. It was a sort of Congressional ball, and I understand was quite splendid. A few of our gentlemen, say Parker, McClellan & Holsey, went, but none of our ladies. In the evening, Mr. & Mrs. Pratt invited the whole household into their chamber to take a glass of champagne, where Mr. Fleischman (is that the way) gave us some tunes upon the guitar, with a few mountain songs in Dutch.

Judge R's case is not yet brought to a close. Judge Parris has moved to the upper part of the City. He is not promoted as I told you in my last. Wolf's place as First Comptroller is to be filled with a Mr. Barker of Philadelphia.

I continue to be pestered with letters from Augusta, and I continue to say NO.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Feb. 24th.

Dear Wife,

Oh, I wish I could see the children taking their steps, including little Augusta—"one, two, three, four is five," as Champrosay used to say when I went to dancing school. I am glad to learn that the children are doing pretty well in some things, though they are becoming orthodox.

In the House today they have been discussing further the N. Y. bill. As soon as Williams of Kentucky rose to make a set speech about one-half of the members cleared out and went into the Senate Chamber and I suppose they would have done the same let who would have risen to speak on that bill after it had been so fully discussed. It finally, however, came to a vote and passed by a majority of 41.

In the Senate we heard a portion of a speech from Preston. He is certainly very eloquent, though I cannot say much for his logic. His figures are appropriate, poetical and selected with good taste. His voice is not so good as Mr. Clay's, and to tell the truth I do not like his oratory so well. But enough for

Washington. What "terrible" times you are having in Saco. Snow five feet deep, weather cold enough to freeze mercury, and wood six dollars a cord. I hope the poor will find those who will see that they do not suffer, but it cannot be expected that all will escape suffering.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### "Cilley's Death Was Murder"

Feb. 26, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I communicate the solemn news of the death of my colleague, Mr. Cilley. It is almost impossible to conceive of the excitement which it produces here, against Graves and his friends, and against James Watson Webb, who is at the bottom of the whole. The latter, I think, will get lynched if he do not leave the City or keep himself pretty close. It is a dreadful affair and is looked upon by most people here as a deliberate murder.

Cilley tried hard to keep out of it, but with his views of honor could not. He avoided his colleagues, and took advice from more belligerent characters. He is represented by all as being as brave a man as ever walked. His conduct on the ground is said to have been beyond all praise by those acquainted with and acknowledging the validity of the laws of the duello.

Today I announced his death in the House and offered some resolutions upon the subject which are contained in the newspaper slip which I send you, having had 8 or 10 given me by the Printer. It is not as it should be, but as well as I could do at a short notice, for it was not finally settled until this morning whether I should announce the death or Evans.

The funeral you will perceive takes place tomorrow, after which I should not be surprised if there should be an attempt to expel Graves from the House and perhaps Wise, his second, with Jones, the second of Cilley. The feeling in the House against them, is very strong.

The matter would probably have been settled after the first fire, if it had not been for the objections of Wise, 8 out of 10 on the ground saying that it was a mere point of etiquette and only one fire should be allowed. And even the surgeon of



Graves, I understand, said that if Cilley was shot after the first fire it would be a case of deliberate murder.

You will not think it strange that this matter fills my head and that I can write of nothing else. But as it is an unpleasant subject I will stop here.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Resolutions on Death of Cilley

Washington, Feb. 28.

Dear Wife,

This morning I moved resolutions of inquiry into the causes that led to poor Cilley's death, which brought on a discussion that lasted all day. I participated in it, and my friends say with great spirit and credit to myself & State. What my enemies will say remains to be seen. Tomorrow I will send you a Globe containing a sketch of the debate. I was not to be on the committee, it having been agreed beforehand that I should not, the moving of the resolutions being my share.

Yours as ever,

J. F.

### Fairfield Calls for Investigation

Washington, March 2d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday the committee to look into the circumstances of poor Cilley's murder was appointed and was as follows: Toucey of Connecticut, Potter of Pennsylvania, Briggs of Massachusetts, Elmore of South Carolina, Bruyn of New York, Harrison of Missouri, & Rariden of Indiana. Briggs & Harrison asked to be excused and were. You perceive I am not on it. It was thought to be right and proper that no one should be on the committee coming from either of the States where any of the parties resided; accordingly Maine, Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio, & N. C. were stricken from the list. I suppose you will not regret that I am left off from the Committee, though if I were on, I should not entertain the least fear of personal injury.

I perceive the press, particularly from N. Y. is speaking out upon the subject in withering language, and I cannot but believe it must be so throughout the country. The sensation is

very deep and strong here and they give me much credit for the step I have taken in calling for an investigation.

I have another swelling on my jaw and went today to a dentist's to have it opened. Instead of that he persuaded me to have my teeth sawed, filed, cut, scraped, plugged, and I don't know what else, which I did. He worked about 2½ hours upon them and will resume his job tomorrow. He has plugged 3 today, 1 with tin and 2 with gold. I feel much pleased with what he has done thus far, and anticipate an escape from future toothaches.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Dentistry 100 Years Ago

March 3d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Nothing new or uncommon has transpired here since the fatal duel. The newspapers from abroad begin to come in teeming with heavy denunciations of the gang who murdered poor Cilley.

Today the dentist completed his job on my teeth. I taste like a new man, if I do not feel like a new man. Several teeth occupying very important positions were getting into great danger. These he drilled and bored out, separating from the teeth every particle of caries, and then plugging them up with gold. In two instances the holes were too large for gold & so he used tin foil, which probably will last as long as I shall, but if it should be otherwise it is very easy to renew them. I wish you were here, I would have you thoroughly overhauled, as the sailors say. I know you have some good subjects to operate upon in your head.

Yours truly,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Runaway Accident at Home

March 4, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I have been writing for several days in regard to thrilling events which have occurred here, and was not prepared to expect any information of occurrences of exciting interest at

home. Oh, how grateful we should be that things were no worse. You and the children have had quite an escape, particularly poor Walter. Nothing saved you but that Good Providence which has ever watched over me and mine and blessed us immeasurably beyond our deserts. Let us gratefully remember it, and act according to its wise suggestions. But while I am thankful the case is no worse, I regret very sincerely that poor Davis should have been so injured. He should be careful not to attempt to use his arm too early, and above all things not to catch cold in it, in which case amputation might possibly become necessary. Hereafter, tell Davis to use the double twisted bit. I believe we have two or three of them, but if he does not find them, let him go to Fernald's and have one made. The bit should be double and break joints in different places. With such a bit I could hold a rhinoceros.

I am very glad you had presence of mind enough to saw his mouth, and wonder that you could not in that way hold him, more especially as he is not very hard mouthed, at least I never supposed him to be so. You certainly managed from beginning to end with great skill and good judgment and I have no fault to find with any body or thing, except the colt.

I should not advise any of you to ride him again without Davis, and then not without the bit I have named.

Your letter came last night, one day later than usual, and accompanying it was one from Mr. Haines announcing the death of Mr. Burbank & Mrs. Allen. Events gather upon me so fast that I can hardly contemplate them separately. Mr. B. I left in most robust and vigorous health, and bidding as fair for a long life as any man of my acquaintance. His death will be much felt in our little community, as well as in his young family. But, after all, how much less cause has Mrs. B. to mourn than Mrs. Cilley; I forbear to refer to the circumstances of difference, because they will all suggest themselves to your own mind.

Oh, how thankful I am that our dear children as well as yourself escaped injury. I had too many eggs in that basket, as your father used to say.

J. F.

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### Petitions Pour In

Washington, March 6.

Dear Wife,

No letters or papers from Maine yet, since the receipt of the news there of Cilley's death, but presume I shall get some

tonight. The committee are going busily on prosecuting their inquiry, but I know little of what has actually transpired before them.

I am daily receiving letters, some anonymous and some otherwise, complimenting me for the bold stand I have taken—and last night I recd. from Newark, N. J., a petition with 87 names upon it calling for the expulsion of those who were concerned in this atrocious murder, as the petitioners call it. Mr. Adams had another with over 200 names upon it, of a like character with mine. He asked for a suspension of the rule to introduce which was granted by a vote, 80 or 90 majority. Mine followed in the same track. I should not wonder if such petitions were sent in in great numbers.

I am sorry to inform you that Mr. Carter is dangerously sick. He has been confined to his bed for about a week. His wife is an excellent woman and displays uncommon fortitude under the circumstances.

Yours truly,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Delivers Speech on Northeastern Boundary

Washington, March 7th.

Dear Wife,

I have the pleasure to inform you that I have at last been delivered of my speech upon the northeastern boundary question. I was something over two hours in the delivery, and am not very well satisfied with myself, though my friends speak well of the speech. I shall write it out as soon as I can and publish it in pamphlet form.

I recd. your letter last night, and admire the spirit it contained. You ask dare they (the murderers), hold their heads up? Graves I have not seen, though I believe he is in the House every day. It is said he looks solemn and oppressed; Wise looks haggard, and feels, I apprehend, that the weight of public indignation is too heavy for him. The others being more remotely implicated in the affair, look sorrowful, and that is all.

The committee are prosecuting the inquiry and will, I hope, report early. The House is now, I think, in the right state of opinion & feeling to act upon the subject.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**Mr. Carter Near to Death**

Washington, March 7th.

Dear Wife,

I feel much better tonight than I did last night at 9 o'clock. Then I had no expectation that Carter would live the night out and now the physicians, Sewall, Taylor & Lime, consider the danger as past and his recovery certain. Between 8 & 9 I went into Berth's. Carter was then bereft of his senses and tossing himself about upon the bed apparently in the most intense agony, and groaning dreadfully. Four or five persons were round his bed endeavoring to prevent his bounding off. His wife was kept out of the chamber, and was nearly as crazy as her husband.

Doct. Sewall, I understood, had given him over, and he, the Doctor, at the time, told me that these paroxysms would occur until he died. About 9 the pain subsided a little & he called Mrs. Jones by name. They then thought it would be well enough to let Mrs. Carter come in. When she did come, her eye was glassy and wild; she lay down upon the bed with him, called him by every endearing epithet that you can imagine & implored him to recognize her. But he took no notice of her. His reason had fled again, and tho' relieved from pain for a moment he did not seem to know anybody or be conscious of what was going on around him. It was an affecting scene, & such as I hope I shall not soon be called to witness again.

Evans & Noyes sat up with him, and early this morning before I was up I sent Sam in to know if he was living, who brot back for answer that he had a tolerably quiet night and was better. This information was as joyful as it was unexpected. I have spent the whole day with him, having just stolen away to write you a letter. During the forenoon he was very uneasy and tossed about a great deal. This afternoon he has been more quiet & has slept at least 2 hours. The Doctors all concur in saying that the critical point is passed and that he will get well, though it is difficult to convince Mrs. Carter of any such probability. She seems to think they are either deceived themselves, or else that their favorable opinions are mere pretence, and a deception practiced for her benefit.

Judge Ruggles & Davee sit up with C. tonight. The latter appears to me rather chicken-hearted, and would be a poor hand as well as myself in such a scene as we had last night.

Good night,

J. F.

**Course in Cilley Investigation Approved**

Washington, March 11, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Your answer to my invitation to come on here was what I had feared. I am aware how much you are tied down by domestic cares & duties—but hope it will not always be so. It would give me much pleasure to see you enjoying more of it (pleasure & not cares), though I am not sure that freedom from care would effect it.

You ask where is Eliza Clark? Her father has just left my room and I am, therefore, able to give you satisfactory information, viz.: she is in Philadelphia where she has been for some time, but what is of more importance she is about to be married. And whom do you think it is to? Why, no less a personage than Lieut. (now Capt.) Downing of the Navy. Perhaps you may recollect him. He was one of Mrs. Pitman's city mess. I am not sure that he was there when we were on that side of the entry, I think he was not, but came afterward. He is quite a small man, of tolerable capacity, exceedingly vain & a very great talker. But he is a man of good habits, and I should think upon the whole that Miss Eliza is making out pretty well.

Poor Carter remains in a critical state yet. I sat up with him night before last, and a dreadful night it was. He had five fits between 2 o'clock and morning—and twice the Doctor (his brother from N. Y.) said he was dying. Since then he has been lingering along, sometimes upon the very edge of existence, and then brightening up and appearing to be better. Today his friends begin to cherish some hope, but it is slight. He is blessed in having his wife and three brothers with him, one a physician, one an Episcopalian clergyman and the other, I believe, a merchant.

The death of Mr. Cilley is still the subject of conversation. The committee are pursuing their subject of inquiry steadily & firmly, and I hope will be prepared to report in a few days—perhaps a week. If they do not recommend an expulsion of Graves and perhaps the seconds, I shall be disappointed. For the part I have taken in this matter I am constantly receiving complimentary letters, and evidences that my course is meeting the warm approbation of the wise and good everywhere. To this I know you cannot be insensible any more than myself, approbation for doing right cannot be unwelcome to us.

Among others I have just recd. the following: "At a meeting of the members of the Democratic party holden at the new

Court House in Augusta on the evening of the 5th of March, Col. Geo. W. Stanley was chosen chairman & V. D. Parris, Secretary. Hon. Saml. Mildram of York offered the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That this meeting view with **pride & admiration** the course adopted by the Hon. John Fairfield in the House of Representatives in **demanding an investigation into the manner and circumstances of the death of the Hon. Jonathan Cilley**. It has anticipated the demands of the people and will be by them fully sustained.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolution be signed by the chairman & secretary and forwarded to the Hon. John Fairfield.

GEO. W. STANLEY, Chairman,  
VIRGIL D. PARRIS, Secretary.

The underscoring is not mine, but comes with the resolves. In one sense, to be sure, such testimonials are gratifying, but I do not feel that I have done anything beyond what most other men would have done, placed in similar circumstances. I am not, therefore, deserving of all the praise that is bestowed upon me.

I recd. a letter today from Bro. Whitman, giving me some good advice, which I needed, and which I hope to profit by.

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Writing Out Boundary Speech

13 March, Tuesday.

Dear Wife,

I am sorry to be obliged to say that there is no probability that Mr. Carter will live through the night. He has been failing gradually, I think, ever since the night I sat up with him. They sent for me about two hours ago thinking that he was dying. Since that, however, he has revived, and seems to be tolerably comfortable. His wife is calm and appears very well.

I have been hard at work for several days and nights writing out my speech on the northeastern boundary for publication. It is a laborious job and I shall be glad when it is over.

I am glad to hear that Hammy is learning to talk so well; by the time I get home he will talk as well as anybody.

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**Death of Congressman Carter**

Washington, March 15, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I am sorry to be obliged to inform you that poor Carter is dead. He died last night about 10 o'clock. I was there a minute after he breathed his last. His death was announced today by Mr. Evans and thereupon the House adjourned over to Saturday when the funeral is to take place.

I hope this is the last piece of bad news I shall have to communicate to you this session, though we should always be prepared for the bad as well as the good.

Mrs. C., I believe, bears it very well, and having her three brothers with him, everything was done for Mr. Carter that could be done. Evans' announcement of the death was in excellent taste and cannot but yield much comfort to his friends. He spoke of him in the highest terms, as he ought.

The committee on the murder of Cilley are making progress and I trust will report next week. If you see the papers, you will find that I am reaping a harvest of glory for my course upon this subject, but I am not conscious of deserving it.

Others, I suppose, in similar circumstances would have done the same.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**Maine Demands Investigation**

Washington, March 18, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday poor Carter was buried, but it was so stormy that the concourse of people was small. Mrs. C. did not attend the funeral, nor any of the ladies at Berth's. Mr. Reese, our Chaplain, delivered a very appropriate and eloquent address. Two of the brothers have returned, and the third & Mrs. C. set out about Wednesday next.

Mr. Prince, the father-in-law of Cilley, has written on that he shall send for the body.

Whether the body of Carter is to be carried home I have not learnt.

Petitions and accounts of meetings are flowing in upon me from Maine, demanding an investigation, and expulsion of those







HEPSEY  
Old Family Servant of the Fairfields

concerned in the late murder. I have 11 to present tomorrow morning.

My speech on the northeastern boundary I have written out and carried to the printer. It is to appear in the next Tuesday's Globe, and immediately afterward will be published in pamphlet form for distribution. It is longer than I intended it should be, and will cover, I think, two sheets, or 32 pages.

Mr. Buckingham, the famous English traveller, is lecturing here and I have had the pleasure of hearing three of his lectures upon Egypt. His lectures are very interesting, but I cannot help thinking sometimes that they are a little too highly embellished for truth.

I am glad the colt has returned to his soberness and governability, for I cannot help feeling some attachment to him, though there are a few unpleasant reminiscences connected with his course of life. I apprehend he wants to be worked more. You spoke in one of your letters of his being lame, how is that now?

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Scrap in the Senate

March 23d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I will just write you a line from the House today, for as soon as the House adjourns I must go home and go to work franking off my speeches, they having at last been published.

Nothing new here. In the Senate Calhoun, Clay & Webster have been indulging in personal attacks, much to the amusement of the spectators, but to the degradation of the persons engaged in it. In the House we are engaged upon the appropriation bills and such other dry matter.

The committee of investigation in the murder case will not report before next week, then I suppose we shall have some pretty warm discussion.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Longs for Home Breakfast

Washington, March 27, 1838.

Dear Wife,

It seems you have a new cow, and that the colt is recovering from his lameness. This is not bad news, but it is much better to hear that Davis' lame hand is getting better. How does your other cow hold out, and your hay? Oh, I wish I had a little piece of your new butter. Their butter here, you know, is greasy. I don't like it. Though we live here like princes, I want one of your Sunday morning breakfasts. A cup of coffee, neither too strong nor too weak, with good fresh cream in it; a loaf of rye & Indian with crust as thick as your foot, and butter, hard, clean, bright and sweet; and last but not least, mince fish, smoking from the kettle, warmed in pork, not butter, and eaten with real mustard, and not mustardy flour. And then the pleasure of helping our children, and the rest of you all round, & seeing the mills set a-going at a merry rate. What a picture! I can't say that there is much poetry in it—but you won't deny, I think, that it looks a little like comfort.

Yesterday was petition day & today but little has been done. The sub-treasury bill from the Senate was, to be sure, laid on the table, but as there were 39 members absent, the vote amounts to just nothing.

Yours ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Doesn't Want to Be Governor

Washington, March 28, 1838.

Dear Sir,

I concur with you fully in the views you take of poor Ciley's death and the manner in which it was compassed. The committee are prosecuting the inquiry steadily, industriously and, I trust, firmly. It will result in a resolution of expulsion, offered by the committee or some one else, but it probably will not be carried, two-thirds being required, you know.

In regard to the other matter alluded to, I must be permitted to express my sincere regret that you should find any obstacles in the way of your success. For in the first place, I know of no man who would fill the place better than yourself; and in the second place I know of no man who has so great an aversion for it as myself. I have written many letters in which

I have stated peremptorily that under no circumstances could I consent to be a candidate for Governor, and I do not wish to retract this at present. My inclinations for private life seem almost irresistible, yet there is no knowing what sacrifices one may make under peculiar & trying circumstances.

I know not to whom you allude when you speak of anticipated opposition from York & Cumberland, unless in C. you mean Smith and his few friends. If you mean these, they are not to be dreaded, their number is too small to be feared. Perhaps you may find reason to change your views upon this matter before the Convention is holden. If public opinion should settle down in your favor, and you should be nominated, nothing could afford me more pleasure, though with yourself, I thought the nomination of Judge Shepley would unite more votes than that of any other man. But I regard him as out of the question. He will not consent to a nomination, and so far as regards his own interest, his course is unquestionably right. The office of Governor I regard as the least desirable of any place in the State or nation. Indeed, in my case, it would be next to ruin. You could much better afford it than myself. Upon this subject I have no thoughts to conceal from anybody, and least of all from you. For your letter, for the admirable tone & spirit in which it is written, you have my sincere thanks. I have not time to say more now. Perhaps you or I must be the victim (if Shepley holds out in his refusal) and time will show which. Write often & much oblige

Very truly Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD

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### Prentiss' Bill to Prevent Duelling

Washington, March 29th.

Dear Wife,

The Senate have been discussing the bill introduced by Judge Prentiss to prevent duelling, and the House have been engaged in the appropriation bills. In the morning, however, we made an attempt to have the 13th & 14th of April specially assigned to take up the bill for the payment of French spoliations. It requiring two-thirds, we failed, but we have had a vote which may be regarded as a very favorable indication. It was 79 to 63. The House, to be sure, was thin, but probably we had as many absent as the enemies of the bill had. This looks very much like carrying the measure.

Old Mr. Carr, the Doorkeeper, is dead, and the applicants for his place are as thick as snow fleas. I think I shall go for Follansby, the man having charge of the Document Room.

Col. Hall has got an appointment in the Boston Custom House, which will give him about \$1,500 a year.

Jarvis is nominated for Navy Agent in Boston. Parks is to be Marshal, "and so on."

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Hotly Pressed to Run for Governor

Dear Wife,

In regard to your domestic operations I must say I think you do nobly. The amount of butter manufactured is much beyond what I had supposed. It is more than a pound a day throughout the whole year. This is pretty well. As to the lame colt & the proposition to take one of Uncle James' horses, I refer you to a letter written yesterday to Walter.

I also send directed to Martha a caricature of Webb. It is no great affair. Not half so good as a caricature I saw in a shop window a day or two ago of most of our great men mounted upon hobbies. Nothing is going on in the House or Senate of any great consequence, except upon second thought the Senate are discussing the bill introduced by Judge Prentiss to prevent duelling.

The fates seem to be against us in some respects. In addition to all the other inroads that death has made upon our party, I am now obliged to say that Mr. McKim of Baltimore is considered to be dangerously ill. He is at Gadsby's and his wife is with him. Others are sick but none dangerously so.

Judge Ruggles' committee, I understand, is to report today and that the report will probably acquit him on the charge of corruption. The committee on the subject of Cilley's murder will probably report some time next week.

In regard to your inquiry about the question relating to Governor, I say that I am hotly pressed upon all sides. Many, however, are beginning to cease asking my consent and claim a right to nominate me upon public considerations. What the result is to be, time only can answer. We must all, however, "prepare for the worst." Your joke upon this subject I think was rather a hard one, though I must confess it seemed to be

based upon a correct view of the case. Rice Garland has got up right behind me to talk and his sharp voice being no more pleasant to me than his sharp temper, I find myself unable to write longer.

Ever Yours,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Death of Congressman McKim

Washington, April 1, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I regret to be obliged to add another to our list of deaths. Mr. McKim, one of the members from Baltimore, died this forenoon about 10 o'clock. He had been sick only about a week; complaint, the pleurisy originating in a cold. His death will be much felt in Baltimore where his benevolence has been unbounded. I believe he has a left a great fortune, and a young widow. Perhaps you may recollect her. She is a sort of relation of Mrs. Barry. Mr. McKim was also a staunch friend of the administration—and herein we meet a great loss, which we can ill afford to incur, after the loss of two from Mississippi and two from Maine.

Night before last we had a charming serenade from the marine band. They came round and stood in the lane directly opposite our windows, and woke me from sleep about 2 o'clock with a tune which I admire very much, tho' I do not know its name. They had before this played several tunes in front of the house. I can hardly imagine anything more delightful than it was.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, April 3d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Today was held the funeral of Mr. McKim. At 11 o'clock we assembled at the Capitol, and had funeral ceremonies. Mr. Slicer gave us an address made up of commonplace sentiments expressed in the coarsest manner. There was as great a want of taste in it as anything I have heard of late.

At 12 a procession was formed, which proceeded from the Capitol to the railroad depot, and thence to Baltimore. Most

of the members went, conveyance being provided at the public expense. Not feeling remarkably bright myself, and it being a cold, windy day, I concluded to stay at home and try to bring up some of my work in which I am a little behindhand.

Mr. McKim is said to have left an estate worth a million and a half. He made his will before he died but I have not heard any of the particulars.

I have been to see a pair of large oxen today. The present owner gave \$3,500 for them. They are supposed to weigh over 3,000 lbs. each. They are of the Durham shorthorn breed, and are very handsome, notwithstanding their extreme fatness. I should think two middling sized men might lie on the back of the ox without rolling off. They beat all hollow, everything of the kind that I have seen before.

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Wants to Get Back to the Farm

Washington, April 10, 1838.

Dear Wife,

We have nothing new here but flowers, and they are coming out daily in beautiful variety, both as to shape & color. Peach trees have been in bloom a week and other trees are putting out their leaves. The walk behind Mrs. Pitman's house will look beautifully soon. The grass about the Capitol forms one of the most beautiful carpets that I ever beheld. The green is handsomer than anything we have at the North.

I was up to the President's this morning to introduce young B—. He is a fool to be spending his time in endeavoring to obtain an office. He had much better go to work upon the land, or engage in some active employment. It is strange to me that people should be so fascinated with office, with a degree of dependence upon the humor and caprice of A. B. & C.

The President appeared very well and indulged in a few pleasantries. Poor man, I should think he would regard it as a great luxury to laugh once in a while. Why, I would not be President of the United States for all the honors or wealth that Uncle Sam could pour upon me.

I have not yet consented to be candidate for Governor, though the invitations still flow in upon me. I want to be at



home now and go about my farming. That is the best employment, after all. I shall try to get Uncle William to engraft the remaining apple trees. One row, I think, had better be grafted with the Island Greening. What do you think?

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Sends Grafts for the Apple Trees

April 12, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I recd. your letter last evening, one day in advance of the regular time. So it seems there is some multiplication going on out to the barn. I suppose you won't think of raising the "critter" after the experience of last year. What are the indications in the new swine palace behind the stable? I have written today to Judge Hayes to send to Uncle William grafts enough for all trees except one row—the Island Greening row. I have also written to Uncle William asking him to do the needful when the grafts shall arrive. If he can't attend to it, Davis must get Bowden. I feel anxious to get our orchard into good fruit as soon as possible.

I hope you will pay a little attention to the strawberry bed this spring, that is, you or Martha. Keep it clear of weeds, cut the runners and make the plants grow. I don't know but that it would be a good plan to dig trenches between the rows & cover up some old manure, or to spread a little about the plants themselves. The ground there, I think, is not very rich.

I don't see where your pump or pipe could have frozen up. If anywhere, it must have been in the well near the top of the water.

Ever thine,

J. F.

### Judge Ruggles Exonerated

Washington, April 14, 1838.

Dear Wife,

"Every other day" has arrived, and so I must write you a letter. Not that I consider it a task which must be performed, but then I like to have something to say. Our committee, the

duel committee, I mean, has not yet reported. I called on Toucey this morning to know when we might expect the report, and his reply was the first of next week. What the report is to be I could not learn. They keep all matters secret.

The stream of petitions continues to flow on and probably will continue to for a long time to come. Their character has been very uniform, speaking of the duel in strong language, asking for the expulsion of all concerned in it, and the passage of a law to prevent such occurrences in future. One, however, was presented by a Whig member the other day in which the petitioners prayed no expulsion might take place.

F. O. J. has this day (through Mr. Evans) asked leave of absence after the first of May. So it seems he has concluded not to resign. If the Cumberland people don't scold about this I shall be mistaken.

The Ruggles committee have reported, exonerating him entirely. I am very glad of it. It would have been a sad affair to have had it otherwise!

Now I am bound off to attend a caucus.

Yours as ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### An April Snow Storm

Washington, April 15, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Would you believe it, we have had quite a snow storm today! The snow melted, to be sure, as soon as it touched the ground, but it snowed in tolerable earnest for several hours and if it had not melted, would probably have made two inches or more. The peach & plum trees are all in bloom, and I fear that the cold weather we have had for two days, aided with this snow, have cut off their prospect here for fruit. So you see there is no condition from which some comfort may not be extracted. With you, frosts at this season can do no harm. Vegetation, I presume, has not yet started, or at all events has not got so far along as to be liable to injury from frosts.

I felt like meeting an old acquaintance today when I came across an article in a paper about old Uncle Brannan. I have sent you the paper—the Eastern Republican. The article, it seems, is extracted from a Pennsylvania paper. The account



A Reunion of Children and Grandchildren of John Fairfield



given must be very true to nature, there is no difficulty in seeing the old man just as he was at Saco.

I wish the members would begin to talk about adjournment, but they don't seem at all inclined that way.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Reports Northeastern Boundary Bill

Washington, April 17, 1838.

Dear Wife,

The weather here is "awful cold," how is it with you? I have been obliged to keep as large fires for two or three days past as at any time during the winter.

The flowers in bloom look like old ladies rigged out in the finery of girls and everything else looks "kind of sorry."

I got my bill for surveying and marking the northeastern boundary line through the Committee of Foreign Affairs today and reported the same to the House. I also gave notice that I should call it up for consideration on Tuesday, two weeks from today, when I shall probably make a short speech, simply to show that the communication from the British government, since I made my former speech, has not changed the state of the case, or diminished the necessity of passing this bill.

In the House they have spent the whole day in discussing a bill providing for the taking down of the new Treasury building and putting the materials into a post-office building about to be erected. The new Treasury, probably you recollect, is only a third built and stands at the west end of Pennsylvania Avenue, just this way of the President's. It is said that the architect, Mills, has made some great mistakes and that the walls are not strong enough to sustain the lateral pressure of the arches. A Philadelphia architect thinks that it will tumble down itself, if finished on the present plan. Sargeant, the other day, said he had often heard of things falling to ruins, but here a thing seemed to be rising to ruins.

The tree bearing the large, beautiful white flower that I spoke about some time ago, I have ascertained is the Magnolia. What I once called the holly is, I believe, nothing more than a species of the thorn, perhaps the buckthorn.

Ever thine,

J. F.

## Beginning of U. S. Weather Bureau?

Washington, April 19, 1838.

Dear Wife,

April 19—the thought has just occurred to me that this is the anniversary of the Boston massa-cre, as Aunt Rachael would pronounce it, just before the commencement of the Revolutionary War. I do not mention it because of its appropriateness in a letter to you, but to show how I write my letters, that is, by taking my pen, and putting on paper the first thoughts that come into my head. Thus, this thought or rather remembrance was suggested by dating my letter, and so down it went on the paper. After all, it would be laughable if I should prove to be mistaken in point of fact. Let the boys take down some book & ascertain if I am right.

This morning from ½ past 9 to ½ past 10 we listened to a lecture in the Capitol from Professor Epsy on meteorology, &c. He delivered one yesterday morning which I did not hear. Today it was upon the winds, and so far as I could understand him, he was quite interesting. His object is to have Congress make an appropriation for the purchase of instruments, &c., that observations may be made and registered at particular points throughout the United States, in aid of science.

The Select Committee have not yet reported and I learn today they will not until Saturday. I dislike this procrastination very much. Yesterday Graves had the unblushing impudence to get up in the House and make a speech on the Cumberland road bill. I took my hat and left the House, as did some others. It was a gross outrage upon decency.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Planning the Garden

Washington, April 21, 1838.

Dear Wife,

In regard to the patch of ground between the house & the gravel pit, I think your suggestion a good one, that it should be planted with potatoes, or corn or whatever Davis may think best. As to the trees in which the grafts failed, I think they should be regrafted this spring,—but whether the same limbs will answer I have some doubt. Uncle William can best tell

that. It is of no great consequence if different fruit be put into the same tree provided it is of the same class, i. e., summer or winter. Perhaps, however, some grafts of the same kind may be sent by Judge Hayes. I have a little memorandum in my pocketbook from which it appears the grafting was as follows:

1st Row	5 winter & 3 Imperial Russets
2d Row	13 Baldwins
3d Row	6 Nonsuch & 4 or 5 Porter Apples
4th Row	6 Royal Pearmain & 5 June Pearmain
5th Row	St. Lawrence apple

(Sketch is here inserted)

I will thank you to preserve this letter as the memorandum may be of use at some future time.

Uncle Richard some time since left some tomato seed with me which after adjournment I will send you. Northern seed, however, I should think would be best if you have it.

I think you had better not undertake to drive the colt alone. I will bring him to his bearings when I get home, I'll warrant you.

The investigating committee have not reported today as was anticipated. I am almost out of patience with them.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Makes a Speech

April 23d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I have only time to say that I have made a short speech today—say half an hour long. It will be reported in the Daily Globe about an inch long. I have taken pains to write it out since the House adjournment, but was too late for the daily, it will appear in the weekly tomorrow. I will endeavor to send you one. The whole day has been spent in debating the question whether the report of the committee shall be printed. The Feds seem determined to make a political question of it.

In haste yours,

J. F.

**Indignation Over Cilley Report**

April 24, 1838.

Dear Wife,

This is the third day spent in speeches for and against the printing of the reports of the committee.

If the indignation of the people is not poured out upon these fellows for smothering the evidence in this case, then I'll think the worse of mankind as long as I live.

Viewed in a political aspect, only, things are working well. Every speech the opposition makes is a nail in their coffin. They are on the side of the murderers; they are for suppressing the reports, smothering the evidence, and screening the guilty. We are on the side of humanity; we are against crime; we are for letting facts go forth to the people; we are for light. In such circumstances it appears to me we have little to fear. If we do not carry our point, we shall fail in a good cause, & have the satisfaction of having done our duty.

It has been very cold here for a few days and part of the time a disagreeable easterly rain and drizzle. Best love to all.

Thy Husband,

J. F.

Yesterday, sent you paper containing my speech.

**More on Cilley Report**

Washington, April 27, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Another day has been spent in the duel case on the preliminary question to print without coming to a vote. Tomorrow night I think will find us voting. The opposition

(Here part of sheet has been torn off)

Massachusetts backed out,—took back his speech he made the other day,—and now says he shall vote for the printing.

Toucey made an excellent speech today in which he lashed Johnny Q. rather severely.

It is now 7 o'clock, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs have a special meeting at that hour, to take up our affairs with Mexico, so excuse me.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.



**Disapprove of Monument to Cilley**

Washington, April 29, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Thank you for your letter of last evening. I must be permitted to say further that I felt proud of my wife for that part of her letter which related to the contemplated monument to the memory of Mr. Cilley. I read it to Anderson and he spoke of it in warm terms for its high tone of moral feeling, though he could not agree with you. He is for erecting the monument & subscribing liberally toward it. I disagreed with him, and your letter comes in the right time to confirm my impressions which, though early taken, were not sufficiently deep and strong.

The funeral honors paid him here I think were justifiable and right. They rested on a different principle from the one involved in the erection of a monument. The mode in which he was buried here was the usual mode for the burial of members of Congress. We neither stepped out of our way to pay undue and unusual honors to his remains, nor did we undertake to lacerate the feelings of his friends by omitting the customary rites. This course I think was just right, and I have seen no cause to regret the part I took in inducing the House to adopt it.

I have received a subscription paper from Thomaston, but with my present views I shall give nothing.

The question whether the reports & evidence shall be printed, in the duel case, has not yet been decided, though debated a whole week. Some of them had a touch at me yesterday for "springing a trap upon them" and possibly I may give them a short reply tomorrow. I do not, however, consider it of much consequence. I expect as these fellows find themselves driven into a corner, that they will turn round and go to abusing me. I hope my philosophy will enable me to endure it.

One word as to matters at home. If you feel very desirous of raising the two calves I will not object, though I had rather not. But if they are raised, I insist on their being taken from the cows after they are three months old; butter is butter, say what you will to the contrary. Your dairy will be a small affair this year, I suspect.

Hope the children are not going to have the whooping cough, notwithstanding your suggestions. It is a complaint I dread much. I would give a good deal to see them, though in

consequence of the employment of my mind just now I do not think of them so much as I ought to. Right gladly would I consent to little Hammy's pinching me.

The Senate, as you suggest, took up the subject of an adjournment, but, I believe, fixed no time. There is no probability I think, of adjourning before the first of July.

The weather yesterday was extremely warm and today differs but little from it. I put on cotton drawers & worsted stockings this morning for the first time, & yesterday had my hair cut—three things that have promoted my comfort not a little. I doubt whether I shall want the pair you have been knitting for me; if I should I will let you know. Did you receive yours through the mail? I sent them as requested.

Have you read the nos. of the Dyspeptick in the Mirror or Robert Rueful? I think they are very amusing.

Have been to meeting today & had an excellent sermon from Mr. Bullfinch.

Your Husband,

J. F.

### No Quorum—Members Attend Races

Washington, May 1, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Another little speech of "our John's" will appear in tomorrow's Globe. It hit some sore places of the opposition, and caused a little wincing. Hope I shall not be called out again. Have spoken enough for one session,—want to be more quiet. Today, at one time, we were without a quorum, many of the members having gone off to the race course, where a purse of \$20,000 was to be run for. At 3 o'clock we adjourned on account of the absence of members; this is disgraceful to the last degree. It is a foul stain upon the character of an American Congress.

No decisive vote yet in the duel case, tomorrow I hope we shall bring it to some point.

Yours,

J. F.

**His Views on the Races**

Washington, May 4, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Immediately after the House met this morning Mr. Bell introduced a resolution to adjourn over to Monday to give the officers of the House an opportunity to change the carpets, putting down straw matting, and to cleanse and air the House, and it was carried by a vote of more than two-thirds. I, however, voted against it, for, tho our health requires this change in the House, the public business is suffering for our action. Besides, I was not disposed to lay the duel case aside for anything.

After the House adjourned I joined in the dissipation of going to the races which have been going on for two or three days, and by reason of which we have not been able to have a quorum in the House more than half the time.

The horses, 8 or 10 in number, ran finely. The day was good. Much company was there though but few ladies. I saw but few intoxicated, but such a scene of gambling I never saw before. Roulette tables, faro tables, &c., &c. I have been to these races, I think, for the last time. They create no pleasurable excitement for me at all. But for going I have high authority; if I am not much mistaken I once saw several northern ladies there, who, it is to be supposed, will set themselves against every thing immoral.

What shall I do with myself for the three days before me? I have been contemplating a journey to Richmond, but find that most of it will be in the night and I have no taste for that. So I will sleep upon the matter one night and then determine. It looks now like foul weather; if that comes it will, of course, interrupt all plans.

No decisive vote yet on the case reported by the duel committee. I think the Whigs will carry their point and kill the whole matter by indirect and unfair attacks. Well, I shall have discharged my duty and for the rest the House must take the responsibility.

Love to all.

Yours,

J. F.

**Boarding House Burglarized**

Washington, May 8, 1838.

Dear Wife,

The House has just adjourned at 11 o'clock, on the announcement of the death of another member, Mr. Lawler of Alabama. I was much astonished this morning to hear of his death as I had not before heard of his sickness. He had, however, been sick for a few days only—the complaint being what is a very common one among Southern men, bilious pleurisy. The death was announced by Mr. Lyon and the funeral takes place tomorrow, 12 o'clock. This makes the 4th death this session.

I have also another piece of news for you, to wit, that last night our house was entered and robbed by some villains at present unknown, tho the officers are in hot pursuit of them. They probably entered at the front window which, to my astonishment, I find was not fastened, indeed, that is the case with all the windows. Mrs. Pitman lost her large spoons, soup ladles, fish knives, rings for the napkins, &c., &c., making a loss of about \$100, she thinks. The robbers then went to Mr. Allen's room, where he was asleep, and took his watch from the table, worth about \$80, his wallet from his pantaloons' pocket, containing about \$30 in money, and his gold spectacles, worth about \$14.00.

They went to Mr. Loomis' room, who, you know, is a little hard of hearing, and took from his pocket a wallet containing about \$100 in money. His trunk was taken down into the parlor and broken open, but nothing was taken from it that Mr. L. has yet discovered. All the rest of us escaped. Mrs. P. suspects a man by the name of William, who was with her about a week during the special session. I do not recollect him, do you? Mr. Allen laughs very heartily about it, and Loomis doesn't cry; indeed, all concerned bear their loss very well. I suspect we all hereafter lock our rooms on going to bed. This perhaps is safest, though I do not like it.

I intended to have made an asparagus bed this spring, but suppose we must let it go another year.

Have the peach trees shown any signs of life yet? I'll thank you just to have an eye to my mulberries in the front yard.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Take Vote on the Cilley Duel Case

Washington, May 10, 1838.

Dear Wife,

We have at last taken a vote on the report of the select committee in the duel case, twenty days having elapsed since the report was made and a motion to print. The question was divided, and on the first branch to lay upon the table, there was a small majority. On the second for printing the Reports, there was a majority of over 50, and the third, to print the evidence, &c., was carried unanimously. The opposition squirmed dreadfully at being obliged to vote, for a motion to lay upon the table is not debatable, and immediately after a vote was taken on that, the previous question was moved and carried as to the printing. In this dilemma Old Adams and others found themselves placed and finally had to vote for the printing after they had wasted three weeks in opposing it. Adams, Cushing, Lincoln & several other Feds had to go for the printing.

Old A. I believe to be a rotten, unprincipled old scamp. I have heretofore supposed that his course was to be attributed to waywardness. I now believe him to be destitute of principle, a man who has but little to restrain him from the gratification of the worse passions. May the Lord forgive me if I am uncharitable, but I know of no way but to judge a tree by its fruit. There, that is letting off a little. I hope I shall now feel easier. Yesterday, Anderson, Loomis & myself took three horses and off we started for Curtis's, which I suppose you remember as a sort of palace visible from the Capitol, situated on very high ground on the other side of the Potomac, distant, say 3 or 4 miles. The location we found very fine, but the soil was poor, and much of the growth appeared to be rather stunted and dwarfish. The house, too, altho it makes such an imposing appearance from Washington, is rather shabby when reached.

From Curtis's we went up to opposite Georgetown on the southern side of the Potomac intending to cross to Georgetown by the ferry, but on reaching it, the ferryman said the current was so strong he could not venture to take horses over, so we made back tracks, reaching home before dinner. Today, with the exception of two chafed spots and lame shoulders, I feel much improved by my ride.

J. F.

**The Reissue of Treasury Notes**

House Representatives, May 12, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Our friends having agreed to sit out the question now pending, to wit, a bill authorizing the Secretary to reissue treasury notes, I have taken a cold bite below and am prepared for a session of a part, if not the whole, of the night. I regret this inasmuch as it is Saturday. But the opposition grow worse & worse, and as we now are in committee of the whole where the previous question cannot be moved, we have no other remedy than to sit out the matter.

The necessity, too, is exceedingly strong as the treasury is empty and the public business must stop and the public creditors must go unpaid unless something is done forthwith.

Ever Yours,

J. F.

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**Hopes Soon to Get to Boundary Bill**

Washington, May 17, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Last night about 9 o'clock we succeeded in obtaining a vote on the bill providing for the reissue of Treasury notes. The previous question was carried by the casting vote of the Speaker. Today a motion was made to reconsider the vote by which the bill passed last evening and on the vote being taken, it stood for reconsidering 110, against it, 109. By the rules of the House, when the Speaker by voting can produce a tie, he has a right to vote, which he did in this instance and thereby defeated the motion for reconsideration; so the question may now be regarded as settled.

Today Cushing & Mr. Adams have been holding forth about the territory beyond the Rocky Mountains and the occupation of Columbia river. We shall try to get up our Northeastern boundary bill next week probably. Chas. S. Davis has been sent here by Gov. Kent to aid us in procuring the passage of the bill! &c., &c.

I want to hear from my own dear children. Hope their whooping cough is not to be very severe. The weather today & yesterday has been very warm. I have not yet doffed my

guernsey but have put on my summer coat. I have also exchanged my white summer hat for a black one of the same material, and which is very "genteel."

The ladies are all cleared out from the City and very soon it will be as dull and gloomy as a bachelor's hall.

Ever thine,

J. F.

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### Would Give Ninepence to See the Pigs

Washington, May 19, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I was glad to get a letter from you last night and to learn that the children are no worse.

I was also much gratified to learn that we have been so fortunate in our pigs—10 and 7, with a loss of 2 only, I call capital luck. I think we had better keep 4 of them & sell the rest. About this, however, I will write to Davis. As to your inquiry about the roaster, if you are serious, let me say that I hope you will not deprive yourself of any comforts which the farm can furnish.

Oh, the pigs, I have thought of them a good deal since last night. The dear little, round, plump, white squealers, how I should like to look down into your comfortable quarters and see you nestle, climb over each other's backs, and nose one another about, to say nothing of listening to the combination of musical voices. Ah, I would give ninepence to see you, and that is saying a good deal, for it is half as much as they ask to see an elephant.

Your list of news about domestic operations was very welcome to me. You will have a late garden, I fear, but there is no help for it. I have just heard that Mr. Senator Tallmadge was awakened last night by some one in his chamber who was endeavoring to get open the drawers of his bureau. He jumped out of bed, when the rogue fled & escaped. If my turn is to come the rogues will find easy work, for I not only sleep with my door unlocked, but open. I should have locked it the night after our robbery, but could not find any key.

The President & a few from the Senate have been down to Mount Vernon today in the steamship Fulton.

Ever thine,

J. F.

## A Bit of Home Gossip

Washington, May 23d.

Dear Wife,

Our House commenced its session today at 10 o'clock, this leaves us no time hardly for anything, and we seemed to have little enough before, in all conscience. However, I voted for it. But little is yet said in favor of adjournment, though that little is in favor of the 2d or 9th of July. Some have suggested the expediency of meeting a month earlier next session. If so, this session may be shortened thereby a little.

I never should have thought of neighbor Dearing taking Widow Gould! Hope you will leave your card early.

If Uncle William wants the heifer calf, give it to him.

Ever thine,

J. F.

## Mr. Parris Arrives

Washington, May 30, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday, notwithstanding your injunction to the contrary, I took the liberty to make another short speech upon the subject of the boundary. It will come out in this evening's paper, which I will send you, though I don't know as you will care much about it.

We had a report here last evening of an insurrection among the slaves out at Georgetown, but I believe but a very small number were found to be implicated and they are now in jail.

Mr. Parris, our new representative, has arrived, and astonishes everybody with his beauty. From some remarks in the papers about his chin, everybody was prepared to see a very ugly looking fellow. He is, however, very far otherwise. Prentiss & Word from Mississippi, have also arrived, which is rather a sore matter to me. I can't endure that Prentiss.

Yesterday we had for our dessert my great favorite, strawberries & cream, and better still, I had as many as I wanted. I wish I could send you a quart or two, don't you?

Ever yours,

J. F.



**Disgraceful Quarrel, Blows Being Struck**

Washington, June 1, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I have one more disgraceful scene to record enacted upon the floor of the House of Representatives. Mr. Turney of Tennessee concluded a speech today, begun yesterday, in which he replied to a speech before made by Jno. Bell. Turney had reviewed the political course of Bell with some severity but keeping himself within the rules of the House. He was followed by Bell, who indulged in a strain of violent and bitter invective, using many epithets of a personal and offensive character.

At one of his remarks, Turney, who sat immediately before him, rose, and turning to Bell said, "It is false, basely false," being strongly excited at the time. Thereupon Bell struck at him with his fist. Turney parried the blow and struck at Bell. They continued striking at each other for some time before they could be stopped by the members who surrounded them. Cries of "Order!" "Order!" rang from every part of the Hall, and the Speaker (we then being in committee of the whole, Mr. Howard in the chair), resumed the chair without a vote of the House in order to bring the House to order, which he finally succeeded in doing. After a few short speeches upon the subject, Bell & Turney apologized to the House and so the matter passed off.

It was a disgraceful scene and will go far to destroy the dignity & character of Congress in the eyes of the Nation and the world. I was in the gallery at the time with Mr. Chase & Mr. Balkam from Maine and had a fair opportunity to see the whole.

I am writing now from the House where I expect to be detained at least till 12 o'clock. The Florida war bill is to be set out tonight & I understand that Wise is to come in and make a long speech in the course of the evening.

Yours,

J. F.

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**Nobody Dares Fight a Duel**

Washington, June 9, 1838.

Dear Wife,

This has been an exceedingly warm day with us. It is fortunate we are not made of tallow, otherwise we might melt as quick as Mrs. Gage's ice creams.

The anticipated duel between Biddle & Downing has been settled and a very silly & pompous announcement made of it in the House by Waddy Thompson. The truth is no one ever dreamt a duel would grow out of what passed between them; no one dare fight a duel here now, and this parade about the affair made by Thompson is merely to keep up the idea that the peculiar code of southern honor is still in force, and that certain folks are determined to be very "chivalrous"—yes, chivalrous is the word.

Sunday Afternoon, June 10.

After writing the foregoing I was called to tea last night and did not return in season to get into Sam's bag, so I'll finish it now. Another warm day. Have been to meeting and had a first rate sermon from Mr. Bulfinch. Moderate dinner, strawberries smothered in cream for dessert, short nap after it, "& so on."

Ever thine,

J. F.

### State Convention Day Approaches

June 13, 1838.

Dear Wife,

We have many important bills that must be acted on before we can agree to adjourn, particularly the sub-treasury, the increase of the army, northeastern boundary, &c. We are now debating the pre-emption bill, i. e., a bill for the benefit of the squatters. Cushing has just made quite a democratic speech in favor of the squatters, and in the course of it cited and read a case from 3d of Fairfield's Reports.

Rice Garland is now at it with his sharp voice and vinegar spirit. He is no favorite of mine as you may well judge from what passed between us in regard to the duel investigation, tho I think he entertains harder thoughts of me than I do of him.

I received last night from Col. Dunn "The Old Orchard Sentinel" No. 2. It is quite amusing, have you seen it? Amos Goodwin adds a P.S. to Dunn's letter and speaks about the prospect of my descending to be candidate for Governor.

The Convention takes place a week from today & I fear the result. If they nominate me I shall have to stand. What say you?

Ever yours,

J. F.

**Bill to Regulate Steamboats**

Washington, June 16.

Dear Wife,

How does the farm get along? By the way, just tell Davis I think we had better have a horse rake made before haying comes on. Capt. Jordan, I believe, has a pretty good one and Davis had better go see it before he has one made. Hope I shall get home, and think I shall, time enough to help get in the hay. My first job will be though, I think, to build a front yard fence, the old one probably looking very shabby by this time—doesn't it?

Today we are acting on the bill regulating the management of steamboats. Hope we shall get through it today. It is an important bill & may save many lives. But everybody is so full of talk that I get out of patience with them.

My colleague "Davee"<sup>1</sup> is in the chair and presides remarkably well. He is an old Speaker, you know. My colleague, Par- ris, has learned within a few days that his wife & child are sick with the small pox, he having carried it home from Augusta. It seems that he was not aware that he had it himself, inasmuch as he had before been vaccinated, and indeed it is probable that he only had the varioloid. The last letter he had they were supposed to be out of danger.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Davee of Blanchard, Me., a Democrat and a merchant. Served two terms.

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**Taking Up the Sub-Treasury Bill**

Dear Wife,

We have today taken up the sub-treasury bill which is the great measure of the administration and when we shall have reached a vote upon it, everything else will be disposed of hastily and members will begin to scramble for home. We have all along been calculating upon a protracted debate upon this question, but the indications at present seem to be the other way. At all events, I think the matter will be disposed of this week.

Mrs. Pitman says she is going to Maine to visit you, but won't say when. I invited her to go with me, but without effect. She gives us an abundance of strawberries of the largest

& best kind. Hope you get some now and then—and yesterday she gave us a new article, viz.: ice custards (frozen custards instead of cream). They were very nice. I mention these little things because this hot weather we cannot eat much of anything but nic-nacs, and to remind you of your sojourning here.

Our mess has diminished somewhat, most of the ladies having gone & two of the gentlemen. Poor Mrs. Birdsall seems to be dreadfully homesick, I don't wonder at it. She never goes to the House or Senate and but seldom anywhere else.

Parris' wife is like to get well, but his child is yet dangerous. Judge Bruyn of N. Y., who left here some weeks since for home on account of his ill health, we hear has not yet reached home & probably never will. He is nearly gone in consumption.

Tomorrow the great convention meets at Augusta. I hope McIntire will be agreed on for Governor, but I fear otherwise. If they should agree upon you & I, we shall have to submit. How does the prospect affect you?

Ever Yours,

J. F.

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### Two Terrible Disasters

Washington, June 22d, 1838.

Dear Wife,

This morning the rules are suspended to admit a resolution fixing upon a day of adjournment and I have been giving some very reluctant votes. After amending the resolution so as to stand for the second Monday of July, the 9th day, the resolution was postponed to Friday, this day week. Much against my feelings I voted for the postponement. There are certain bills pending before the House that must be attended to and as a friend of the administration, I cannot consent to fix upon a day of adjournment until some disposition is made of them. On Friday I think the resolution will be taken up again & the 16th will be determined on for adjournment.

We have just heard of two more terrible steamboat disasters, one, the burning of a boat on Lake Erie within 2 or 3 miles of the shore by which about 40 persons have lost their lives. The other is the case of the Pulaski, bound from Charleston to Baltimore, having on board about 150 passengers—50 of them women—off Cape Hatteras. Her boiler burst and all were lost

except about 20 who betook themselves to the boats. Gov. Hamilton of South Carolina and other distinguished men are among the lost. There were also, I believe, many persons & families on their way to spend the summer at the North.

We have a bill pending which has for its object to prevent these accidents, but I fear that it will not be very effectual, tho it may do some good. Steam is too powerful an agent to be entirely within human control.

Ever thine,

J. F.

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### Gives His Views on Forrest, the Actor

Washington, June 25, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I write from the House where I think we shall be confined to a late hour,—as there seems to be a strong desire on both sides of the House to take up the question of the sub-treasury bill tonight, and still many have speeches prepared for delivery. The vote will be a close one, but I fear we shall get beaten.

Tonight we shall hear who is to be our candidate for Governor and consequently who is to receive the outpourings of federal abuse for two months or more.

I send you today two plays, "Ion" and "The Love Chase." I have tried to obtain the "Lady of Lyons or Love and Pride," but could not. It is excellent, and when I can get it, will forward it to you. "The Love Chase" is, I think, next to it.

Without making any acknowledgments as to what I have seen or heard, I will give it as my opinion that Forrest as Claude Melnott & Miss Monier as Pauline, are inimitable. Forrest is a most magnificent looking fellow, and what is better, is a thorough-going Democrat. He has consented to deliver an oration on the 4th of July at New York, and it is said that, having acquired a fortune, he intends quitting the stage and entering upon political life. "The Lady of Lyons" is full of noble sentiment and seems to have been written for Forrest himself.

Mrs. P.'s flowers look elegantly, particularly the Tennessee rose, which runs up over a frame work and bears very abundantly.

Today the Masons, great fools as they are, are having a public celebration. Mr. Allen, who boards with us you know, says he was once admitted to a lodge, but has never been near

them since. He admits that Morgan disclosed the secrets and calls the whole institution a humbug. He offered if we would go to his chamber to go through the process & show us how Masons were made, but none of us had curiosity enough to go with him.

J. F.

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### Is Nominated For Governor

Washington, June 27.

Dear Wife,

So it seems the matter is settled, and if the doings of the Convention be ratified by the people you & I are to be promoted. You recollect the story of Major Bryant and his wife, I suppose. I perceive that there was great unanimity among the members, and so far as that goes, augurs well for our success. Our friends are very sanguine, and if beaten will be much disappointed.

For myself, aside from political considerations, defeat would not excite any very strong feelings of regret. The office has nothing inviting about it in my eye. Its duties, cares, responsibilities, etc., are far from being desirable to one who loves quiet as I do. Beside, you know I hate dignity, much more stiff, stately form and ceremony, and Governor or no Governor, I never can array myself in it.

Another of the unpleasant things connected with my anticipations is the abuse that I must receive from the federal papers. Slander will be heaped on slander; my conduct misrepresented; my motives impugned, my character traduced & everything done & said which may be thought necessary to prevent my election. Well, I must make up my mind to endure it. Conscious rectitude, if it will not arrest the arrows of the enemy, may prevent the infliction of very deep wounds. Nothing new here, except that speeches diminish in length and business men are becoming more prominent in the House as the session draws to its close.

Ever thine,

J. F.

**Appropriation for Kennebunk**

Washington, July 5, 1838.

Dear Wife,

We are having an abundance of warm weather and business. Yesterday Evans & I had a very pretty little skirmish about an appropriation for Kennebunk Harbor. The debate on my side, although pretty earnest, was in good nature & apparently so on the part of Evans, though his object was political and insidious. He is welcome to all he made by the attack.

Ever Yours,

J. F.

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**Leaving for Home**

Washington, July 7, 1838.

Saturday Afternoon.

Dear Wife,

I have not fully made up my mind yet whether I shall set out for home on Monday or Tuesday, that must depend upon the course which the business of the House shall take. I shall start on Monday morning at 6 o'clock if I can, in which case I suppose I can reach home by Thursday morning. My present impression is, in accordance with your suggestions, that I shall not take the steamboat route from Boston, but shall go by the mail stage, reaching home, if no alteration has been made in the stage arrangements, at 2 o'clock in the morning.

You may, therefore, leave open or rather unfastened the front door on Wednesday and Thursday nights—but don't say anything to the family about it. I don't want to disturb them.

This probably is the last letter I shall write you this session, trusting that we shall soon have the pleasure of meeting personally.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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**Finds Changes in House**

Washington, Saturday, Dec. 1, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Here I am at Mrs. Pitman's up in the 3d story in a large room in the front part of the house. I arrived here last evening about 8 o'clock, having had a very pleasant time on, the

weather moderating gradually as we approached the great city. Mrs. P. is very well, has her house newly fitted up, and is very anxious to have a full and a good mess. At present she has Parker, McClellan, Birdsall, Cushman, Jones of N. Y., Allen and Prentiss of Vt., Anderson & myself and Dr. Jones, minister from Texas. I have just returned from a call on the President. He appears to be remarkably well & and in good spirits. In four days, he says, at the springs he actually gained 5 lbs., ascertained by weighing in the scales.

Mr. Dungan says that Mr. Dummer & family are well. I shall try to go up & see them tomorrow or Monday, as well as Uncle Richard. Mrs. Barry, I understand, is well, still keeping house. All inquire for you and Augusta and regret that you didn't come on with me. At present we have only one lady, Mrs. Judge Prentiss. Mrs. Allen is to be here by and by, now at her son's in Newark.

Everything looks pretty natural here and I think I might spend a pretty comfortable winter if duty didn't call me back again. The journey back I dread; the residence nearer home I anticipate with some pleasure.

The Hall of the House of Representatives has been entirely changed in its fitting up. The Speaker's chair has changed fronts, the seats of members, of course, following suit. It is more elegantly fitted up than it was before, and the whole arrangement I think is much better.

Your Husband,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Lost Thanksgiving Dinner

Washington, Dec. 5, 1838.

Dear Ann,

Today the deaths of two members have been announced, to wit, Judge Bruyn & Mr. Patterson, both of N. Y., who died as you may perhaps recollect, during the vacation.

The House in consequence immediately adjourned till tomorrow, at which time I suppose the appointment of committees will be ordered and then the House will adjourn over to Monday to give the Speaker time to execute the order, and thus one week will have been used up.

I have just been called upon by two ladies soliciting my vote for chaplain. Who do you think they were? Do you give



it up? Mary & Almira. What could I do—but to tell them I would go for their candidate, a Mr. Fowler, if I thought there was any prospect of electing him, but that the prospect was altogether against him. What efficient politicians, in some respects, the ladies might become, if they should enter the field in earnest.

Many of the members have brought their wives with them, and I suspect they are preparing for a pretty gay winter. I shall, however, gladly quit all the allurements of the great Metropolis to go into the cold regions of the North, inasmuch as I shall then be near those who fill my heart.

Tell the boys while they were enjoying their good Thanksgiving dinner (as I trust you had one, tho I forgot your turkey) I was going without any at all. The arrangement was for us to take dinner on board of the boat immediately after getting on board of her at Bordentown, but when we reached there on the railroad, the Delaware was found so frozen that the boat could not run, so we had to go up to Bordentown & take the cars for Phila., which we did not reach till night. So it was the next day. Instead of taking the boats by the way of Newcastle & Frenchtown, we took the railroad from Wilmington to Baltimore & so went without my dinner again. But I am alive and well and upon the whole, think that going without one's dinner once in a while is no such killing affair.

I found but little snow west of Portsmouth in coming on. Here the weather is quite mild. I can't wear my new wrapper and at night throw all off but the sheet & spread.

Truly your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Resolutions on Slavery

Washington, Dec. 10, 1838.

My dear Wife,

I regret to tell you that your cousin Dolly is very sick and some of the family think dangerously. She was sick when I came here and partially recovered; since that, however, she has suffered a relapse. Bilious pleurisy, they call the disease. I believe. I have not yet been up to Mr. Chas. Cutts', tho I intend to in a few days. They are, however, all well, including "Kate," my favorite, you know.

Today the House has been discussing a proposition to amend the rules so as to require all elections hereafter in the House to be viva voce. The proposition was carried, "the Gov." himself going for it.

They are having strange times in Pennsylvania. I suppose you hear something about it. The Whigs have sent 8 members there from Philadelphia & seem determined to press them upon the House of Assembly tho they were never elected by the people. If they prove successful in this, the Lord only knows what they will attempt next. The Governor has called out the militia to suppress the meeting of the citizens, calling it a mob, &c., &c. Unless some compromise is effected soon, I fear some blood will be shed.

Tuesday, Dec. 11.

Dear Ann: I wrote thus far yesterday but did not get it into Sam's green bag, so I'll make it answer for my letter today. We had a caucus last evening which kept me out till 12 o'clock. Our object was to agree on some resolutions touching the troublesome subject of slavery, which we finally did. This morning they were introduced into the House by Atherton of New Hampshire (I having refused) by whom the p. q. was moved to cut off debate. The whole day has nevertheless been spent without taking a vote except upon the first resolution—tomorrow comes the rest.

Have not heard from Cousin Dolly to-day.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Death of Cousin Dolly

Washington, Dec. 13.

My Dear Wife,

I have just heard that your Cousin Dolly is dead. She died last night and is to be buried tomorrow afternoon. Her death, following so soon after that of Thomas, must be very afflicting to them. I shall, of course, attend the funeral if I am able, but I am sorry to say that I am now laboring under a severe pain in my leg,—a touch of my old-fashioned rheumatism. Am very glad to hear by Walter that you are to have Mrs. Morse with you this winter. I shall feel much easier about you.

My twinges are so confoundedly severe that I can't write.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**Mrs. Madison Attends Funeral**

Washington, Dec. 16, 1838.

Dear Wife,

Cousin Dolly was buried yesterday. Poor Mary was exceedingly affected. The attachment existing between her & Dolly, I am told, was uncommonly strong. The sickness, I believe, was only about three weeks' duration, before that time she having enjoyed the most robust health. I am told, also, that her constitution was remarkably strong and vigorous.

Mrs. Madison was at the funeral and appeared to be in good health, though she did not go to the grave. I rode in a carriage with Madison Cutts' wife and Anna Payne, a niece of Mrs. Madison. This Anna is a plain, simple, sweet girl, and I had a great mind to love her for her name, if for nothing else.

Dolly, it seems, had contemplated going to the North the first of January, probably with me, though it was not so said. I have a great mind to invite Mary, tho' I suppose it would be useless, she probably cannot now be spared, unless Uncle Richard should break up housekeeping.

I have not yet called at Mrs. Chas. Cutts' or to Mr. Dummer's, am almost ashamed of it, will try to call this week, especially as the last of it, or the first of next, I shall start for home.

We have nothing new here. On Friday Congress adjourned over to Monday. Thus two weeks have passed without our having accomplished much of anything, except the passing of some pretty important anti-abolition resolutions.

The weather here is very mild and I am enjoying pretty good health, my rheumatism lasting only one day.

I have written this with a stump pen and it is not strange, therefore, if the writing looks like a stump fence.

Love to the boys & girls and to my dear wife the assurance that I am

Ever Hers,

J. F.

**Entertained by Russian Minister**

Washington, Dec. 16, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I have just returned from dining out and in a few minutes must begin to rig for a "soiree"—the invitation to which I enclose. Pretty well, in dissipation, for such a steady old man as myself, isn't it? About 1 o'clock Mary & Almira came down

to the Capitol & called me out. M. & I went into the Senate gallery, heard a couple of hours of interesting debate from Benton, Buchanan, Davis, Wall & Calhoun, and then, Almira having sent the carriage back, we went to their boarding house, Mrs. Craven's, to dine. Staid there till after 5 o'clock, when they sent me home, and here I am writing to you. They are all well—and in good spirits and send an abundance of love to you.

The party tonight is to be given by the Russian Minister at Georgetown. I understand it is to be a splendid affair. Perhaps I'll tell you more about it in my next.

I had a call the other night from Mr. Papineau, the great Canadian orator, & Doct. Walfred Nelson, who fought the British troops there and was afterward banished to Bermuda. He spent about 3 hours with us and interested us the whole time with his instructive and pleasing conversation and at times by flashes of the purest eloquence. Not time to write more now. Shall probably start Saturday morning, but will write you again, next day after tomorrow.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### High Cost of Living

Washington, Dec. 20, 1838.

Dear Wife,

I have made up my mind to start on Saturday morning. Perhaps I might have delayed it until Monday if I was sure of a direct passage home without any obstructions, but I am afraid to risk it, and so shall start on Saturday. I shall probably reach home Wednesday at 2 o'clock in the morning or 2 o'clock in the afternoon, as I may feel, and the weather may feel, when I get to Portsmouth. It is possible I may get home Tuesday morning, but I don't think it very probable and I may not reach there until Thursday.

Night before last I attended the party of de Bodisco, the Russian Minister, and such a magnificent affair as it was, I have never witnessed in Washington before, but I reserve my description of it until I get home.

I called this morning for the first time at Mrs. Charles Cutts'. She was in a pretty coarse dishabille, but otherwise appeared very well. I had a homily upon the difficulty of living with eggs 50 cents a dozen, butter  $\frac{1}{2}$  a dollar a pound, beef





LUCY FAIRFIELD PERKINS RIPLEY  
Daughter of Annie Fairfield Perkins and Granddaughter of  
Governor Fairfield

10 or 12 cents, &c., &c. Poor woman, I pity her, but how many are there who are worse off. Miss Stros is as handsome as ever and as full of flattery as an egg is full of white & yolk both.

I also called at Uncle Richard's, but he was at market and the black girl said Miss Mary was not to be seen. Tonight, however, Uncle R. called upon me. He feels the death of Thos. & Dolly very much and thinks, moreover, that Walter died the last summer in New Orleans. He said he was not sure of it—but thought so—and seemed to have some information which he did not wish to communicate.

Dolly, I understand, has left her property principally to Mary, which was between two and three thousand dollars, so that with what Mary had before, she is comfortably off.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Sensational Report

Augusta, Dec. 27, 1838.

My Dear Wife,

Mr. Pratt being about to start for Saco I will avail myself of the opportunity to drop you a line.

You can't think how rejoiced I was on reaching Portland to find myself alive. The same morning I went in, a report was put in circulation there that I had fallen suddenly in a fit and expired. Everybody seemed to believe it because the news was so direct—to wit—that an express had arrived at Mr. Whitman's announcing the fact, and that Mr. Dow who lives in the same house had reported it. Some of my political enemies, now that I was dead, began to praise me, and all began to think about a successor.

Here I am at my old stand at Hutchins'. Have not succeeded yet in making a bargain with him, but have laid a train for bringing him down to a reasonable sum, which I have no doubt he will take rather than let me leave for a private house.

I want to know very much how little Hammy does. Don't fail to write by Mr. Tucker, who, I suppose, will leave by Monday.

Yours as ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.





## CHAPTER VII.

### JOHN FAIRFIELD, GOVERNOR OF MAINE.

This is the first installment of letters written by John Fairfield, now Governor Fairfield, from Augusta. Fortunately for readers of his letters, Mrs. Fairfield decided not to go to the capital with her husband that first session, owing to her domestic cares, and so we have his letters written during that important session.

His letters while Governor were not so regular as formerly, for he usually waited to send them privately rather than by mail, postage no longer being free to him as it had been when he was writing upon his gilt-edged correspondence paper as Congressman. By this we see how a public man of that day, unless he had private means, was obliged to count the cost of things and practice little economies. However, he was able now to go home occasionally and did not need to depend so much upon correspondence.

That the new Governor was of a shy and retiring nature is shown by his dread of the inauguration ceremonies, which he evidently regarded as an ordeal to be gotten thru as well as possible and for which to be thankful when it was all over.

That first term upon which Governor Fairfield was entering was one of the most important in the whole history of Maine's Governors. These letters are of peculiar interest revealing the inside affairs of the Aroostook war and also revealing the spirit and determination of the man when he, alone and single-handed, asking neither President nor Congress, declared war against a foreign nation.

Readers of these letters no doubt recall how interested Congressman Fairfield had become in the Northeastern Boundary question, from the time the matter was first introduced in Congress, and what difficulty he had in getting an opportunity to deliver the speech he had prepared on it.

Upon March the eighth, after repeated postponements, he delivered his speech upon the Northeastern Boundary. No better explanation of this trouble can be given than by direct quotations from this speech which is marked with clearness and simplicity, an eloquence which proceeds from the reasonableness of the doctrine. Mr. Fairfield began his address to the House as follows:

“Mr. Speaker: I am in favor of the bill which my colleague proposes to introduce. What is it, sir? Why, it simply provides that the President cause the Northeastern Boundary line of the United States to be accurately surveyed and marked, and suitable monuments to be erected thereon at such points as may be deemed necessary and important. . . . In Maine, there is but one feeling on this subject. That State, sir, feels that she has suffered deep and enduring wrongs at the hands of the British Government. She knows that she has been illegally and unjustly deprived of the property and jurisdiction in a portion of her territory; that the valuable timber upon that territory has been the subject of plunder and waste; that her citizens have been seized and imprisoned in foreign jails, without law and without right, and that the nation guilty of these multiplied and gross outrages not only denies redress, but refuses even to agree upon a mode by which the legality of her acts can be tried and an amicable adjustment of the difficulties can be made. That state also feels that she has not been treated by the General Government as she has endeavored to deserve. . . . Corresponding with the extent of wrongs suffered by Maine will be the measure of her right to redress. If she has been doubly wronged she is doubly entitled to relief.”

After showing the dispositions of the several administrations immediately preceding concerning this boundary question, and arguing forcibly Maine's entire right to the disputed territory, showing the indignity Maine had received from the trespassing of the British government and the neglect of the Federal government concerning the issue, Mr. Fairfield ends the speech in the following manner:

“What, then, shall be done? Shall Great Britain be permitted to remain in the quiet and undisputed possession and use of our property, without making one single effort on our part to procure its restoration? Shall we tamely submit to the degradation of being plundered of our property, and then spend years soliciting the plunderer to agree upon some mode in which the legality of his conduct may be tried? I trust not. It will not be in accordance with that spirit which has hitherto distinguished the American character.

“It would argue a weakness and pusillanimity disgraceful to us in the last degree, and cannot, I am confident, find advocates upon this floor. What, then, shall be done? Shall we go to war? I answer, no; unless the surveying and marking our line, and resisting all forcible attempts to take our property from us, be war; I profess to be the friend of peace, and would not rashly and unnecessarily embroil our country in difficulties which would result in war, but in this case, I have not the remotest suspicion that the measure proposed could have so disastrous and unhappy a result. Let this step be taken and the whole question is settled. Great Britain will agree to terms at once. . . . A rupture of the peaceful conditions subsisting between that country and this would be one of the last things that Great Britain could regard as desirable. Nor will she permit it when it is so easily avoided.

“The President in his last annual message, holds the following language upon this subject: ‘Of pending questions the most important is that which exists with the government of Great Britain, in respect to our northeastern boundary. It is with unfeigned regret that the people of the United States must look upon the abortive efforts made by the Executive for a period of more than half a century, to determine what no nation should suffer long to be in dispute, the true line which divides its possessions from those of other powers.

“The time has arrived when some decisive step should be taken. Let there be union, energy and firmness among the different branches of government upon this subject; let them

manifest the determination to submit to nothing wrong, as well as to ask for nothing but what is right, and this long vexed question will be terminated and settled forthwith.' ”

In one of the following letters to his wife, Gov. Fairfield tells of his confidential message to the Legislature and a secret session of both Houses and hints great consequences to follow, but even to his wife he doesn't divulge the secret. We now know that it had to do with the Northeastern Boundary trouble.

One of Gov. Fairfield's first acts, after assuming office, had been to dispatch Rufus McIntire, a lawyer of Parsonsfield, but then land agent, to the disputed territory to drive off the timber thieves, who were stripping the forests along the banks of the Aroostook River.

McIntire was no longer a young man and his previous eight years in Congress had poorly fitted him for the rigors of a winter's campaign in the Madawaska country and soon tiring of the rude fare and frigid nights of the cabins of the forest he sought more comfortable quarters. Though more comfortable they were more exposed and while enjoying a sound night's sleep in the house of one Fitzherbert, he was surprised by a force of New Brunswick militia and Indians who unceremoniously dragged the land agent from his warm nest and hurried him across the country to Fredericton, N. B., where he was thrown into prison.

The news of the land agent's arrest spread like wildfire thru Maine and Gov. Fairfield at once sent a message to the Legislature then in session. This was the "secret message" of which he spoke in the letter, and the result of it was that the militia was ordered to put themselves in readiness to march at once.

Three days after the "Secret message," of which Gov. Fairfield spoke in the letter to his wife, August 24th, he hastened a second message to the Legislature. He had received a proclamation issued by the Lieut. Gov. of New Brunswick, designating the movements of the Maine land agent and his posse as an "invasion" and an "outrage." In this message the Governor recalls the circumstances and asks: "Could a

greater indignity be offered any people having a particle of sensibility to its rights and its honor or to the sacred liberty of its citizens? . . . How long are we thus to be trampled upon—our rights and claims derided—our power contemned—and the State degraded?” Gov. Fairfield had already hastened the departure of reinforcements and issued an order to Maj. Gen. Hodsdon to detach one thousand men by draft or otherwise, to proceed at the earliest possible moment to the aid of the land agent who had been chosen to fill the place of Agent McIntire, held captive by the Canadians.

The Legislature gave the Governor prompt support and an appropriation of \$800,000. In a postscript Gov. Fairfield informed the Legislature that since writing the message he had received another communication from Lieut. Gov. Harvey, in which the latter called attention to an alleged agreement by which the British government was to have exclusive jurisdiction and possession of the disputed territory, and urged the withdrawal of the land agent's party, stating that he had directed a strong force of troops to be in readiness to support Her Majesty's authority in the disputed territory. “No such agreement as that alluded to by the lieutenant-governor can be recognized by us,” said Gov. Fairfield, “it is a misapprehension, to say the least, that such an agreement has ever been made.”

Patriotic feeling was roused to a high pitch. Gov. Fairfield tells of reviewing the troops that were recruited from the logging camps, the farms and hamlets in answer to his call for men to protect the State's rights.

Meanwhile, the Governor was trying to arouse Congress to some action in behalf of Maine. He had written to President Van Buren concerning the threatening conditions that had forced the State to call out such large reinforcements, inclosing correspondence and a copy of his message to the Legislature. The President, in a message to Congress a few days later (Feb. 26) referred to the matter. He said that examination of the correspondence showed that no such agreement as the Lieut.-Gov. spoke of had ever been made and that “the State of Maine

had a right to arrest the depredations complained of." But he tempered this by informing the Senate that he might find it proper to propose to her Britannic Majesty's government a temporary arrangement for "the mutual exercise of jurisdiction" by means of which border trouble would be avoided.

There was further transmitted to Congress by the President a Memorandum, dated Feb. 27, signed by the Secretary of State of the U. S. and the British minister in Washington, stating terms on which it was believed that boundary collisions could be avoided, consistently with the claims of both countries, the terms being that New Brunswick officials were not to seek to expel by military force the armed party of Maine in the Aroostook country, while the Government of Maine, voluntarily and without delay, was to withdraw, beyond the bounds of the disputed territory, any armed force at that time there."

This spiritless and luke-warm attitude in Washington must have sorely vexed the intrepid Maine Governor, but he did receive some support in Congress and many encouraging letters. Mr. Williams of Maine expressed doubts as to Maine's acceptance of any such agreement as was proposed in the Memorandum. Mr. Ruggles of Maine spoke in behalf of Maine and Daniel Webster declared his belief that "if something of her own spirit and feeling pervaded us here we should have now been through the controversy."

Miss Martha Fairfield, daughter of Governor Fairfield, has in her possession some interesting letters of this period, showing that Governor Fairfield had attracted nation-wide attention and had support outside of New England. S. T. Carr, from Albany, N. Y., wrote:

Governor Fairfield, Sir—Where National honor is concerned the voice of the humblest individual has a right to be raised in assisting that honor. You, I know, are fully competent to sustain the rights of Maine and the dignity of the American name. But, Sir, to do this you must necessarily pay no attention to the "Memorandum" of Forsyth and Fox. Sir, that Memorandum is a foul blot upon our nation, which Gov-



JOHN FAIRFIELD  
Great-Grandson and Namesake of Governor Fairfield





ernor Fairfield must wash away. Does it not plainly surrender up the disputed territory to the possession of the British? And then it stipulates that Her Majesty's officers shall not "drive" off the troops of Maine! And is it possible that an American can be found to put his name to such a paper? Thank Heaven that Forsyth is not Governor of Maine, else her dignity were low indeed. You, Sir, stand upon a proud eminence,—the eyes of the whole Nation are upon you. Assert your rights over the territory, occupy and hold it, and, if necessary, every state in the Union will pour forth her troops to sustain your just war against British oppression. You need not the interference of the general government. You can contend single-handed—and conquer, too. And the name of Governor Fairfield shall be as a bright star in our national firmament, around which the sons of Revolutionary heroes shall rally and go forth "conquering and to conquer."

Respectfully, S. T. CARR.

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Later came a letter from J. C. Bennett, Brigadier-General of the Invincible Dragoons of the 2d Division of Illinois Militia, with this substantial offer of assistance:

Dear Sir: Permit me, Sir, though a stranger, to ask you if you will require any additional troops for the defence of the just rights of your state against foreign usurpation? If so, will you be so good as to use your influence with the President to make a call on my brigade? By doing so you will much oblige,

Yours respectfully,

J. C. BENNETT, Brig.-Gen.

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The following from Hon. H. J. Anderson, of the Maine delegation to Congress, marked "Private," must have come as a relief to the harassed Governor, in view of the apparent determination of the President to avoid a clash of arms with the British:

"I mark this private, not from my own choice, but because my information comes in such a way as to forbid me from communicating it in any other manner.

"Feeling, as you will readily imagine we all do, great solicitude and anxiety in relation to the present posture of our border relations, we have had frequent conferences and consultations, as to the course it had become our duty to adopt.

"After one of those consultations with Clifford and Davies day before yesterday, Mr. Clifford went to see the President and had a long and interesting interview with him upon the subject of our affairs. He was informed by the President, that the aspect of affairs had, in his view, essentially changed, that a letter of an exceedingly angry character had been received from Fox, and that in his opinion, the British Government had come to the conclusion that the negotiations should be broken off. To this letter they were preparing a reply with the utmost care and that a communication would shortly be made to Congress upon the subject. The opinions of the President, Mr. C. thinks, have evidently undergone a great change, and he now, as C. thinks, entertains much less hope of avoiding serious collision between the two countries. This information was given to C. in confidence and imparted to me under the same injunction, and you may consider it as coming directly from him, he authorizing and seeing the communication. You will give it what importance you think it deserves.

"I cannot ascertain what came by the British queen. Pickens spoke to me yesterday on the subject, was evidently somewhat alarmed and, I thought, had some information which he did not feel at liberty to communicate. From all the indications I see here, it seems to me most manifest that matters are rapidly coming to a crisis, and, to my mind, the ultimate result is almost equally clear. A few regiments of troops have been ordered to Houlton and I think Congress will be speedily called upon to make extensive preparations of a hostile character.

"Very truly your friend,

H. J. ANDERSON."

This encouragement was well founded, for soon after the President was empowered to employ for the defence of Maine the naval and military forces of the United States, the sum of ten million dollars was placed at his disposal and he was further authorized, in case of actual invasion, to accept the services of any number of volunteers not exceeding fifty thousand. In the course of the debate on the matter of the appropriation, Mr. Buchanan said: "Should Maine act in accordance with the spirit of these resolutions then, if war must come, it will find the country unanimous." General Winfield Scott was ordered to proceed to Maine and "Only peace with honor" was his instructions from the President.

This was actually accomplished. By the Governor's message, following General Scott's personal efforts as a peacemaker, the way was prepared for action by the Legislature. A resolve was adopted March 23, 1839, authorizing the Governor, when satisfied that the Lieut. Governor of New Brunswick had abandoned all intention of occupying the disputed territory with a military force, to withdraw the Maine militia, leaving the land agent with a sufficient posse, armed or unarmed, carrying the resolve into effect.

The Aroostook country remained in possession of Maine, while the Madawaska country was left in the possession of the British. There was no more encroachment on the timber lands of Maine, and there was no further seizure of Maine land agents or imprisonment of Maine citizens. What the Governor intended had been accomplished.

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The family has the following interesting and quaint anonymous letter to Governor Fairfield, which came from England, simply signed "John Bull."

The Tight Little Island, April 18, 1839.

Sir.—In the excellent letter of your Excellency to John Harvey of New Brunswick, of the 19th Feb., you have been

pleased to say, you have neither "threats nor boasting" to indulge in, and that if Maine does her duty no palaver of yours will add to her glory, and that if she prove recreant you could not by any use of the same commodity, diminish her shame. Now I believe your Excellency has in this matter taken much too humble a course, for although your Excellency be but the temporary monarch of a petty state, that is no reason why you should humble yourself; and it is for the purpose of putting you right in your own conceit, that I take the liberty of trespassing on you.

I have for a long time studied mankind, and the knowledge that I have acquired enables me to be quite sure that none but a very brave man could write such a very brave letter, and therefore the reverse of your Excellency's modest declaration is the true truth; that is to say, if the State of Maine do her duty, her glory will be double in the renown of her Governor, and if she prove altogether recreant, the glory of her Governor will save her entirely from shame; and that consequently both "threats and boastings" will very well fit your Excellency and become you admirably.

I beg to assure you that your letter has my high approbation, and I am sure it would have that of all my countrymen if they had time to read it.

Sir, I have the honour to be

Your Excellency's much approving and most humble servant,  
JOHN BULL.

## The Inaugural "Agony Is Over"

Augusta, Jan. 4, 1839.

Dear Wife,

If I cannot say that "the long agony is over" I can say with truth that a matter very much dreaded has been disposed of, to wit, the inauguration. It took place today at 12 o'clock in a Hall crowded to excess with spectators. I can assure you all my equanimity and self-possession was put in requisition. However, I got through it without fainting or appearing very much frightened. The particulars I must write you another time.

I am now writing in the Council Chamber, seated in the Governor's great chair, the Council having taken a recess of half an hour to hear the message which I have just sent in, read in the House.

On my way here I stopped Tuesday night at Portland & Wednesday night at Gov. Dunlap's and came here on Thursday, say 2 o'clock afternoon.

Sleighting fine, weather, after Tuesday, not very cold. Good quarters here. A good many comforts & not a few friends, &c., &c. So ends the first epistle.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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## Getting Used to Being Governor

Augusta, Jan. 6, 1839.

Dear Wife,

My room is now clear of callers and I can devote a moment to you. You have no idea how much I am favored with company. From morning till bed-time the stream is running in and out. The President himself can hardly beat me in callers—mine, however, are more troublesome—for they stay much too long. I suppose, however, I should not complain, for if my time is the public's, why should I seek to appropriate it to myself?

I have taken the rooms previously engaged, you know, and like them pretty well, except that all the doors are whistling for list. I pay \$14 per week which is \$3 less than I had anticipated, but this is bad enough in all conscience for a poor fellow with a small salary and a large family.

We have two long tables set the whole length of a long hall,—at which are seated between 40 & 50 members of the Senate & House, besides others.

Yesterday a new council was chosen and among them old Elder Hobbs of Waterboro! I suppose by Tuesday a majority of them will be here, so that we can organize & go to work.

My message, I believe, gives very general satisfaction, which rejoices me much. The Printers, though, made some bad mistakes, which is a little annoying to me.

Our friends here all talk of a short business session; I pray that it may be so.

I send you a few Ages, which I will endeavor to follow up as I receive them. Weather mild, sleighing good, "& so on."

Went to meeting all day to Mr. Edes—capital sermons "and so on."

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The Inaugural Ball

Augusta, Jan. 11, 1839.

Dear Wife,

My room being clear I embrace the moment to write you a line. You can have no idea how I am thronged. Sometimes my mail lies almost the whole day upon the table without my having an opportunity to open it. I would not, however, have you think that all my callers are after office, many of them merely want to see the Governor a few minutes, then make way for others.

Six out of seven of the Council are in and we are fairly under way. Today I made a batch of nominations and next nomination day, which will be Friday, I shall make nearly all that remain to be made.

Last night the folks here had an "inaugural ball." At 9 o'clock the President of the Senate & myself went in, showed ourselves like lions, &c., &c. The Hall, which is very large, was pretty well filled, the ladies quite handsome and very well dressed, the music good, and every one disposed to enjoy him & herself. At 11 o'clock or so a most elegant supper was furnished on a table extending through two large rooms with folding doors and a long hall between them. I have seen nothing superior to the supper this side of Washington. I left about ½ past 12 after having enjoyed myself much. I was beau to

our old friend, Sarah Child. She is a charming girl. Hannah Buckminster was also there and was really quite a belle.

Everybody wants the Governor's wife to come down here & show off. What say to it?

Yours ever,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Describes His Council

Augusta, Jan. 13, 1839.

Dear Wife,

On my way here, you know I stopped over night at Portland. Sister Mary inquired of me if we had yet made any presents of some of Martha's things and particularly to Marianne Condon. I told her I didn't know, but would inquire. If you have not done it, would it not be well to do it? Marianne, you know, did a good deal for her, and I suppose it would not do to offer her pay. Should you not also give Jane Leland something as a remembrancer? Do. to Hepsy.

I intended to say something to Cousin Harriet about the silk, but forgot it.

Did Martha, while sick, say anything about Sarah Child? The other evening at the ball, Sarah talked a good deal with me about her, and said she had hoped that Martha had said something which she could have treasured up. My impression is that she did talk about Sarah C., but am not certain.

Today is Sunday and I have been to hear Doctor Tappan, Mr. Edes being sick and unable to preach.

He is orthodox "clear down"—but upon the whole did pretty well. Mr. Fletcher, one of my Council, is a Universalist minister. He is rather a young man, and I believe of very good talents and excellent character. Lyon of Waterville is a lawyer, respectable in talents and character, and nothing more. Cony is also a young lawyer, and a very fine fellow. I anticipate much aid from him. He is, by the way, the same who was in partnership with Albert awhile.

Elder Hobbs is,—Elder Hobbs.

Mr. Milliken from Waldo is a farmer of over 50 years of age, a man of good sense, but plain & obstinate, I think.

Webb is a large, good-looking man who has been chiefly, I believe, a schoolmaster. Walker has not yet arrived.

Our Council Chamber is the largest and best room in the Capitol—say 30 feet square.

When shall I hear from you? Do write soon.

My room has been clear the whole day, two callers only. Judge Weston has spent most of the evening with me.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### A Letter From President Van Buren

Augusta, Jan. 20, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

On Friday last I made another batch of nominations which relieves me very much. I shall now look for some ease, though from my anxiety to perform my duties well and faithfully, I do not expect to be idle. Much is to be studied & learned, especially by one so poorly qualified as myself for the station in which I am placed.

It is amusing to see in what manner I am spoken of in the papers, and myself and motions described. Don't be jealous at my alleged familiarity with the ladies at the inaugural ball—much of it, I can assure you, is hyperbole. By the way, though, I have recd. a compliment from the President which I appreciate highly, and as you are mentioned also in his note, I will transcribe it:—

“Washington, Jan. 15, 1839.

My Dear Sir: I beg you to accept my thanks for your very sensible & appropriate speech and to believe that there is no one who more sincerely rejoices in your well-deserved success, or who is more anxious for its continuance. Remember me kindly to your family, and to my friend, Chief Justice Shepley.

Very truly Yours,

M. VAN BUREN.”

I have also recd. some other compliments from Washington, well calculated to excite my vanity if I was not proof against it. But what an egotist I am becoming. Let's talk about something else.

You will be gratified to learn that I have appointed your old friend, Stephen Emery, Attorney General. I have incurred much responsibility in doing it, but believe in the long run it will prove to be a judicious appointment.







Old Cutts Mansion, Saco, Me.

Old Cutts Mansion, Saco, Maine

I send you today Gov. Hill's new agricultural paper. After Davis has read it, let it be preserved, as I intend to have them bound. It appears to me that few papers in the country will possess more value.

I will also in a day or two after I have read them, send you Mr. Morris' papers on Common Schools, which you will also preserve, if you please.

J. F.

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### A "Secret" Message to Legislature

Augusta, Jan. 24, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

Here I am sitting in my big chair, with my seven wise, grave and reverend Councillors around me, and seeming to have nothing of much importance to occupy our time just at this moment, I will give you a line or two.

Yesterday I dined with Maj. Ripley of U. S. Army, who has charge of the Arsenal at this place, and really I have seen nothing equal to the treat since leaving Washington. The company was Judge Weston, Rob. H. Gardiner, Danl. Williams, Adj. Genl. Thompson and some half a dozen others. Our entertainment was very fine, and was enjoyed much by us all. I have always, you know, preferred dinner parties to those of any other kind.

The conversation at table was lively, interesting and instructive and was only put an end to by the lighting of candles. We did not see Mrs. Ripley, she being unwell. Don't you recollect of seeing her & husband at the table at the Augusta House, when you were here with me?

Today I dine at Danl. Williams', where I expect a rich entertainment, from his great reputation in such matters, and having dined once with him several years ago. I hope you won't think I am becoming dissipated, notwithstanding these circumstances seem to be a little against me.

You will see by the papers that yesterday the Governor sent a confidential message to the Legislature and that both Houses had a secret session. Now don't you wish you knew what it was all about? What will you give to know? If you have half the curiosity that is attributed to your sex, I think I could drive a good bargain with you. But keep quiet, you

will find out, shortly, without paying anything for it. The injunction of secrecy will probably be removed in the course of a week or so.

At the end of five weeks I shall begin to think about making you a visit, considering that as about the middle of the session.

The weather last night and today is excessively cold. All my Yankee ingenuity is insufficient to make my parlor comfortable. The messenger calls, and so I stop.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Regular Hurricane

Augusta, Jan. 27, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

Since I wrote you yesterday we have had a tremendous wind which has done some injury and frightened a good many people. It blew with such violence during the whole or a greater part of the night as to shake the large brick house we occupy very sensibly. Indeed, while sitting at the table with one elbow resting upon it, reading, the newspaper shook in my hands. I can hardly say how much. Not so much as an aspen leaf, or a man with the ague, but considerably to say the least. Some dozen chimneys are blown down here, several sheds, tavern signs, &c., and our house partially unroofed. I presume you had a touch of the same at Saco, and I shall be anxious to hear whether it has done any damage.

Mr. Edes, our clergyman, has preached but once since I have been here, being quite unwell. Today we had an orthodox clergyman by the name of Adams. He is one of the old school and laid out his sermon with mathematical precision into divisions, sub-divisions, points, improvement, &c., and then shelled it off for about three-quarters of an hour with about as much monotony as Pap's shelling corn. However, it was not a very bad sermon and perhaps many were improved by it.

Accompanying the wind last night was a warm rain which has carried off all the snow, leaving us without sleighing. What effect this will have upon my contemplated return home on Saturday next, can't say. If it should be good wheeling I think I shall go.

**Afternoon.** I have only to add that I learn several houses have been blown down between here & Waterville, but I believe no lives have been lost. Tell Mrs. Freeman that two or three chimneys in the house of her nephew, Mr. Gillpatrick, have been blown down.

Ever Yours,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Bridges Swept Away

Augusta, Jan. 28, 1839.

My Dear Son,

In my letter to your Mother of yesterday I spoke of a high wind that we had here on Saturday night. Since that I have learned that much more damage was done than I at first supposed. Many barns have been blown down and cattle killed, fences and trees have been prostrated and much property destroyed. The water in the rivers has also risen to a great height, sweeping almost everything before it. The ice is entirely broken up and is floating down in cakes from 3 to 20 feet square. All the bridges in this river above this place have been swept away, including that at Waterville, one at Skowhegan, one at Norridgewock, one at Anson & one at Farmington.

The dam here & the beautiful covered bridge are considered in danger. I have been to look at them this afternoon, however, and am of the opinion that they will stand, though some damage has already been done to some of the stone work upon the side of the river below the dam.

As I was returning from my visit to the dam, my attention was called to a painting, suspended over a shop door in the lower street in this town, which I regard as a very great curiosity. When I first saw it, which was about at this angle (a sketch inserted) it was an elegant representation of a tiger. When I was directly abreast of it—thus—it was a most beautiful horse upon a full gallop. After passing it, and viewing it from the opposite angle, thus—it had changed to a noble, great lion with his shaggy mane and open mouth. Now, how was all this done? Study it out if you can. I saw it but a minute, but I think I see through it, and if you can't find it out before, I will tell you when I go home.

I have had for this two or three days, delegations waiting upon me from the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes. They

are very eloquent in setting forth their grievances and demanding redress. You would be very much pleased to hear them talk. Tell your Mother that the letter we had in the paper purporting to be from Sabattis to Gov. Kent, was a pretty fair specimen of their talk. But I must stop until the mail arrives.

Trusting that you are a good boy, diligent in your studies, obedient to your Mother & kind to all about you, I subscribe myself

Your affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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#### Gov. Fairfield's 42d Birthday

Augusta, Jan. 30, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

I write you now for three purposes only, 1st, to let you know what an old fellow for a husband you have got, being this day 42 years old; 2d, that I shall probably be at home on Saturday night; and third, that I shall not write again this week.

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Augusta, Feb. 6, 1839.

Dear Wife,

I have only time to say that here I am, safe & sound. Reached Portland just as the sun was peeping from his bed in the ocean, and in ample season to get on a welding heat before taking the stage. Our ride in it was exquisitely cold. Trist came near freezing his hands, though I drove. The Messenger stands by & says can't wait any longer.

Ever Yours,

J. F.

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#### Meets Some Interesting People

Augusta, Feb. 10, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

Everything is moving on here smoothly and quietly, but not so rapidly as I could wish. At present there is no telling when the Legislature will bring its session to a close.

Mr. Rantoul of Gloucester, Mass., is here and expects tonight to make an address at the Representatives Hall upon the subject of education. Quite a treat is expected. He has called upon me twice. I find him to be a very interesting man. He is possessed of extraordinary talents and is now exerting them to the utmost in endeavoring to promote the happiness of the people.

In personal appearance he is said to resemble "the Governor," but this I know to be gross flattery to one of the parties. Mr. R. is one of the finest looking men I ever saw.

Last night I had an invitation to call at Parlor No. 3 where Mrs. Hutchins, my landlady, presides. She is a very fine-looking woman and with some more mental cultivation, would make something of a figure. We had also Mrs. Hamlin, Mrs. Emery, wife of Senator Emery, and Mrs. Whidden, wife of the member from Calais. Mrs. E. is quite a sensible and accomplished lady, dresses in excellent taste and is highly polished in her manners. This is saying not a little for "a way down east" lady—don't you think so? Two of them, Mrs. E. and Mrs. H., started for home this morning, much to my regret. It was really comforting to see a few female faces at our dinner table, and still more so to have the privilege of calling upon them now and then at their rooms, to say nothing of their calling upon me, as they did.

We have an invitation to attend a ball tomorrow evening at Hallowell. I have sent for answer that it is inconvenient for me to attend. You can answer for yourself. I enclose the invitation.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Aroostook War Clouds

Augusta, Feb. 16, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

You will see by the paper sent you today that I have had a little something to do. Night before last between one & two o'clock an express arrived from our Company in the woods. I got up and was busy the remaining part of the night in writing letters, and making preparations for the extraordinary emergency. I regret exceedingly that Mr. McIntire should have been captured. Everything has worked well with that exception.

You now see what the secret session was about. The whole matter creates a good deal of excitement, particularly in Bangor and that region. We experience no difficulty in procuring men to go on this service against the trespassers. On the contrary, it is hard work to keep them back. Thousands and thousands would go if permitted. I am too busy now to extend this letter farther.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Collision Seems Inevitable

Augusta, Feb. 21, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

Last night Mr. McIntire returned to this place, having been released upon his parole of honor. McLaughlan & his assistants I thereupon directed to be released upon the same terms. Mr. McIntire & Mr. Ropes brought me another letter from Sir John Harvey, from which it would appear that collision is inevitable. His insolent demands will never be complied with by us while we have a sword to draw & an arm to wield it.

I am just about sending in another message to the House of Representatives, after which a large number of all the documents will be printed. The House is thronged to hear the message. The deepest excitement prevails and but one spirit animates our whole people. Our house was thronged last night after McIntire returned. He & Rodgers had to address the people, when they cheered with great enthusiasm.

The sleepers gave way & they all came near going into the cellar, but escaped by the door without injury.

I can write about nothing else now, and but little at that.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Orders Out the Militia

Augusta, Feb. 23d, 1839.

Dear Walter,

If you read the papers you will see that very serious troubles are occurring on the eastern frontier of our State.

Certain persons from the Province of New Brunswick, having gone on to our territory to plunder it of its valuable timber,



we sent an agent with 200 men to aid him in driving these trespassers off from the land. Sir John Harvey, Lt. Gov. of the Province, had the Agent seized, carried to Fredericton and imprisoned and says he shall send a military force and drive back the rest of our men. Now, although it is wicked to fight under most circumstances, it is not wicked, in my opinion, to fight for the defence of our country. Consequently I have ordered out about 4,000 of the militia to meet the troops of Sir John Harvey and resist his insolent pretensions, an unjustifiable attempt to drive us from our soil.

By looking at the map you can see all the places which are spoken of in the papers and your Mother can give you further explanations.

Affectionately, Your Father  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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**“Now Is the Time to Strike a Blow for Our Rights”**

Sunday, Feb 24.

Dear Wife,

The only news I have today from the frontier is a letter from Mr. Wiggin who is there, in which he states that on that day, which was last Friday, our force there was 300. The rest were on their way.

About 100 of the number had gone across from No. 10, on the Aroostook, the place of their encampment, to Fish river, emptying into the St. John, to break up the gang of trespassers there and the remainder intended to move down the river to the mouth of the Little Machias and fortify there.

You had better have the map of Maine brought into the house and you can then see better what our troops are about. We shall have 1,000 troops assembled here tomorrow, who will immediately take up their line of march for the frontier. More will follow the last of the week.

This affair, I suppose, is not very gratifying to you in some respects, but you must be willing to make every sacrifice in the cause of duty. How soon I may be able to return I know not. I had been anticipating an early return with much pleasure. But if the cause of my Country and my own honor requires me to remain here, I know you will cheerfully acquiesce. Perhaps however, things may take a favorable turn, and leave me at liberty soon. Can form a better opinion when I hear

from Washington. Thus far I am happy to say that my measures meet with almost universal approbation. Party spirit seems for the moment to be forgotten and all are willing to do me justice.

So far as in me lies, I am determined now to have this boundary question settled. Now is the time to strike a blow for our rights. If we let this golden opportunity pass without improvement, we shall deserve to lose our territory and win the contempt of the world.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Reviews the Drafted Troops

Augusta, Feb. 27, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

You will perhaps be surprised to learn that I have turned soldier. But don't be alarmed. I have no present intention of going to the seat of the war.

Yesterday, the drafted troops assembled here to the number of perhaps six or seven hundred were very anxious to have me review them, and Gen. Bachelder, having circulated a report that I was to do it, I found that it would not do for me to disappoint public expectation. So I mounted my horse and acted the Commander-in-Chief. The day, as you know, was lovely. I had a horse belonging to Thomas W. Smith of this place, the finest saddle horse I ever knew. The concourse of spectators was immense, perhaps some thousands. The windows of all the houses were full, tops of houses covered, trees full of boys, and the streets crowded with men.

After reviewing the troops, that is, in the first place, by taking my station in front in the center with my aids, the Adj. Genl., &c., I then advance a few steps, take off my hat and the whole brigade salute me by presenting arms—flourish of music. I then go to the right of the Brigade & walk my horse down the whole length of the line in front, merely inspecting the men and their arms; then pass back in the rear of the troops, down again in front to the center. The troops are then put in motion, and are made to pass me, I standing uncovered & receiving the salute of the officers as they pass.



RICHARD CUTTS FAIRFIELD

Grandson of George Fairfield and Great-Grandson of John Fairfield  
He was killed in Italy in the first year of the war with  
Germany at the age of 18 years



After reviewing them, in this manner, they were drawn into a hollow square, and I made a short address to them, designed to infuse into them a little spirit and military ardor. My address was only about five minutes long, and was responded to by the shouts and claps of the whole multitude. It is spoken highly of, but whether in flattery or not, can't say. You will judge for yourself tomorrow, when you will see it in the paper.

The troops are in excellent spirits and anxious to march for the Aroostook.

How all this is to end, I know not, but I am conscious of having thus far done my duty. Events are in the hands of a Wise and Good Being, and with his orderings, I will endeavor to be content.

Ever Yours,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Waiting for Word From Washington

Augusta, March 3d, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

No news yet from Washington. Last night we should have had the President's message, but there was no mail south of Boston. How provoking! Nothing has occurred since my last to change the aspect of affairs. The news from Washington may.

Last night I received a most elegant and valuable present from Col. Cross of Portland—to wit, one of "Cutting's patent rifles"—cost \$100. Perhaps you may recollect of my speaking of the agreeable acquaintance I formed with him a short time since when on my way from here to Saco. He commands the Portland regiment and is under marching orders for the Aroostook. It, the present, is an elegant affair and will be properly appreciated.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

P. S. Charles Waterhouse, the Clerk of the House, was taken sick last Monday and died on Friday. He is to be buried today. He was a very estimable man & is much lamented. A very handsome contribution of over \$500 has been taken among the members of the Legislature.

## A Letter to His Son Walter

Augusta, March 6, 1839.

Dear Walter,

In reply to yours received yesterday I must refer you to your mother for an answer to your request to go to Standish. Situated as I am, it is impossible for me to say whether it would be proper for you or not. I don't know how good a boy you have been. I know nothing about the state of your clothes. I don't know how much Old Dick may be wanted at home, &c., &c. These are things about which your Mother can judge much better than myself. You say you have had 11 pigs, and that four have died. Do these include both litters?

Poor little lamb with his bitten head. Old Dick ought to be deprived of his oats a whole week to punish him for his cruelty.

The troops are mustering here today from Oxford & Portland. They are noble looking fellows and I believe mean to insist on my reviewing them tomorrow.

If the news from Washington tonight should be favorable, perhaps I can make my arrangements so as to be at home in 2 or 3 weeks. The Legislature will probably rise the last of next week, if the state of our frontier difficulties should not require them to remain in session.

Very affectionately, Your Father  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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## Reviews the Troops From Oxford

Augusta, March 9, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

The troops from Oxford and a small detachment from Portland were yesterday paraded on the field in front of the Capitol and reviewed by the Governor. I tried to avoid it, but it was insisted on, and I had to consent. The troops numbered 1,000 and the spectators perhaps two thousand. I made a little speech to the troops which was received with tremendous cheering.

General Scott is here, and is now the lion of the day. He is often at my rooms and I find him to be very agreeable. Last night some twenty of us were at Dan'l Williams' and had a splendid treat. Today we dine with Maj. Ripley. This looks rather dissipated, but you must recollect how hard we have

been at work and how necessary a little relaxation is. Great anxiety is manifested here, to hear from me upon the subject of our difficulties, and the proposed arrangement between Mr. Fox and Mr. Forsyth. Monday I shall gratify them and send a message to the Legislature. I hope I shall be able to take a course which shall preserve our honor and yet not unnecessarily provoke hostilities.

The Legislature may rise the first of next week, or the first of the week after, in which case I hope I may be able to go home in the course of the same week, say by the 23d. About this, however, I cannot speak with any confidence.

My health, under all the excitement and labors, remains good. I have scarcely had the slightest touch of a cold for the winter.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Points a Way Out of Trouble

Augusta, March 15, 1839.

My Dear Wife,

I sent a message to the Legislature yesterday, advising them not to agree to the "memorandum" signed at Washington by the diplomatic agents of the countries. You will see the message in the papers and my reasons. I think they will prove satisfactory to all. A collision of arms, however, will not necessarily follow. On the contrary, I point out a mode in which the whole thing may be adjusted without difficulty, and I have now but little doubt that it will be so adjusted.

The Legislature are talking about getting up by the last of next week.

Last night Mr. Reuel Williams gave a very fine entertainment at which I had the honor and pleasure to be present. After our return General Scott and myself were invited into the ball room, where we spent a half hour or so.

I have an invitation to dine on Monday next with the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society. So you see we are endeavoring to enjoy ourselves here, notwithstanding the bellicose aspect of things. Hope soon to be able to beat the sword into the ploughshare and to go to work upon our humble farm.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

The boys at the High School are declaiming my addresses to the soldiers here.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE YEAR 1840—SECOND YEAR AS GOVERNOR.

The political campaign of 1840 has gone on record as the most boisterous in American history. It was the year of national as well as state election and marked the great revival of the Whig party, culminating in the election of General Harrison to the Presidency of the United States.

In no state was there greater campaign excitement than in Maine. In fact, it was believed, at the time, that the National election was much aided by the result of the September election in Maine, when, in the language of a poet wit of the time, "Maine went hell bent for Governor Kent," and this campaign slogan which so tickled the fancy of the throngs that crowded the Whig rallies and aroused the most uproarious applause whenever quoted by the Whig spell-binders, has come down to us as a part of Maine's political history.

This was known and remains known to this day, as "the hard cider and coonskin campaign." The Whigs at their national convention had nominated Gen. Harrison of Ohio for President and John Tyler of Virginia for Vice-President. As they could agree on no principle except that of opposition to Van Buren, they wisely adopted no platform at all. However, they did vote to raise money. This called forth the Portland Argus' pithy remark that "in money and machinery it had implicit confidence, but no faith in its principles." The Democrats were more definite in stating the Whigs' platform than were the Whigs themselves, for their circular declared that the Whigs "favored an assumption of State debts, a splendid and extravagant system of internal improvements, a high tariff for protection and a United States Bank." The Democrats, of course, stood for the opposite of all these. The candidates for Governor in Maine were Kent and Fairfield, as the year before.

The Whigs, generally speaking, were afraid to advocate specific measures, except, perhaps, the repeal of the sub-treasury bill, so they resorted to spouting demagogism and abusing

their opponents. The Democrats played into their hands. They sneered at Harrison and a Democratic paper in Baltimore published a letter stating that a Clay man had said, after the Whig nomination, "Give Harrison a barrel of hard cider and settle a pension of \$2,000 a year on him, and, my word for it, he will sit the remainder of his days in his log cabin, by the side of a sea-coal fire, and study moral philosophy."

The Whigs called their candidate a "man of the plain people, the honest old farmer of Ohio," and the Hero of Tippecanoe. Of the latter they made much. The Democrats called him in ridicule, "old Granny Harrison," and "the candidate with a padlock on his mouth." They bitterly attacked his civic as well as his military record.

In Maine each party accused his opponents of employing unworthy methods. A Farmington paper said that the Whig ladies were wearing little gold cider barrels on their bracelets and watchguards, and that it feared that this would result in their all becoming intemperate. The Saco Democrat bade its political brethren "Organize. Imitate the zeal but not the malignity of your opponents. They keep their spirits up by pouring spirits down."

No political campaign in Maine either before or since was carried on with so much hurrah and excitement and attended by so many sensational features as was this one. And so it is most interesting to read these letters from the Democratic candidate for Governor to his wife, straight from the political battleground, for the Governor was in Augusta at the time of the election and off and on subsequently while the election was being contested.

The Whigs opened their State campaign with a monster convention that met at the State House, June 17. Although there had been freshets that had recently washed away bridges in many parts of the State, yet thousands poured into the capital city from the remotest sections of the State, and by every mode of conveyance. Some appeared on the streets on horseback,

their garments dripping water, where they had plunged their steeds into the swollen water where the bridges had gone out.

An enthusiastic partisan from an adjoining town paraded the streets with a long string of oxen and steers, drawing a log cabin, hung over with coon skins, while within, the projector shocked the temperance principles of the Democrats by selling hard cider to the shouting and thirsty Whigs.

The convention was presided over by Rufus K. Goodenow, a prominent politician of the time, who severely arraigned the financial policy of the Democratic party, that had "hurried the country from an era of unexampled prosperity to the verge of bankruptcy." A committee on resolutions presented a lengthy series of resolutions, which would be looked upon today as a literary curiosity, being nothing more than a prolonged stump speech. Senator John Holmes exhausted his rhetoric and wit arraigning the Democratic party and, at the close of the convention, in response to the shouts of the "cider-guzzling Whigs," appeared on the balcony of the State House and read a poem of sixteen verses understood to have been his own composition. This doggerel was received with the most uproarious applause by the masses that crowded the State House grounds.

Here are a few of the verses, which show the sort of stuff which the spell-binders depended upon in political gatherings 75 years ago:

It rather seems that humbug schemes  
Can never more cajole us.  
There's such a run for Harrison  
That nothing can control us.  
The western world's the flag unfurled,  
No faction can divide her,  
And all the rest will sign the test—  
"Log Cabin and Hard Cider."

Come, farmers all, attend the call,  
'Tis working like a charmer,  
Hitch on the team and start with him,  
For he's a brother farmer.

His cabin's fit and snug and neat,  
 And full and free his larder,  
 And though his cider may be hard,  
 The times are vastly harder.

Let Grundy sneer and Benton jeer,  
 The day of Retribution  
 We firmly trust will be for us  
 A day of Restitution.

With social joys, our wives, girls and boys,  
 Our Cabins and our Cider,  
 We'll shout as one for Harrison,  
 And spread his glories wider.

With all this parade of log cabins and coon skins and expenditure for hard cider, and all the enthusiasm and hooray, Kent barely pulled through. In fact, the election was for a long time uncertain, as these letters of Governor Fairfield show. Both parties were unwilling to admit that there had been no choice. The Democrats stated that 28 votes had been cast for Hannibal Hamlin for Governor, under the mistaken impression that he was the party candidate for Governor instead of for Congress, and that a correction of this error, with other changes which should be made, would give Fairfield a majority.

The Whigs also believed that certain returns were invalid and it is said that some wished to have the Legislature declare Kent elected by the people, but more prudent counsels prevailed. The report of a joint committee that there was no election was acquiesced in, the House sent to the Senate the names of Kent and Fairfield, and the Senate, in which the Whigs were in control, elected Kent Governor.

The Whigs throughout the country expressed great elation because they had carried Maine and the young state was put on the map politically. All through the fall campaign was heard the famous song, or rather the ending to a song,

"Oh, have you heard how old Maine went?  
 She went, hell-bent, for Governor Kent,  
 And Tippecanoe and Tyler, too,  
 Tippecanoe and Tyler, too."

The Democrats in Maine were much disappointed by the defeat of Fairfield, but they made a gallant attempt to rally for the Presidential election. The Democratic members of the Legislature issued an address which began: "The result of the late election has been to all a source of mortification and chagrin. Our partial defeat, however it may have been brought about, should now engage our attention, only so far as it may serve to throw light upon the future and guide us in the way of duty. Crimination and recrimination can do no good. If all have not done their duty, the approaching election affords ample opportunities for amends."

Their efforts were unavailing, however. Harrison carried Maine by 411 majority and swept the country. "The battle is over," said the Argus, "and Hard Cider is triumphant." The Democrats claimed that the Whigs had triumphed by means of fraud, slander and money, probably supplied by a British source. This was the opinion of Gov. Fairfield, as evidenced by one of the following letters.



## Second Winter at Augusta

Augusta, Jan. 9, 1840.

Dear Wife,

I have been very anxious, especially to hear about little Hammy. Give me full information respecting him. How did the tonic vermifuge operate with him? Tell me also all about the rest of the children and generally how you get along. My mind, not being so constantly employed about public business as it was last year, hovers about home a good deal more. Our notion of writing only when private opportunities occur for sending letters, must be abandoned. Let us write once a week at least, to each other. The postage is a mere trifle.

To give you some little account of myself, I would inform you that I am at my old quarters at Hutchins', though my establishment has been somewhat reduced. I have given up the bed-room attached to my parlor and have taken a bed into the latter. This, in addition to reducing the price of board to ten dollars, I find to be very much promotive of comfort. You know I always had a strong desire for a warm room to go to bed in. "Sylvester" also builds a good fire every morning before daylight, and, would you believe it, I have several mornings got up and read a long time by candle light, after shaving and "doing my toilet." This habit I fear is too good to last long. I shall, however, keep it up as long as I can.

I have already read "Nicholas Nickleby," 2 vols.; "Lord Brougham's Opinion," 1 vol.; Murray's "March in North America," 2 vols.; "The Black Dwarf," 1 vol., and am now reading "Old Mortality," 2 vols. This, with my political reading, has kept me from being idle, I can assure you. Let me tell you also of another reform, if you choose to call it so, to wit, that I have not tasted a drop of coffee or tea since I have been here—nothing but milk, excepting at tea time, when I take a cup of hot water, milk it and sugar it well, and this answers all the purpose of the best of tea. I have not persevered long enough yet in the practice to judge of its effect upon my health, except that it is not injurious thus far.

We are having very quiet times here, there being but few offices to fill, Augusta is not thronged as it was last year with strangers. And as for my chamber, it seems to be quite a retired and almost lonely spot.

A Council has been chosen, but a quorum have not yet arrived, so we are unable to do any business. Three of the old

Council are re-elected, to wit, Lyon, Fletcher & Webb. The four new ones are old Doct. Burnham of Hancock County, Col. Wilson of York, a Mr. Eastman of Somerset and Mr. Talbot of Washington. I think the Legislature has given me this year a very good council.

Ever Yours,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Finds Time for Charades

Augusta, Jan. 11, 1840.

Dear Wife,

My new Council have not got in yet, and of course we are doing nothing. Last night I was up to Judge Fuller's where there were some eight or ten gentlemen and ladies. Had a very pleasant time, and among other amusements, played plays, can't describe them now. Had one game of chess with Judge Fuller who is an old hand at it, and beat him, at which he seemed a little vexed. Vows he'll pay me for it. We also had lots of charades, among which was the following, which by the way, was made last September by a Mrs. Gould of Boston who was visiting at Judge Fuller's.

#### Charade.

My first, to employ a lady's eyes,  
And hands, and heart, is seen;  
Is often used a general term,  
Though due to fresh eighteen.  
My next, the gifts of Heaven conveys,  
And makes our Country blest;  
My whole deserves to be your praise,  
And you must guess the rest.

There, if you can puzzle it out, very well; if you can't, I'll help you in my next. It is not often, however, that you need any aid in things of this sort.

My washerwoman has just sent home 4 shirts, 6 collars, &c., white as the driven snow. She is not the one I employed last winter, but I am inclined to think, much better.



## Sunday Afternoon, Jan. 12

Have been to meeting all day and had two excellent sermons from Mr. Cole of Hallowell, it being also communion day. Many of the members attend this meeting, so that the house is now pretty well filled.

By the way, we have upon our tea table very frequently pumpkin preserve and it is really very good. I should like to have you try it. You have a way of preserving apples in a short time which I always liked much. I think you may use pumpkin in the same way. It is not——

When I had written thus far, Judge Weston gave me a call and after chatting with him about an hour, I resumed my pen but could not for my life recollect what I was saying when I was interrupted. Of course it was not of much consequence.

Augustine Haines is here from Portland—came in today. He is endeavoring to aid John Appleton in procuring the appointment of Register of Probate in Cumberland, that office having become vacant by the death of John L. Megquier. There are several candidates and all very pressing. Can't please all—wish I could. Near  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10, so good night.

**Monday Afternoon.**—New Council came in this morning and were qualified, except Col. Wilson from York. Doctor Burnham is a real old patriarch, full of religion, politics and fun, all most delightfully commingled. He is not, by the way, the Doctor Burnham who married the quondam wife of Bill Fairfield and whom we saw, you recollect, at Unity some years ago. This one is, I should think, some 70 years old, if not more.

**Tuesday Afternoon.**—Soon after the mail bringing your good letter, came in last evening, Col. Reddington of this town called and invited me to ride over to Danl. Williams' with him and pass the evening, which I did, enjoying it very much. Had one game of chess with the Colonel and, playing very carelessly, was beaten. Augustine left this morning before I was up. John Holmes is here today, so I suppose something is brewing in favor of Granny Harrison. The session, I am inclined to think, will not be long. They are now talking of having an extra session to take up the subject of the revised statutes. If this project should prevail, as is more than probable, the present session will be short—i.e., it will not extend into March.

**Thursday Evening, Jan. 16.**—Today I nominated John Appleton for Register of Probate, the delegation from Cumberland being equally divided between him and a Mr. Leach.

If you can procure "Nicholas Nickleby" I advise you to read it. It is excellent—much better than "Oliver Twist" and that is saying a great deal.

**Friday Afternoon.**—Have nothing new to add, except that it has just occurred to me to ask you to send me a box of chess men by Mr. Tucker, or by any other opportunity that occurs. Weather still very cold. I have just learned that Col. Spring & A. Goodwin are in town, and I am every moment expecting a call from them. Hope they have brought letters for me. At all events, their return will afford a good opportunity to send mine. I have also just heard of the loss of the steamboat Lexington by burning with 110 passengers on board, all of whom, dreadful to relate, it is said are lost, excepting three. Among all the late disasters this is the most horrible. I have not heard the names of the passengers, but have no doubt some of them will prove to have been from Maine.

Mr. Goodwin & Col. S. have been in. They bring letters from Mr. Emery and Mr. Haines. By the former, I learn that L— has not yet sent the deeds of the Tennessee lands, but he, L—, says that "I am assured that by tomorrow I shall have the deeds which shall be forwarded at once." I believe him to be a great rogue and have pretty much made up my mind that I have lost my \$300.

**Sunday Morning.**—It seems there were very few persons from this State on board the Lexington—a Mr. Hinckley and a Mr. Peirce from Portland are the only persons I have yet heard named. Professor Follen & wife, it seems, were on board—the latter, you know, was the author of tales of married life that we all admired so much—Oh, how much misery this dreadful accident will cause.

We have no news here of any sort. Col. S. and A. G. G. are still here, and I believe expect to remain several days. I shall avail myself of their return to forward this long, desultory, and I fear uninteresting epistle. I enclose a receipt for pumpkin preserve. By the way, I have recd. a letter from Geo. Folsom, N. H., to whom I had written upon the subject, saying that the publishers of the New Era had no bill against me. That he had sent it gratuitously and should continue so to do. Enough for one sheet.

Yours as Ever,

J. F.

## Many Social Festivities

Augusta, Jan. 21, 1840.

Dear Wife,

Thursday night I have an invitation for tea at Mr. Allen's at Gardiner. The small social party here seems to be taking the place of jams; and plays, of dancing. For one I have no objection to both, regarding them as decided improvements.

You can hardly imagine what a still and quiet time I am having here this winter, no war, no offices to give away, the Whigs as mum as oysters, and the Democrats half asleep. Really, unless something occurs soon to excite the political elements, this place will be fairly entitled to the appellation of "sleepy hollow." I enclose you Rules & Orders of Council, a list of recipes and a specimen of Provincial eloquence.

They talk here of a short session. I hope it will not end in talk. I long to be at home. Not that I am what we call homesick, but the older I grow, the more I become attached to home and the joys that cluster around the domestic fireside. I doubt, though, whether you will see me until the close of the session, certainly not if it be likely to terminate by the first of March.

Your Husband,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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## Death of a Friend

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 1840, 1-4 past 11.

My Dear Wife,

It is with pain inexpressible that I inform you of the death of my friend, A. G. Goodwin. He expired about 10 minutes ago, after an illness of a little more than a day.

On Monday afternoon he came into my room and after sitting a little while threw himself upon the sofa where he remained perhaps some 15 minutes, when he arose, walked to the fire and seemed to be very cold, shivering much. I advised him to go to bed & take a sweat and he thereupon went up to his uncle's room, went to bed, took from his uncle some warm medicine and that night sweat profusely.

The next morning the fever appeared to have been broken up and I thought he was in a fair way to get out again immediately. In the afternoon I went again to his room & found

him up and dressed, the girl making his bed. Was there again in the evening as late as  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10. Saw then no particular alteration in him and presumed that he would be out soon, indeed he himself insisted that he must go out today. In the night—say 2 or 3 o'clock—his uncle who staid with him, says he grew worse, complained of pain in his head, got up once or twice himself and bathed it.

Before daylight, it was concluded to send for a physician and at Amos' request Doctor Briggs, who was a classmate of his, was sent for. He immediately let blood and finding that he was very restless, administered a dose of opium. About 9 o'clock I went to his room, asked him how he did. He replied "I am worse this morning," but I had not the least apprehension that he was then dangerous.

Soon after I left, say  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 9, he began to be delirious and gave other indications of failing. Immediately after the meeting of the Council at 10 o'clock, I went to his chamber, intending to spend the day with him. When I arrived, however, I found him apparently in a stupor and breathing with great difficulty. Soon after Dr. Hubbard of Hallowell arrived, and he, after many inquiries and a private consultation with Dr. Briggs, pronounced the difficulty to be apoplectic affection of the brain and that nothing would save him but taking blood from the temple, and he doubted whether even that would. This was done, but in less than half an hour he expired. For the last two hours or so, he did not appear to have his senses—and before that time I do not think he was aware of his danger.

A two-horse sleigh will start with the body tomorrow morning & reach home tomorrow night. Col. Spring will start at the same time, by whom I shall send this letter & others heretofore written. There is nothing important in the others and you had better lay them aside unopened for the present. I fear they are much too light to be read while this afflicting event is so fresh in our minds. It will be a dreadful blow to his wife & relations. I sympathize with them deeply, but can do nothing for them. There is one source of consolation, however, to which they may resort which never fails—the goodness of God, the benevolence of his dispensations, however grievous they may appear, the certainty of immortality and the union of friends in another world, will afford a consolation that the world can neither give nor take away.

Yours as ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Gov. Fairfield's Views on Total Depravity

Augusta, Jan. 25, 1840.

Dear Wife,

What can have become of Mr. Tucker? We have been looking for him all the session. I have been the more desirous for him to arrive as I expect letters by him. An order was moved in the House the other day inquiring what members were absent and the reasons therefor, &c. More a matter of sport, I suppose, than anything else.

I did not go down to Gardiner on Thursday evening as I once contemplated. The weather was cold and unpleasant and besides my feelings were too depressed at that time to permit my contributing a fair share to the enjoyments of a social party; nor have they yet recovered from that depression. The death of Mr. G. was so sudden, so unexpected, and under such peculiar circumstances that it could not fail to make a deep and painful impression. But God in his goodness has so constituted us that the afflictive events of his providence may in time be forgotten—or remembered only with the bright and happy scenes and events of life intermingled, and thereby robbed of all their poignancy. What a merciful provision of a Kind Father this is! Were it otherwise, our lot in this world would be perpetual misery, our life a grievous burthen.

**Sunday Noon, Jan. 26.** Mr. Cruft being too unwell to preach today, I strolled away to the orthodox church and heard Doctor Tappan deliver one of his stiffest sermons upon the subject of total depravity.

He goes the whole figure, filling us from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot with innate, hereditary, total depravity, from which he said we had no more power to rid ourselves than a corpse had the power to restore itself to life and that we shall all, nevertheless, be eternally damned unless we are relieved from it.

This doctrine is not only utterly abhorrent to all the better feelings of the heart, but utterly at war with the plainest dictates of common sense and common justice. And when I hear a man preaching it, as I did today, and illustrating by a reference to children, I cannot help thinking that he must have a very bad heart himself, and must, moreover, be cursed with a very perverse set of children. However, I think I shall go to hear him again this afternoon. I do not like to stay at home, and I have no very great desire to go to the Unitarian and hear

a tailor by the name of Hawes read a sermon, although it be one of Doctor Channing's.

**Sunday Afternoon.** The doctor gave us this afternoon the end of what he began this morning, in inferences from the positions then established. Judge Weston has just given me his usual Sunday afternoon call, spending about an hour in interesting chat. The Judge is really a very interesting companion.

**Monday Afternoon, Jan. 27.** On making this date I am reminded that it is Sister Mary's birthday, she being 41 years old. Mine comes on Thursday next. We have no excitement here, but little business and ample leisure to read. I went into the library today and took "The Court and Camp of Bonaparte," 1 vol. and "Russell's Life of Cromwell," 2 vols., and since that Mrs. Williams has sent me Stephens' travels in "Arabia and the Holy Land," 2 vols. So you see I have work enough before me.

Have you got hold of "Nicholas Nickleby" yet? To give you some idea of the power of the author, at least in the way of description, let me give you his description of the house and furniture of old Gride, a miser. "In an old house, dismal, dark and dusty, which seemed to have withered like himself, and to have grown yellow and shrivelled in hoarding him from the light, as he had in hoarding his money, lived Arthur Gride. Meagre old chairs and tables of spare, bony make, and hard and cold as misers' hearts, were ranged in grim array against the gloomy walls—attenuated presses, grown lank and lantern-jawed in guarding the treasures they enclosed, and tottering as though from constant fear and dread of thieves, shrank up in dark corners, whence they cast no shadow on the ground, and seemed to hide and cower from observation.

"A tall, grim clock up on the stairs, with long, lean hands & famished face, ticked in continuous whispers, and when it struck the time in thin and piping sounds, like an old man's voice, rattled as if 'twere pinched with hunger. No fireside couch was there to invite repose and comfort. Elbow chairs were there, but they looked uneasy in their minds, cocked their arms suspiciously & timidly and kept upon their guard. Others were fantastically grim and gaunt, as having drawn themselves up to their utmost height and put on their fiercest looks to stare all comers out of countenance. Others again," &c., but I must stop—this is enough for my purpose. Really, Boz. is one of the greatest geniuses living!

### A Tea Party at Gardiner

**Tuesday Afternoon.** Last night Mr. Blake of the Senate & myself having an invitation, went down to Mr. Allen's at Gardiner and had rather a pleasant time. I would not say as one did after dining out with a friend "that everything was cold but the ice and everything sour but the vinegar." I would only say that if the rooms had been better warmed, the coffee not quite so cold, and the toast had been made of baker's bread, I think we should have "enjoyed our tea" a little better. But this is making a poor return for the extreme kindness with which we were treated and so I have no more to say about it.

The whole family were very amiable and disposed to make everybody happy. The girls sing, play upon the piano, write poetry, and talk like a book and the old lady is a perfect library of ancient history. Fortunately, she requires but little more than a good listener, otherwise I should have found myself pretty often against a stump.

Mrs. Cheever and daughter were there, the mother and sister of the celebrated George Cheever, formerly minister at Salem, now at New York, and the author of the famous dream called "Deacon Giles' distillery." I found the daughter very pleasant, intelligent and talented, besides playing well on the piano and singing pretty fair. Mr. Foote of Wiscasset had two daughters, but I saw but little of them except that they were rather pretty. In all, there were about a dozen of us, and upon the whole we had a very good time.

This afternoon it is snowing again. Nothing new except that I think the news from Washington looks a little more belligerent than it has heretofore. Shall expect something more positive in a few days.

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### Gov. Fairfield's 43d Birthday

**Thursday Afternoon, Jan. 30.** This day I pass the 43d year-stone in the great journey of life. In casting my eye back along the way I have trod, I find innumerable deficiencies and sins to lament, and uncounted mercies of God to be thankful for. My life has certainly been somewhat of an eventful one and though my path has not always been scattered with roses, I feel that I have enjoyed a greater measure of happiness than I deserved.

Next month comes your birthday, when, I believe, you will be 35—am I right? Let me exhort you to spend it in reflections upon the past with a view to a better improvement of the future. I do not say this in my capacity of husband, finding fault with his wife, for in that relation, thank God, I have much to commend and but little to censure, but as a preacher to a fellow mortal. However, lest you should turn upon me with the charge that like a guide post I point the way in which I do not walk myself, I will consult discretion, the better part of valor, so far as to say no more about the matter.

Nothing further yet from Washington. Shall expect something tonight. Our monotony was yesterday broken in upon by a most abusive political speech from Chadbourne of Eastport, who was replied to by D. in the same spirit. A little cayenne now & then, I'm inclined to think, won't do much harm. Today we have rain, but it is too cold to permit the snow to run off.

**Sunday Noon, Feb. 2d.** Blake and I have agreed to accept the invitation of Mr. Allen and go down to Gardiner to church this afternoon. After our return I will add a word or two more.

**Monday Morning.** After my return last evening I found a document on my table from Washington & so postponed my letter till this morning. The church at Gardiner was very handsomely & tastefully decorated; we had a middling sermon, took tea & spent the evening at Mr. Gardiner's & altogether had a fine time. Nelly read to us some half hour from a poem which she is writing, and I must confess it surpassed a good deal what I had anticipated.

I have been watching the movements of the Legislature for some time to see whether the session was to be a prolonged one or not. I am now pretty well satisfied that it will be of the usual length, say to continue to the last of March, and therefore I am half inclined to go home next Saturday or the Saturday after. I shall send this by mail, so that you may be prepared to receive the Governor and not be caught in your dishabille. However, don't rely on my coming, I shall keep further watch upon the movements of the Legislature and if I am confirmed in my present opinion and the weather is suitable, I shall start, otherwise not.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.



**A Round of Gaiety**

Augusta, Feb. 17, 1840.

Dear Wife,

I had a remarkably pleasant ride down for a stage ride. Had the sleigh principally to myself and of course kept curtains rolled up and had all the benefit of the fresh air which generally prevents my being stage sick. We reached Portland much earlier than was anticipated.

When I arrived here, found that Gen. Merrill & wife had been occupying my chamber and my narrow bed. Things somewhat in confusion, didn't much like the liberty taken by my landlord, though as there was a lady in the case, I, of course, smothered my wrath.

On Wednesday evening, after my return on Tuesday, there was a most magnificent party at Danl. Williams', at which probably there were over 200 persons, and which approached more nearly to a Washington party than anything I have seen here. On Friday Genl. Chandler gave a dinner party for about a dozen of us which was a very pleasant one. On Saturday evening Judge Fuller came down, as he said, to pay me off for the game of chess I beat him one evening at his house, and thereupon I sat down and beat him four games in succession at which the poor Judge was considerably mortified.

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The Legislature are moving along a little more rapidly, though no one can predict the end of the session as yet.

**Friday Afternoon.** I suppose I ought to acknowledge to you, between whom and myself you know there should be no secrets, that I have been somewhat dissipated since my visit home, that is to say I have attended a party at Danl. Williams', one at Deacon Means', do. at Mr. Potter's, do. at Judge Weston's, do. at Capt. Berry's in Gardiner, and dinner party at Gen. Chandler's. This will do pretty well for so short a time, won't it? Last night I was down to Gardiner, took a little, not half a cup full of strong coffee, and for that or some other reason could not sleep any. The weather is very warm and the roads are getting to be very muddy.

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**Sunday Afternoon.** I have just returned from meeting and am enjoying a profuse sweat, such weather, I believe, never grew in February before. It is really uncomfortably warm. The snow is all gone and the mud has taken its place.

In addition to the parties named above I may add to the list, a small one at Judge Fuller's on Friday evening. It was a real orthodox concern—Doctor Tappan with his church deacons and a few of his parish. We nevertheless had a pretty fair time. Doctor T. and I, among other things, discussed the subject of slavery and I must confess that out of the pulpit he is not so morose and so much of a tyrant as he appears to be in it.

Tuesday night I have an invitation to Marcellus A. Chandler's, but doubt whether I shall go.

Many of the members begin to think that they may bring the session to a close by the middle of March. I hope and pray that they may.

Ever Yours,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Mrs. Longley's Cheese

Augusta, March 8, 1840.

Dear Wife,

You will have seen by the two papers I sent you that my good friend, Mrs. Longley, has at last brought down my great cheese and that we have written each other a somewhat flattering, if not loving, letter. The cheese is a beauty, finely proportioned, and I hope of a good quality. At all events it looks well.

With the personal appearance of Mrs. Longley I was somewhat disappointed. I expected to see a tall, large, masculine-looking woman, one who could shoulder a piece of artillery if necessary and flog half a dozen men if insulted. But I found her to be a lady of say some fifty years of age, of middling size, good personal appearance, intelligent face and modest deportment. On the whole I was very much pleased with her. But this, I suspect, is saying enough for you. I should be sorry to excite your jealousy. However, I suppose you will forgive a good deal if I send home a good large piece of the cheese. My present intention is to cut out a slice, say 10 or 20 lbs., box it up and send home, and the remainder to cut up here and distribute among the members of the Legislature. This course I proposed to Mrs. Longley and she seemed to be pleased with it.

The Legislature talks of rising one week from tomorrow, but I think it will be more likely to extend the session to two weeks from tomorrow.

The good people here are having a great many small parties, to all of which I have an invitation and many of which I attend.

In reading some of Bryant's poetry today I was struck with the beauty of the following:

"So live, that when thy summons come to join  
The innumerable caravan, that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

What can be more soothingly beautiful than the last two lines? Let the boys, aye and the girls, too, commit it to memory.

**Wednesday Afternoon.** We have cut up the big cheese and this afternoon at 4 o'clock it is to be distributed to the members of the Legislature and all others who may think a slice worth calling for. It has cut up finely, is rich, well-flavored, and has not crumbled. I have caused a piece, weighing probably 40 or 50 lbs., to be cut out in a regular shape and placed in a box, made for the purpose, just big enough to contain it, so that it cannot crumble, for you. You probably, however, will not receive it until you receive me.

The Legislature now thinks of adjourning on Monday or Tuesday. The Council will remain only one day after the Legislature rises, so that you may expect to see me some time in the course of the week—i.e., next week.

Last night attended a very pleasant chess party at Judge Fuller's, say half a dozen playing chess till 10, then having a cold roast turkey, ham, &c., &c.

How do you like my proclamation? It certainly has one good quality, to wit, its brevity. Oh, I abominate a long, prosing proclamation of all things, and so, I believe, does almost everybody else.

**Evening.** It seems when 4 o'clock arrived the House took a recess of an hour. One of the Whigs sent off and got a barrel of "hard cider" and a Democrat half a dozen loaves of brown bread and with these and my cheese they had a very merry time of it.

**Thursday Morning.** Nothing to add except to say that I doubt whether the Legislature gets up before Tuesday and perhaps Wednesday, so that by Thursday or Friday at longest I hope to see my dear wife and children.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Mr. Fairfield wrote no more letters until September, after the election in which he was defeated.

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### Whigs Carry the State

Augusta, Sept. 19, 1840.

Dear Wife,

I regret that I have no more agreeable communication to make to you than the fact of the almost complete rout and overthrow of the Democratic party in the late election. The Senate is clean gone. The House is yet doubtful. The Whigs have now chosen 86—eight less than a majority—and there are some dozen towns in which there was no choice, and in which another election takes place next Monday. The votes for Governor are all in but a few towns in Oxford, Washington and the whole of the County of Aroostook. My majority, supposing these towns to do as well as they did in 1838, would be about 100. Seven of them have just come in showing a net gain for us of 10. How many scattering there may be I don't know, perhaps enough to prevent a choice. But if there be not and the Whigs have both branches of the Legislature, they will deprive me of any majority I may have short of 400 or 500.

The result of the election is nearly as unexpected to the Whigs here as to us, and is almost inexplicable. A few of the causes we can see and their operation in future will be prevented, but the distribution and use of British gold we cannot well prevent.

I trust I shall be able to meet this disaster like a Christian and a philosopher. By the blessing of God, it may result more beneficially to both of us than success. My spirits are by no means depressed and I begin to anticipate with some degree of satisfaction when my time will be divided between my professional duties and the society of home. Rightly viewed and improved the event may not only serve to increase the fund of our social happiness, but essentially to promote in our hearts a sounder and more healthy moral condition.





Commander ARTHUR PHILIP FAIRFIELD, U. S. N.  
Great-Great-Grandson of Governor Fairfield

I have the satisfaction to believe that we have not lost the election through any misconduct of mine. The battle has been fought almost exclusively upon national ground. Van Buren and Harrison have been kept before the people during the contest much more than Kent and myself.

My political friends here are not dismayed or disheartened, and seem determined to take hold and carry the State for Van Buren in November, as they undoubtedly can.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

If an opportunity occurs I wish you would send my chess board and men.

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### Making the Best of It

Augusta, Sept. 25, 1840.

Dear Wife,

It is uncertain yet who has the majority of votes for Governor, if any one has. Our friends still insist that I have, while the Whigs insist that Mr. Kent has. The certainty of the matter will probably not be known until the votes are counted by the Legislature. My own impression is that there is no choice.

The Whigs are far less boisterous and overbearing than they were in 1837, indeed they seem quite meek. The reason is that they see we have the power to choose by the present Legislature the 10 Electors of President, a U. S. Senator for the next 6 years, and district the State for the choice of Senators and Representatives so that it would not be changed for five years. With this power in our hands the Whigs are living in constant alarm lest we should exercise it.

Notwithstanding our political reverses of fortune, the sun still continues to shine as pleasantly as ever, and pleasant parties and happy faces are by no means scarce. I have attended two large family, lady & gentleman, dinner parties at Judge Weston's and Daniel Williams', attended one wedding and been invited to another party which I could not attend. So you see I am not disposed to cry about the election, but to "make the best of it." As the Legislature will probably be Whig in both branches, Mr. Kent will, of course, be elected by them if he is not by the people. So there is a pretty certain prospect of your having me at home one winter at least. This is no slight offset in my estimation for the loss of office.

Oh, I forgot to say that I want Davis to haul up to Grandmother Fairfield a cord of dry hemlock wood. This I promised last spring, and perhaps she may be wanting it about this time.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### May Not Be Defeated for Governor

Augusta, Oct. 4, '40.

Dear Wife,

I am much obliged to you for your kind letter. I forgive the rejoicing of yourself and the children over my defeat when I consider its inducements. There is really no little comfort to myself in the idea of spending one winter at home. And besides the indulgence of the affections, I have reason to believe that I could make myself useful to the children at least.

But what if I am elected after all? Would you believe it, after all the crowing on one side and giving up on the other, that I have a plurality of 147? It is even so, and with a fair count I apprehend it would appear that I am elected, for I do not believe there are scattering votes enough to prevent choice.

The Legislature are driving on as fast as they can and will probably adjourn in the course of three weeks and possibly sooner.

I am astonished that you could not prevail on Cousin Hannah to make you a longer visit. If she is at Aunt Hartley's yet, you ought to invite her again. Miss Kettell, I suspect, will be along in a few days. Mr. Whidden and Bion Bradbury from Calais have been here and said that she was about leaving when they left. Tell her not to get homesick before I get back and I'll try to find a sweetheart for her.

We had an ordination here last Thursday. Mr. Whitman was here and was very well. The sermon was by Mr. Peabody & pretty fair. Mr. Judd, the gentleman who is settled here, is a young man apparently of first rate talents. His sermons today were more than common.

Let me hear from you again if you can.

Love to all.

Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

I have broken open this letter to say that the majority on the Governor's vote has been reduced by corrections to 85.



## A Christmas Party and an Old Fashioned Sing

Augusta, Dec. 26, 1840.

Dear Wife,

I had a pretty comfortable ride down notwithstanding it was cold and snowy. The weather for a day or two has been awful, and I have found it difficult to keep myself comfortable in my ice house of a chamber. Last night I went to bed about 11 o'clock, leaving a good fire, another being made about daylight this morning by my boy, and yet water froze quite hard—ice  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch thick.

Yesterday I attended religious services at the Church. The house was very prettily decorated and the services appropriate, bating a good deal of flummery growing out of the church forms.

Last night Mrs. Danl. Williams gave a fine Christmas party, where we had an abundance of "creature comforts" and also had a fine treat in the singing of some old-fashioned tunes, such as "Sherburne," &c.

Tell M— her Representative, Mr. Lowell, is elected by a majority of two votes. The votes stood thus:

Lowell .....	5194
Noyes .....	5051
Scate .....	139

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Believes Kent Will Be Elected

Augusta, Jan. 5, '41.

Dear Wife,

Nothing has occurred since I have been here to give us any more satisfaction in regard to the state of the votes for Governor. Both sides seem to be pretty confident of having a majority, while I feel pretty confident that there is **no election by the people** and that Mr. Kent will be elected by the Legislature.

Tomorrow I shall "qualify the Legislature" by administering the oaths of office. The Senate and House will then proceed to choose their clerks and presiding officers, and perhaps commit the votes for Governor the same day. I am in great hopes that matters will progress so fast and reach a final result early enough, in case I am not elected, to enable me to

reach home by Saturday night next. At present, however, this may be considered doubtful, especially as Mr. Kent is not here, and may not be until after he shall have been notified at Bangor of an election.

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**Election Still Uncertain**

Augusta, Jan. 9, 1841.

Dear Wife,

The Committee having charge of the votes for Governor has not yet reported. The true state of the case, however, is known. The whole number of votes thrown is 91,237. I have, including 28 returned by mistake for Hannibal Hamlin which were thrown for me..... 45,588  
 Kent has ..... 45,579

Leaving my majority over Kent ..... 9

There are, however, 70 scattering, & so of course there is no election.

The Whigs are talking about rejecting all the votes from certain unincorporated places and the 28 from Springfield and then declare Mr. Kent elected. If they do this, there is no knowing when I shall be at home, for such an outrageous course will be strenuously opposed by my friends in the Legislature.

My opinion rather is, however, that the Whigs will adopt the easiest and wisest course for themselves, that is to say, to count all the votes, thereby showing no election, and then to choose Mr. Kent by the Legislature.

This, I hope, will be done up soon, for such a hungry set of office-seekers as now throng the Capitol I suspect were never congregated before. There are a score, at least, of mouths for every teat—of course 19 must go home gaunt and growling.

Yours as ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD

## CHAPTER IX.

### LETTERS OF 1842-1843-1844. GOVERNOR AND U. S. SENATOR.

The letters of John Fairfield which are included in this chapter, include those written in 1842, 1843 and 1844.

He wrote occasionally from Augusta during the session of 1842 foreshadowing his renomination for Governor for the third term and describing with some wit and much detail the simpler things of life at the State capitol. He was the Democratic nominee for Governor in 1842 against Edward Robinson, Whig, and James Appleton, Liberty Party. He was elected by a majority of over 14,000 in a total vote of about 72,000.

He did not serve out his term as Governor. His letters foreshadow a plan, concerning which he speaks guardedly but which appears to have been a political secret early in January and which probably was antecedent to Mr. Fairfield's consent to run a third term for Governor—the resignation of Reuel Williams as United States Senator and the election of Fairfield to his seat in the Senate. Mr. Fairfield speaks of this in a letter to his wife as early as January and compliments her on "guessing" so shrewdly what was in the political air. The resignation came late in February and Governor Fairfield, having the situation in hand, was chosen to succeed Senator Williams, Edward Kavanagh of Newcastle acting as Governor for the remainder of the year.

We have but few letters from Mr. Fairfield from Washington in 1843, for he did not go to Washington until December. He speaks of his mess-mates at Mrs. Scott's boarding-house on Pennsylvania Avenue, where he paid a "stiff price" of \$9 a week, as including Wright of New York and Mrs. Wright. Mr. Fairfield might well feel pleased to have so distinguished a man as Silas Wright, Senator from New York, as his companion. He was an eminent leader of the times, a most conscientious old-school Jacksonian Democrat of the loftiest character and greatest learning and much wisdom. He was a progressive farmer, a man of the country-side, loving a simple

and pure life. In the Senate he ranked with Benton and Allen as active constructive forces. For a wonderful biography of Silas Wright, read Mr. Benton's remarkable summary of his life in the "Thirty Years View."

We find in these letters more and more allusions to Mrs. Madison, widow of the former President and a distant relative by marriage of Mrs. Fairfield. He and his aristocratic kinsfolk, the Cutts's, were frequently at Mrs. Madison's home in Washington. In his 1844 letters are many allusions to historic matters, the great Princeton disaster, the annexation of Texas, the growing disturbances that led to the war with Mexico, the great Millerite agitation which swept the country at that period, the prospects of his nomination for Vice-President at the Baltimore convention of that year and his aversion to the same. It is interesting to note that among his acquaintances of that day were Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the "electric telegraph," and a young man named Fremont, who was afterward to be the path-finder, as he had already crossed the Rocky Mountains, and who was to be a candidate for President after Mr. Fairfield had passed on.

## Makes More Nominations

Augusta, Jan 20, 1842.

My Dear Wife,

You can imagine something of my cares and perplexities. I would not go through it again for a year's salary. Rejoice with me, however, that it is nearly over. Today I almost finished the batch of nominations and, of course, as Danl. Webster said, I breathe deeper & freer. All the anxiety & trouble is up to the point of the nomination; the moment that is made, I throw care to the dogs. Having done the best I could I let the consequences take care of themselves.

Aunt Cutts will be glad to learn, and you had better send one of the boys with a note to inform her, that I, this day, nominated Mr. Lane Register of Probate. It required something of an effort, but I hope it will not prove very unacceptable to the people and it is a fact that there is a good deal of sympathy felt for him.

My health has been good since I came here, though it has been sickly. One member, Mr. D., as you will have perceived by the papers, has died after an illness of three or four days and several have been sick. The scarlet fever prevails a good deal among the children and makes me think of home with no little anxiety.

How goes the singing and dancing? your every-day affairs, etc., etc.

I looked in on the ball the other evening as you perhaps have seen by Tom Lane's soft-soaping letter in the Argus. This is the only dissipation in which I have yet indulged.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Augusta, Jan. 24, 1842.

My Dear Wife,

Judge Cony died a few days since of old age, being in his 90th year.

I called the other day to see Messrs. Williams, Daniel & Reuel, but they were both out, probably with Judge Cony who died the next day. I am almost afraid to meet Mrs. D. Williams after neglecting to appoint her husband Clerk of the Courts. I could not avoid doing as I did without disregarding the popular will, which as a good Democrat, you know, I could not do.

There was the case of "Uncle Stephen." It fairly wrung my heart to pass him over, but I could not help it. However, as some balm to both his and my spirit, I appointed his son Register of Probate.

But I am rejoiced that the principal portion of this business is over. There are but a few of the minor offices left, so if you come down here, it must be purely by way of a visit for I have no office now to give you that you would probably take.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Remembers 45th Birthday

**Saturday, Jan. 29.** I am inexpressibly shocked and astounded to read in the Portland papers that Mr. Edmund Coffin of Biddeford, died in Portland yesterday. The Sabbath evening before I left, you know, I was at his house. He then appeared to be entirely well. Since which I have heard nothing of him.

**Sunday Evening, Jan. 30.** In writing the foregoing date it occurs to me, for the first time today, that it is my birthday. The lapse of 45 years! While it speaks loudly of the past, it admonishes me of the future.

Have called twice to see Mrs. D. Williams, & both times found her out. Today I met her on my way to meeting, & she gave me a very cordial reception notwithstanding her husband's failure to obtain an office.

### Buys Cambric Pantalettes for One of the Girls

**Monday Evening, Jan. 31.** I have just returned from attending the Temperance Fair where we had a brief off-hand address from Mr. Pierpont of Boston. It was very neat, and contained some capital stories most capitally told. Do you remember Flim? I think he tells a story much like Flim—including his comical expression of face.

I have brought away a pair of cambric pantalettes for one of the girls, and a butterfly pin-cushion. An ice cream, some grapes, &c., helped to make up my quota of purchases. When I was down to Gardiner the other evening Miss Elen gave me a beautiful little pin-cushion bird for Augusta.



MAYNARD PERKINS of New York  
Son of Mrs. Annie Perkins and Grandson of John Fairfield





Tomorrow is the meeting of the State Temperance Convention and tomorrow evening we are to have another address from Mr. Pierpont.

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### Temperance Convention

**Thursday, Feb. 3.** We have been having great doings here in the temperance way for the last two or three days. Mr. Pierpont's addresses were admirable and well calculated for effect. I attended the Convention yesterday, but did not hear anything of much importance or interest. There was too much bickering between the Washingtonian and the Old Society. Both want the glory of having originated the reform and revolution in this town. How ridiculous!

Yesterday Doctor Burnham started a Legislative temperance book—i. e., a large blank book headed with a pledge for "total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors as a beverage." This is intended solely for the executive & legislative departments of government, not only the present year, but for all future time. It was headed by the Governor and six of his Councillors. I have not yet learnt how it has succeeded in the Senate and House, but think the thing will take pretty well—I hope so, at least.

The cars, I perceive, are to start this week.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Augusta, Jan. 28, 1842.—Last night there was a military ball here and I dropped in, in the course of the evening, and saw them dance twice. Next Monday there is to be a Temperance Fair and Mr. Pierpont of Boston makes an address; I shall endeavor to attend. Last Sunday by request I addressed the Sabbath School connected with the Unitarian Society here and am pressed to do so again, to which I may by and by consent.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Letters to the Children

Augusta, Feb. 6, 1842.

My Dear Sarah,

I would go without my supper tonight if I could hear you sing one of your sweet tunes—say “Upon the Distant Mountain’s Head.” You must write me soon and let me know how well you succeed, and whether George is likely to make a singer or not. You must both of you remember that I pay for your tuition not merely that you may go to Mrs. Kelley’s and have a good time,—but that you may learn to sing.

I have not time to write more now, best love to all.

Your Affectionate Father,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Augusta, Feb. 6, 1842.

My Dear Augusta,

I have just returned from the concert and will devote a few minutes before retiring to bed, to give you some account of it. The first part was composed of six or eight songs, glees and catches, sung by little girls about as old as you and Sarah and one little boy not much larger than Hammy. They sang beautifully and received abundant applause. Tell Sarah that one of their songs was “Oh, How Brightly” and that it sounded finely. The little girls, or several of them, played very well upon the pianoforte. They were not at all frightened, but sang apparently, with as much confidence as if they were singing at home.

The second part of the entertainment was composed of songs, etc., principally by Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln of this town, both of whom are very superior singers. The whole closed with the song of “Auld Lang Syne,” in the chorus of which the audience were invited to join.

At the two back corners of the hall were fixed up two confectionery establishments where could be had all sorts of candies and articles made of sugar, apples & other fruits, ice creams, whips, custards, chicken salad, hot coffee, &c., &c. The hall was well lighted, prettily decorated and tolerably well filled, there being, I should judge, near 200 gentlemen and ladies. The fee for admittance was only nine pence. I wish all

my dear children could have been present and have enjoyed it with me.

Your Affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### May Run Again for Governor

Augusta, Feb. 20, 1842.

The effect of my course in the appointments is beginning to develop itself and is in accordance with my expectations. That is to say, knowing how much the people have complained for the last 8 or 10 years of the influence exerted by the representatives in the appointments, I have done a good deal toward breaking up the system. Many of the members wanted office themselves and many others wanted it for their relatives and particular friends. In many of these cases, thus far, the representatives have been disappointed and of course do not feel very kindly toward me.

Some in Cumberland of the old Preble and Mitchell faction think I have given too many of the offices to the "Argus clique" as they call it, and they are dissatisfied and angry. The Waldo delegation are anxious to get up Mr. Anderson of Belfast as a candidate for Governor. These with some other elements that I could name have combined, and instead of nominating a candidate for Governor by a legislative caucus, as is usual when the incumbent is renominated, have agreed on a State Convention to be held at Bangor on the 22d of June. In this way the movers in this thing hope to defeat my nomination, presuming that the western part of the State will not be fully represented and I think such a result quite probable if I should be a candidate.

It is true that a large number of those who voted for the State Convention insist upon it that it is not a measure unfriendly to me, and that they are in favor of my renomination; but I have no great faith in these protestations—or at least in many of them.

My own judgment and inclinations prompt me to decline at once being a candidate again, but my good friends here insist that I ought not, that if I do our party will become divided, the Whigs encouraged to exert themselves and defeat might be the result. They insist that among the people the most perfect

satisfaction exists in regard to my course and that there is no doubt of my nomination if I will consent to it. Under these circumstances I am not a little perplexed as to what I should do. Perhaps a little more reflection and the advice of friends from abroad may relieve me.

We have been enjoying two or three concerts here, given by a Mr. Friend, who is also something of a ventriloquist.

Dr. Leffingwell has also just commenced a course of lectures on chemistry. He has very politely presented me with a ticket for the course and I have attended one of them, and shall attend as many of the remainder as I possibly can. Tonight, Mr. Judd is to give a lecture on popular amusements, in regard to their influence on morals.

It has been reported here that John Batchelder and Mary Cutts were engaged. How is it? What a sad ship-wreck there has been on Wells beach—8 lives lost and among them Capt. Thomas, brother of Edmund Perkins' wife. The barque was built last year by Perkins at Biddeford.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Woman's Diplomacy

Augusta, Feb. 27, 1842.

Dear Wife,

I see by the paper that Sukey is at last married. The reason of the delay I understand to have been the sickness of Mr. Rice, from which, it was understood at one time, he would not recover. I wish them happiness.

It is now probable that the Legislature will not rise before the 15th of March. After which it will be my duty, as it will be my pleasure, "to relieve you of some of your care." I know how much you have had upon your hands this winter and while I commiserate you, I thank God that I have a wife, who is not only willing to assume responsibilities, but capable of discharging them. Near meeting time, will finish in afternoon.

4 o'clock P.M.—Have just had a call from Mrs. Fuller, daughter of Judge Weston, you know, upon special and important business! What do you think it was? Why this—the Martha Washington Society were about to apply to me to deliver an address to them and took advice of Mrs. Fuller in regard to it.

She, knowing that my engagements during the remainder of the session would prevent my acceptance of the invitation, and fearing that my declining might be misconstrued, and injure me, told them they had better wait until she had conferred with me, which they consented to. And now she says she can satisfy them perfectly, and that I shall come off without blame from any one. Wasn't that capitally done? Is she not a fine manager? And is she not a friend worth having?

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Insane Hospital Investigation

Augusta, March 15, '42.

Dear Wife,

The Legislature, I think, will rise by the day after tomorrow, say Thursday—in which case I hope to be at home on Saturday, though it depends somewhat upon a Resolve now pending in the Senate providing for a reference of the Insane Hospital affairs, which are to be investigated, to a committee of gentlemen not of the Legislature. If this passes, I do not see but I can leave the day after the Legislature & perhaps reach home on Friday, though probably not until Saturday. If the Resolve does not pass the investigation of the Hospital affairs will be thrown upon the Governor and Council and we may be detained a week longer.

I received a letter from George yesterday. He reached North Yarmouth (Academy) well. Did not like Commons, but has taken board, he and Thornton, with a Mr. Mitchell at \$1.50 a week. He wishes me to stop at North Yarmouth from one stage to another.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### An Exciting Trip to Augusta

Augusta, Dec. 27, 1842.

Dear Wife,

After waiting at the depot on Wednesday night until about 9 o'clock for the cars, we started for Portland amidst

Egyptian darkness and torrents of rain. Notwithstanding all which we reached Portland in about 35 minutes. On Thursday morning in company with two old gentlemen with baggage enough for a regiment of soldiers, three young ladies who had been attending the Academy at Gorham and an Englishman with a terrier which he seemed to worship, I started in the stage for Augusta.

Before reaching Backbone bridge we had a very pretty overturn, doing no other injury than frightening the poor girls almost to death, one of whom was constantly "Oh dearing," the remainder of the day. After crossing the bridge a few rods the sleigh plunged into a drift, when the forward horses sprang, broke their traces, pulled the reins from the drivers' hands and ran off. Having an extra driver, one took one of the pole horses and went in pursuit of the runaways, while the other took the remaining horse and went back to Portland to get new harness. During which we all sat in the stage enjoying ourselves very well.

After remaining thus about an hour we got all ready for a fresh start, when the two old men concluded that they would return to Portland and take another day. This was a capital piece of good fortune for us, for after getting rid of so much baggage we skimmed along like a bird, and had no more difficulty for the day, reaching Augusta about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7 in the evening.

In regard to myself, I am taking cocoa shells for breakfast and tea at night. By the way, is it not most time for me to leave off drinking tea? as the late treaty between England and China will probably make it very cheap again. I have anticipated you in this joke, haven't I?

Went to meeting last Sunday and heard Mr. Judd all day. In the forenoon we had a Christmas rhapsody, and in the afternoon a very good practical sermon upon family worship. Mr. Freeman, the Episcopal clergyman, intending to have a party on Monday night and not wishing to be at the trouble of writing invitations or for some other reason, gave his invitation from the pulpit, extending it to the whole parish, and as many of other societies as should choose to come. I had a special invitation and attended. We had a very pleasant time; sang old tunes, such as "Sherburne," "Turner," "Lennox" and "Majesty," and those who chose ate cold turkey, ham, chicken salad, ice creams, custards, nuts, apples, raisins, &c.

I am driving away at my message and hope soon to have it off my hands. All the new appointments have been made, with nobody to perplex and disturb me; indeed I have had but a few letters in relation to them. They have seemed disposed to let me have matters all my own way.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Inaugural Ball—"Bumps"—Politics

Augusta, Jan. 10, 1843.

Dear Wife,

Thus far, we move rather slowly. New Councillors not chosen yet, and doubt if they will be until the last of the week. I sent you a copy of the message. Its tone and recommendations seem to take tolerably well with my Democratic friends here. And as for my political opponents, I am not very desirous of pleasing them.

Last evening a Doct. Ellis, a Phrenologist, came into my room to ask the favor of examining my head and presenting me with a chart. I consented, and herewith enclosed is the result. I don't know how it will compare with Fowler's map, but it appears to me he has missed a figure in more than one bump. He is to deliver a course of lectures, perhaps I may attend some of them.

What a horrible affair this mutiny case is. As the evidence is developed, I begin to doubt whether McKenzie was justifiable in executing Spencer and his confederates, if they were such. There seems to be little or nothing against Cromwell, and there is but little evidence of the danger of undertaking to bring them all home for trial. I am afraid the poor fellows have been sacrificed to the timidity of McKenzie and his officers.

I have just received a card of invitation for the Inaugural Ball on Thursday evening next. Suppose I shall have to go in and look on for an hour or two.

**Friday Evening.** Last night I went into the ball room about 9 o'clock and staid until a little after 10 only. There were very few whom I knew, and I found but little there to amuse me. The ladies outnumbered the gentlemen, I should think, two to one. The weather continues very warm yet, and the stages are beginning to go on wheels.

**Monday Morning.** Yesterday I heard three sermons upon Millerism. Mr. Judd preached upon it all day and Dr. Tappan in the evening. They left nothing but a grease spot.

**Tuesday Evening.** Yesterday and today I sat for my likeness in India ink by a Mr. Homans—Mr. Johnson, the Secretary of State, takes it and pays for it for a son of his in Boston who is to lithograph it. I suppose I shall have an opportunity of purchasing some of the lithographs.

Five of the new Council were sworn in today, so now, one branch is prepared to go ahead.

**Saturday Afternoon.** Homans has completed my likeness, which everybody pronounces to be excellent, and I am not inclined to differ with everybody, so a good likeness it is.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Views on Capital Punishment

Augusta, Jan. 30, 1843.

Dear Wife,

Will you be good enough to find O'Sullivan's report to the New York Legislature on abolishing capital punishment and send it to me by the stage driver. If the Saco stage don't run now, George can take the report to the depot and give it to Maxwell asking him to hand it to the stage driver at Portland, paying Maxwell a ninepence for his part of the trouble.

I am this day 46 years old—Tempus fugit—and we all fly with it. Happy are we if we grow wiser and better as we grow older. Last night, for the first time, I went over to Mr. Danl. Williams' and took tea. Had a very pleasant time and afterward went to hear Dwight of Portland advocate his abominable doctrines in favor of capital punishment.

Augusta, Feb. 3, 1843.—You are pretty good at guessing—I have a private intimation of Mr. W.'s intended course from him. Of this part of it there is no doubt, but of the successorship I cannot speak with confidence, though I have no reason to complain of the present aspect of things. I admit there are some offsets to the anticipated pleasure, but the precariousness of my health and other circumstances admonish me of the necessity of providing the means, while I can, for the future comfort of my dear wife and children.



Night before last, the ladies of St. Marks had a Fair, and last night a concert in connection with it. Tonight, also, I understand we are to have the same. So you see, we are not entirely without amusement.

I send you "Pauline" and "The Neighbors," both good, the latter excellent. You cannot fail to be deeply interested in it. I am astonished to find that a Swede can write anything worth reading. Dumas, the author of Pauline, you know, is one of the most learned and talented men in France, though a man of color. I am now trying to read Stephen's Central America, though I must confess my progress is very slow. It is about time for the meeting of the Council, so good-bye.

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### The Political Skies

Augusta, Feb. 21, 1843.

Dear Wife,

By today's mail I received the resignation of Mr. Williams, and immediately transmitted it to the Legislature. I presume there will be many candidates for the vacancy, but entre nous, I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the present aspect of things. Unless something occurs to change the current of public feeling here, I am confident I shall carry the election.

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### Elected to U. S. Senate

Augusta, Feb. 26, 1843.

Dear Wife,

Arrangements have been made for the nomination of a Senator on Thursday evening next—the election will probably follow on Friday or Saturday. In that case, and should I be elected, I shall immediately resign my present office and start for home on Monday.

Present prospects are favorable to my election. What changes may occur between this and Thursday no one can foresee. The friends of Parks, who is my principal opponent, are very active, and I think are disposed to bargain and log-roll where they can. My friends will scorn every such expedient and stand or fall upon the merits or demerits of the case.

At first, I supposed I might retain my present office until it was necessary to go to Washington—but now am inclined to think that course impracticable. If elected Senator, I must resign the office of Governor.

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Augusta, March 19.—The Legislature adjourned yesterday morning—but the public business will detain “the Governor and Council” until Monday morning.

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Augusta, March 3, 1843.—An election of Senator took place today and resulted in my favor.

The vote in the House stood thus:

Self .....	68
W. S. Fessenden .....	40
Scattering .....	4

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112

In the Senate whole number 22—all of which were for me. So you may expect me home soon, I think.

J. F.

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### Back in Washington

Washington, Dec. 1, '43.

Dear Wife,

Here I am, safe & sound. Arriving last evening (Thursday). Got here thus early in consequence of accomplishing my business at Philadelphia the same evening I reached there. The commission sent to Buenos Ayres for testimony had not been returned—of course no trial can yet be had. I like Mr. Wharton very much. He is a young man and appears to be a man of business.

It is fortunate I had a piece taken from my cloak and collar—coz why?—coz the rest of it is gone—clean gone. While it was lying on the back of a chair in the parlor of the American hotel in New York, and I was in the Reading Room close by, some gentleman gathered its graceful folds around him and walked off—so, take care of the pieces, will you?

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Chooses His "Mess"

Washington, Dec. 3, 1843.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday I connected myself with a mess at Mrs. Scott's, south side Pennsylvania Ave.,—a little farther from the Capitol than I was before. Our mess, thus far, is made up of Mr. Wright of New York, and myself, of the Senate, and Mr. King, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Stetson of New York of the House. Mrs. Scott hopes, I believe, to have half a dozen more—Mr. Wright and Mr. Clinton have their wives.

I have a room on the same floor with the parlor and dining room, about 14 feet square, nearly as large as our sitting room. It has a large bed in it, clothes press, bureau, etc. I pay \$9 a week, which is tolerably reasonable.

Have just returned from meeting. Mr. Bulfinch gave us a very fine Thanksgiving sermon. The congregation was not more than two-thirds as large as ours at Saco. Old Mr. Adams was there and I am inclined to think means to attend there. Of the northern folks there I noticed Danl. P. King, & Mr. Hudson of Massachusetts, J. P. Hale of New Hampshire, and Col. Hamlin of Maine.

Despairing of ever hearing again of my cloak, I, yesterday, bought another. It is better than the other, made of as good or better cloth, lined two-thirds of the way down and faced clean down with very nice velvet. The cost was \$30, after beating him down all I could. Cozzens, the landlord of the American at New York, before I left there, gave me \$15, which was what I told him it cost me, so my loss is \$15 only.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Thanksgiving in December

Senate Chamber, Dec. 7, 1843.—Today is Thanksgiving, you know, and Gov. Dunlap and I have engaged to dine at Mr. Dummer's. Since writing last we have had two added to our mess, Strong and Murphy of New York.

I have a tolerably good seat in the Senate, say in front row, third from broad aisle, Gov. Sprague of Rhode Island on my right, Judge Semple of Illinois on my left and McDuffie of South Carolina immediately behind me.

Committees are not yet appointed. Senate has just adjourned over to Monday! What waste of time.

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### Fairfield's Committee Appointments

Washington, Dec. 11, 1843.—It seems there has been a controversy between Mr. Clinton and his wife as to whether I was a bachelor—and for what reason, think you? Could you ever guess? Do you give it up? Because I was so polite!

Yesterday the committees were announced in the Senate. They have placed me on two committees, viz.: Militia and Printing. Their duties, I think, will not be very laborious and so far I am satisfied, though if my political friends had the majority I should probably have received a little higher appointment. I don't blame the Whigs for making the most of their power, the prospect being that it will be short lived.

Today Mr. Benton announced the death of Doctor Linn. It was admirably done. Mr. Crittenden, a Whig, followed him, with a most beautiful eulogy upon the Doctor, and as just as it was beautiful. He was a remarkable man. His praises are in everybody's mouth.

Yesterday, Stephen was removed from his place by Dow, the new Door-keeper. I helped our delegation "make a fuss" about it, when he promised to give him another place with the same compensation.

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Old Maids and Other Things

Washington, Dec. 24, '43.

Dear Wife,

Last Sunday, I went to the Capitol to hear Rachael Barker, a Quakeress. I heard but little, but quite enough. She would have appeared to better advantage at home, knitting blue yarn stockings with white toes for her husband.

The new painting by Weir of the embarkation of the Pilgrims has just been suspended in the Rotunda of the Capitol. It is highly spoken of by those who claim to be judges. It appears to me so-so—I had a glance the other day at the collection of birds, beasts, reptiles and curiosities, of all sorts,

brought home by Wilkes of the exploring expedition, now deposited at the Patent Office. I was delighted and mean to spend many hours there. The exhibition is an exceedingly interesting one, and will afford me subjects for letters to the children.

I called at young Uncle Richard's. Found Mary had gone to Mrs. Madison's and Richard to the Opera. Uncle and I then went to Mrs. Madison's where we spent an hour or two very agreeably. Miss Legare, a maiden sister of the late Attorney General, is spending the winter with Mrs. M. She plays on the pianoforte most splendidly and paints admirably—but after all she is a real old maid. Mrs. Madison looks as young as when I saw her five years ago. Ann Paine I also saw there, an adopted daughter, you know, of Mrs. Madison's. A tolerably pretty, sprightly girl.

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### The Daily Menu

Washington, Dec. 30, '43.

Dear Wife,

We breakfast at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8, for the most part on buckwheat cakes and molasses, accompanied by a pork or beef steak and cup of green tea. Dine somewhere between 3 and 5 o'clock, usual dishes roast turkey, roast ducks, oysters in some way, best, however, in a fry, or fried; rock fish; and sometimes ham, corned beef, calf's head, mutton, etc., etc. Always followed by a dessert of preserves, apples, almonds, raisins, custards, puddings, pies, etc.—I mean some, not all of them. Between dinner and tea, Mr. King of New York or Judge Breeze of Illinois and I, play chess. At  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 6 or 7 take a cup of tea, and for the most part spend the evening in reading, retiring to rest about 11 o'clock.

By the way, I am in the 3d volume of Prescott's Conquest of Mexico. It is, by far, the most interesting history I ever read. It is as interesting as Scott's novels.

I have also read the mysteries of Paris which I will send to you. Very interesting, but too much of it.

We have just had an addition to our mess of Mr. and Mrs. Hill and daughter of New York. They come only, I believe, for a few weeks.

I have had a letter from George in which he asks for \$5 to buy Lemprieres Classical Dictionary and Homer. I wrote

him that he might get trusted for the books and I would pay at the end of the term. On second thought, however, I think it would be better for you to send him \$5, for which purpose I enclose you an envelope. I have no money that would pass at the north.

What is going on at home? Have you killed the hog yet? Has old Dick got the heavens? Does Davis keep the oxen he had when I left? and so on.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

What an ugly thing a steel pen is.

### President's New Year's Reception

Washington, Jan. 2d, 1844.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday being New Year's day, the President's house was open for all, and such a jam I scarcely ever saw before. There was nothing agreeable about it but to see how happy it made the "President without a party" and the excellent music of the band from the Navy Yard.

I forgot to call on Mrs. Madison and felt very much chagrined about it.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### The Lost Cloak Is Found

Washington, Jan. 9, '44.

Dear Wife,

Mr. Murphy, from Brookline, N. Y., has just returned from a visit home, bringing his wife with him. She plays well on the piano and sings superbly. It is really a God-send to us; I keep her playing and singing till she fairly tires. She, however, is not averse to the exercise of her admirable talents, deriving, apparently, as much pleasure therefrom as she imparts to others.

By the way, Mr. King of our mess is rather too much for me at chess. We play between dinner and tea. Dinner at 1½ past 4 and taking tea at 1½ past 6.

Did I ever tell you that my cloak had been found? It was found hanging in the wardrobe of one of the boarders at the American Hotel. A few days since, one of Cozzen's clerks, the keeper of the hotel, brought it on to me. My new one I sold to Mr. Herrick for \$25—\$5 less than cost; so I have my old cloak back again, with a loss of \$5 only. This is doing pretty well, isn't it?

Today Jno. C. Spencer was nominated Judge of the Supreme Court. The nominations of Tyler's cabinet have not yet been acted on. What is done, you know, is in Secret Council. But I suppose it will all see the light some time or other.

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### The Passing of Porky

Washington, Jan. 10th, 1844.

Dear Sarah,

You are very kind to write me such good long letters and tell me so many interesting things, for everything, you know, about home, however insignificant to you, is interesting to me. Poor old Dick! I am very sorry he has the heaves. He is not merely a faithful servant, but an old and highly esteemed friend. If our attachment to him should be measured by his kind services to us, our love for him would be strong indeed. Porky, too, it seems, has got into trouble, as well as old Dick, and far worse, too, for while old Dick's wind is merely obstructed, Porky's is entirely stopped. Well, pork and greens is good, as Madam Malaprop would say, and so I will indulge in no hypocritical lament about Porky's death. If I had time, however, I would write an eulogium upon her character. For there never was a peacefuller, kindlier, cleverer critter in this ere world.

Tell your mother I made a speech in the Senate today on a private bill in which the Jewells of South Berwick were concerned. I suppose it will come out in tomorrow's Globe.

Your Affectionate Father,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## A Letter to Sarah

Washington, Jan. 19, '44.

Dear Sarah,

I am much obliged to you for your interesting letters, and would write you oftener in reply were it not for my many engagements. I am obliged sometimes to write from five to ten letters a day besides going a mile and a half to the public offices on errands for my constituents. So you see I have not so much leisure as many suppose.

I can well conceive of your lonesomeness while Hannah is at South Berwick. Might not this be relieved by a correspondence between you? This might not only afford you pleasure but be of mutual advantage. Mr. Bridge don't seem to be a favorite with you or your mother. I think if you would shut your eyes and listen to him, his preaching would be less objectionable. The matter of his sermons is far better and more agreeable than the galvanic twitch of his elbows, his awful pauses, and the painful regularity in the use of his white handkerchief.

You say "Augusta is asleep in her chair." Just give her a jog, and tell her I shall be very happy to hear from her when she feels wide awake enough to write. Or, if she has the power of going into the mesmeric sleep, tell her to take a peep at me in my little chamber and describe to the rest of you what she sees.

And Hammy, my dear boy, and dear little Marty and Luly and Johnny, I should be glad to have letters from you all.

That Johnny can make his mark my own face could once furnish practical proof.

I send you a plan of the Senate Chamber, seats of Senators, etc.

Your Affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Nominations Made

Washington, Jan. 20, '44.

Dear Wife,

Have I told you how unwell I have been? One night, say about a week ago, was a night of great suffering. My teeth were chattering the whole night and no amount of clothing



could prevent it. The pains through my body and limbs at the same time were excessively severe. I am not yet entirely clear of the violent cold that I had caught. And now my mouth is awfully disfigured. Large fever sores came out on both upper and lower lips, which with the swelling gave me a hideous appearance. I am on the mending hand, however, and hope in a few days to be entirely well.

For news let me say: Henshaw's nomination as Secretary of the Navy has been rejected by the Senate, so has Isaac Hills' as Chief of one of the Bureaus. Porter's as Secretary of War, I think, will follow. Spencer's as Judge of the Supreme Court may be confirmed. Wise has been nominated as Minister to Brazil. I cannot go for him whatever others may do.

Have just received an invitation to dine with the President on Tuesday next. Don't know what I shall do.

**Sunday.** Have just returned from church where I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Giles, the English or Irish Unitarian. It was a great intellectual treat, but for a constant preacher I would much prefer Mr. Bulfinch. He is a dwarf & a good deal deformed. His head, however, is large and finely formed and his eye is large and full of the fire of genius. Though a dwarf in body he is a giant in intellect. He brought a letter to me from Jno. Wingate and so I stopped after meeting a little while to see him. He is now delivering a course of lectures at Baltimore and will do the same here, if he meets with encouragement. But I do not anticipate much. The prejudices against Unitarianism are so strong, that even philosophy would not be favorably received from that source.

In the Senate, the three great guns on our side are Benton, Wright and Allen—or perhaps I should say four, and include Buchanan. Haywood of North Carolina, a new Senator, is also a man of fine talents and an eloquent speaker. He is very nice in his dress, rather fashionable and wears black gloves constantly in the Senate.

Well, my dear children, how do you all do? How many teeth has Johnny got? Does his hair grow any and is it as white as tow? Learn Luly to talk and Marty to read. I would give my cloak with its new lining to hear them.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## A Sunday Chat

Washington, Jan. 28, '44.

Dear Wife,

Well, here we are again set down to our Sunday chat. How do you do? Are you as large as your mother yet, or have you pined away to a delicate thinness? How many teeth has Johnny got? Does he bite? Oh, the scamps! how I should like to wake up in the morning and have a frolic with them and hear mother scold a little at keeping her awake.

Last night I went to hear Mr. Giles lecture upon Irish history and today have heard him preach. He is a man of extraordinary talents. His subject today was "temper" and the way he poked some folks with a picked stick, as George would say, was a caution. His personal appearance reminds me of the "Black Dwarf" in one of Scott's novels. His body is a rough casket to contain so precious a jewel as his mind.

I did not dine with the President the other day. Had too many black patches on my face. They are off now, thank fortune, and I am well again. By the way, I don't sleep near so much as I used to. Don't go to bed often till 12, and wake up by daylight, after which I indulge in waking dreams of home till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7, when I rise, heat water, shave, wash and read a few chapters in the Old Testament which I am going to read through, and then breakfast at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8. That is going it pretty regular, isn't it?

Let me see, when shall I hear from you? About next Thursday night, for I persuade myself, you are, about this time, getting out your writing apparatus for a letter to husband.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Heard the Hutchinsons

Washington, Feb. 1.

Dear Wife,

Day before yesterday was my birthday—47 years have rolled over my head, and have not rubbed all the hair off yet.

I am going tonight to hear the Hutchinsons and anticipate a rich feast of music. They sing "right on," as Mark Antony talked. They sing to make melody, instead of endeavoring to

show the wonderful mechanical qualities of the human voice. I can't bear the Italian school of singing. Tomorrow night Mr. King—Preston King of New York, an old bachelor of our mess—gives a sort of dancing party here. We anticipate a pleasant time.

(Next day). I had written thus far when a call compelled me to suspend,—so you have been delayed one mail the pleasure of reading my gossip.

There was nothing done in the Senate today but the announcement of the death of Judge Porter, a Senator from Louisiana, who died at home, not having been here during the session. It was done by Barrow, his colleague, and seconded by Col. Benton in most beautiful and eloquent terms.

There is a duel brewing here between Weller of Ohio, and Dawson of Louisiana on one side, and Johnson and Shriver on the other. I hope, however, the fools will see their folly before the affair reaches a bloody catastrophe.

Went last night to hear the Hutchinsons. Sang no better than when I heard them at Saco, but that is well enough to satisfy any reasonable expectation.

If you can find my card plate I will thank you to enclose it by mail. It will probably not weigh more than two ounces.

Your Husband,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Letter of Laments

Washington, Feb. 5, 1844.

Dear Wife,

What an awful cold Sunday you had the day you wrote—30 degrees below zero! and yet you went to meeting! How courageous and how commendable. That is a shocking affair of Mrs. F—. I remember her very well. Another shocking affair, it seems by the Democrat, has occurred among you. The attempt of a man to hack out his brains with a dull axe! Poor creature—what an object of commiseration. Again, what sad information your letter gives me of Elizabeth Fairfield. Poor girl—or rather I should say poor father and mother. Her death would be a terrible blow to them. Elizabeth would exchange a world of suffering for one, I trust, of bliss.

Have seen but very little of Daniel and Marcia Cleaves yet. Have not been to Mr. Dummer's since their arrival. Tomorrow night I have an invitation to Judge Parris' "to meet our northern friends" and shall endeavor to go.

Glad to hear that Old Dick is frisky and happy and that Johnny is beginning "to show his teeth." Hope it may never be in anger. George writes again a pitiful story of his coat and wants a new one. I believe I will write leaving the matter to Mrs. Weld. If she thinks by repairing it may be made decent, he must continue to wear it this winter. Otherwise, I will request Mrs. W. to purchase the materials for a new one and have the bill forwarded to me. Shall I do right?

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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#### Visitors From Maine

Dear Wife,

Last night I went to Judge Parris' and had a very pleasant time. I was very much tempted to expose my lame leg on the floor when I heard Fisher's hornpipe to the figure of the Virginia Reel. Daniel Cleaves danced and appeared quite social. Sarah Lord is also a dancer. I told her I didn't believe she learned at Kennebunk, but she said she did and moreover, that Bill Banks was keeping dancing school there this winter! The Parris girls are very lively and agreeable, particularly Sarah. Mr. Dummer has also a sister, Mrs. Moody, and her husband visiting him at this time, and a sister of Mr. Moody.

Thursday. Dear Wife: Mr. Woodbury has been making an admirable speech today on the tariff, which I suppose he will finish tomorrow. Noticed Daniel, Marcia and Mary in the gallery but did not have an opportunity of speaking with them. In the Supreme Court they are trying the great case of Girard's will; Binney & Sergeant on one side and Webster & Jones on the other—very eminent counsel. I steal a moment now and then to run in and hear them.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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#### To Make a Speech

Washington, Feb. 12, '44.

Dear Wife,

I intended to write you a long letter today but am prevented by the following reason—that is to say, tomorrow, wind

and weather permitting, I am to make a short speech. I have just received Resolutions of our Legislature in favor of the French claims, and tomorrow morning I am to present them to the Senate, when I intend to make some remarks upon the subject—consequently I have been obliged to appropriate that part of today, not spent at meeting, to the reading of documents, and am not yet half through.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### As a Match-Maker

Washington, Feb. 16, '44.

Dear Wife,

Entre nous, there is a match about forming and I have been consulted in the matter. Who do you think the parties are? Do you give it up? Well, if you will say nothing about it at present, I'll tell you. My old friend, Richard Ela—do you remember him?—and Lucia King. Yesterday I enclosed a letter from him to Mr. King asking consent. In mine I told what I know of Mr. Ela and have no doubt of the consent of Mr. K. Ela is an excellent fellow and Lucia is a first-rate girl. It is a capital match for both. Ela, as you may recollect, is a clerk in the treasury department and is the one who has so rich a laugh.

Last night, for the first time, I started for a call at Mrs. Charles Cutts'. Not finding them at home I went to Mr. Dummer's and finished my evening there. Mr. D. and Daniel had gone to a lecture.

Last night, also, there was a party at the Post-Master General's and the night before, the President's Levee. I go to none of them. I care but little about company and hate to go out evenings. Can't see in the night well enough to make it safe for me, at least without moonlight.

Today the President sent in Mr. Wilkins of Pennsylvania as Secretary of War and Governor Gilmer of Virginia as Secretary of the Navy. They were both confirmed right off without going through the usual forms of reference to a committee.

I have a letter from Haines by which it appears he has been for a fortnight at Augusta getting new charters through

for Factory Companies. I expect we shall have smashing works in Saco next summer.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### A Picture of Home

Washington, Feb. 16, '44.

Dear Sarah,

I am pleased to find all my letters from home concurring in representing Johnny as a noble fellow. Has he any hair yet? He had none when I left home. I can see his great, white, hairless head, his mild and handsome blue eyes and good-natured, intelligent face as plain as if they were before me.

Little Marty, I see her, too, with her large, full and intelligent eye, pug nose, soft flaxen hair, delicate complexion and funny expression of countenance, sitting at one corner of the breakfast table and our little brunette at the other, with her piercing black eye and regular and handsome features. Next to whom sits my not-to-be-forgotten noble boy, Hammy; on opposite sides my good, smart and much-loved daughters, Sarah and Augusta, and at the head she who constitutes the better part of myself. What a group! But I must not keep the picture before me too long, or I shall grow homesick.

Your Affectionate Father,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### A Father to Love

Washington, Feb. 26, '44.

Dear Wife,

I was delighted with little Martha's discrimination—"Well, that isn't a Father to love and take you on his knees"—Oh, the sweet one, I wish I could take her on my knees. And the sweet Lucy, too, it seems she begins to talk a little. How delightful it must be to hear them chat.

I shall rejoice to see the flowers coming out in the grounds around the Capitol. Additions are made every year and I think they are much more beautiful than when you were here. I am ashamed to say that I have not yet been out on the square

east of the Capitol to see the statue of Washington—but I'll try to do it this week.

Next Tuesday I am engaged to dine with Mr. Blair, which will be the first dinner party I have attended since I have been here, unless I except Judge Breeze and myself dining with Mr. Beale our "Door Keeper." They are trying to induce me to speak on the Oregon question. A day or two ago Gen. Atchison of Missouri paid me a compliment in his speech with that design. But I think I shall not say anything. A more war-like speech would be expected than I am willing to make just now, though I am for maintaining our rights to that territory at all hazards. You need not break over your rules and compliment my speech on French spoliations, for without vanity, I think it will stand pretty well without propping. And this reminds me of a remark of Doctor Franklin's—to wit—that when one said "without vanity he might say," etc., you might always look for a piece of most consummate vanity to follow.

Mr. Bulfinch today alluded to the late duel between two young men here in a most feeling manner, but most indignantly at the conduct of those who permitted it to go on when both the young men would have been glad to have adjusted it.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### A Horrible Catastrophe

Washington, Feb. 28, '44.

Dear Wife,

Just before commencing my letter I received some horrible news which unfits me from saying anything more—to wit, that the big gun on board the Princeton today burst, killing the Secretaries of State & Navy, Upshur and Gilmer, and five or six others, but who the others are I know not. You will have the particulars in a day or two in the papers. How shocking!

Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

I open my letter to add that Capt. Kennon of the Navy, Virgin D. Maxey and a Mr. Gardiner of New York, and five of the crew are to be added to the list of killed and Capt. Stockton and Col. Benton to the list of wounded.

Washington, Feb. 29, '44.

Dear Wife,

The horrible catastrophe of yesterday unfits us all for everything but thinking about it. My account in letter of last evening was erroneous in stating that five sailors were killed. They were badly wounded only—a black servant of the President who was wounded died soon afterward. A report has just started that there are many sailors missing, but I do not credit it. Both branches of Congress met today and adjourned over to Monday. In the Senate the deaths were announced by a message from the President which was followed by a few eloquent remarks from Mr. Rives. Mrs. Gilmer, Mrs. Upshur and Mrs. Kennon are said to be almost distracted. Mr. Gardiner of New York was here on a visit with two beautiful daughters, both of whom were on board the Princeton.

The time for the funeral services has not yet been fixed, or rather has not been announced.

Yours as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Memorial Services for the Dead

Washington, March 3d, '44.

Dear Wife,

I have just returned from meeting. Mr. Bulfinch preached a sermon adapted to the melancholy occasion, but not quite up to my anticipations. He alluded to one of the slain on board the Princeton as one "who last Sabbath was seen in this house, his arm around one who is now an orphan." I recollect very well that in the pew immediately back of me was a large, noble-looking man who, during the prayers, stood with his arm around a little boy about 11 or 12 years old, pinching his cheeks, playing with his hair, etc., in the most affectionate manner. I felt a warming of my own heart toward him but was not aware until today that it was Commodore Kennon.

Yesterday the funeral services were performed and such a concourse of people before, I think, I never witnessed. The burial was from the President's house. The great East room was filled with members of Congress, officers, civil, military and naval, foreign ministers, etc. Coming out, we found the grounds around the house and the avenue thronged with



people. Atherton and myself wishing to see the military escort which we could not do if we went in the procession, concluded to leave it and walk on before. From the President's house nearly to the Capitol we found the sidewalk nearly full of people. The walks, you know, are over 20 feet wide. Besides this every window of the houses was full of heads and the tops of many of the houses covered with people.

The whole thing was very imposing. There were a large number of light companies and among them a company of Flying Artillery of the U. S. Army. All the officers of the Army and Navy were in uniform and mounted. All the foreign ministers also were arrayed in their Court dresses.

The address of Mr. Butler of Georgetown was highly impressive and eloquent. The other services were rather commonplace. I was struck with one of your remarks, made by you just before the accident, and received by me just afterward—to wit: "You must have had a grand time on board the Princeton. I think I should not care to be in the way of one of their balls." If you had said guns instead of balls, the coincidence would have been stronger.

Well, George, it seems, has got home, for you say his quarter was to terminate last Wednesday. Tell him I want to hear from him. He must give an account of himself and of the expenditure of all his money.

I hope Augusta will go to the Academy. I think she would do better there, considering her age and advancement, than at Aunt Cutts'.

Yours as ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Calhoun Secretary of State

Washington, March 6, '44.

Dear Wife,

This morning Mr. Thacher started for home, taking with him Lucia King, who, I presume, returns to make ready for getting married. Last night I went up to Mr. Hartley's and took tea, but could not stop for the evening as we had a caucus which I wished to attend.

John C. Calhoun was nominated by the President today as Secretary of State and was immediately confirmed by the

Senate. This is a matter of some importance and its effect upon our politics generally seems to excite a variety of opinion.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Masquerades in Col. Cutts' Clothes

Washington, March 10, '44.

Dear Wife,

You say my letter did not contain the particulars of the awful calamity on board the Princeton. I would give them to you now, but I suppose you have had them long before this in the papers. As you say, the gloom thrown over the city will hardly be dispelled for the remainder of the session. All the parties and balls which were in anticipation have been given over and I presume will not be revived.

We have had a caucus composed of the Democratic members of both Houses and chosen an executive committee to prepare and send out electioneering documents, etc. I am placed on it, and expect therefore that for the remainder of the session I shall be very busy.

Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Murphy insist that you must come on here and spend the remainder of the session. They say they will take care of your baby for you all the time. Mrs. Wright never had children and therefore would be delighted to have a baby to tend and Mrs. M. has seven, so that she understands it. You see how the case stands. I told them I would write you as requested and would rejoice if you could see your way clear to come. Is the thing possible?

I am disappointed, and I wish you would tell George so, if not gone before this reaches you, in not receiving a letter from him giving a detailed account of all his expenditures as well as of his studies, as I had directed him. I couldn't help laughing, though, at the idea of his strutting about in one of Col. Cutts' old waistcoats. I hope you did not let him carry the gun. It would interfere too much with his studies. If Augusta remains at home this quarter, and I don't know but what it would be as well for her, I hope the opportunity will be embraced to make her familiar with all household duties, including cooking. I hope when I come home we can have the breakfast table set with the cookery, and good cookery, too, of Sarah and Augusta.

If they read Frederika Bremer's novels they will never omit to learn cookery and other household duties.

I have received a copy of the *Columbian Ladies' and Gentlemen's Magazine* which, after I have read one or two of the articles I will send you. I find little time for reading anything now, except political matter, which I regret.

Yours as ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Letter to His Daughters

Washington, March 10, '44.

My Dear Daughters,

With your sleigh-riding, sled-riding, going over to see Hannah, Hannah coming over to see you, going up in town, up to Mr. Locke's, etc., etc., etc., I think you must be having a pretty merry time. Well, enjoy yourselves. I like to see it. Innocent pleasures are the sweeteners of life. But we should always be careful that our pleasures are innocent. Never do that, or say that, which will cause you to look back upon it with regret or shame. Preserve an entire innocence in thought, word and action if you would be entirely happy.

I have written much in my letter to your mother today which I should have reserved for this. I will, therefore, refer you to it. It is, to be sure, about common, every-day matters, but you must not think lightly of it on that account, for the greater part of life is made up of such matters.

I met a little girl at the door just now as I returned from meeting and gave her a good smack; another little one ran and hid behind the door. Oh, how it reminded me of home and made me long to be among you!

I had a japonica given me the other night which I intended to send home to you in a letter. But in the morning, lo and behold! there was nothing left but the leaves.

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### Death of a Cousin

Washington, March 14, '44.

Dear Wife,

Your letter informing me of the death of Elizabeth Fairfield is received. It must be most grievous and afflicting to

Seth and Phebe, and I have written them a letter expressive of my sympathy.

You must have had a beautiful ride to Portland. I always liked spring sleigh rides. Am very glad Sister Mary is going to make you a visit.

I have sent to Sarah and Augusta today a package of flower seeds. Would it not be best to start some of them in pots? Before any seed is sown in the flower garden, the weeds and roots, etc., should be thoroughly eradicated. The ground is full of them.

Mr. Strong from New York, who has been home on a visit, writes that he is about to bring his wife and three children—the youngest eight weeks old. Perhaps this may operate as some inducement for you to come on. Our weather here is delightful. I have thrown off all outer garments, given up my silk lung protector, taken my summer stockings, and am enjoying myself “as well as could be expected.”

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### An Invitation

Dear Wife,

We have had several very pleasant meetings lately—meetings in which nothing occurred to mar our mutual enjoyment, but awaking and finding it all a dream. I suppose my invitation lately given you to come on here and spend the remainder of the session may have particularly induced these pleasant dreams, so I have gained something by it, even if you should not come on. Mr. Evans introduced a resolution into the Senate today for an adjournment on the 20th of May. I shall vote for it and hope it will pass.

I wish sometimes I could have a lump of your good butter for breakfast. The butter here is grey, greasy and rancid. However, the envy shan't be all on one side, so let me tell you that we have beautiful Carolina potatoes on the table every day—what say? Is not that an additional argument for you to come on? Where shall I meet you, at N. Y. or Boston?

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Keener for Politics Than Ever

Washington, March 24, '44.

Dear Wife,

Your answer to my invitation is about what I expected, though I thought I could see a way in which it could be done, i. e., by placing three of the children at Aunt Cutts' and two at Aunt Augusta's and bringing Johnny with you. But if a resolution just introduced into the Senate should pass, I should care less about your declining to come on. The resolution fixes the day of adjournment on the 20th of May.

What a queer blunder I must have made in my letter to Mrs. Allen. I must have gathered up everything on my table after finishing my letter to Mrs. Allen and put them in the same envelope with hers. Mine to you, I suppose of course, was not sealed. I cannot remember its contents, but trust there was nothing in it that I should wish to keep from the eye of anyone.

Mrs. Murphy promises to comply with your request and look after your husband a little, and she is an excellent hand for the purpose, I can assure you. Already has she reformed three of our mess in regard to smoking and some, I believe, in regard to drinking.

Have just had a call from General Scott. He is nearly as tall as the steeple of St. Paul's, and seems to feel "as huge as Olympus." However, I ought not to complain of him or any other vain man, inasmuch as they add to my stock of happiness. It always gives me pleasure to see people happy and especially well satisfied with themselves.

You asked me at a wrong time if I was not almost sick of politics. The fact is, I feel a deeper interest now than ever and mean to go into the coming contest with all my soul and "feel it in my bones" that we shall triumph.

Love to everybody who loves me, and in a Christian sense to everybody else.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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On Current Politics

Washington, March 26.

Dear Wife,

I write you one day in advance merely to say that the resolution fixing on the 27th of May as the day for adjournment, passed the Senate yesterday without opposition.

Yesterday Mr. Benton made the first half of an excellent speech on the tariff, which is to be continued today. By the bursting of the gun on board the Princeton he has lost the hearing entirely in one ear. By stopping the nostrils he can force the air through his ear, making a noise equal to the wind coming from bellows.

The anticipated annexation of Texas to the United States seems to be creating a terrible commotion at the North.

I suppose the report is true that the President is negotiating a treaty for that purpose but I have no idea that it could be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Senate,—especially if slavery should not first be abolished therein.

Yours as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Worried About Lame Knee

Washington, March 29, '44.

Dear Wife,

Your note of 26, is received. It grieves me much to hear that Augusta's swollen knee is growing worse. The complaint is precisely like my own and I have pretty much made up my mind, on my return home, to have an operation upon the knee, or something done to attempt a cure, for I am satisfied that the difficulty is increasing, and unless something be done, I shall in time lose the use of my leg.

With these views I cannot hesitate to say I very much approve of the suggestion of Sister Mary. By all means let Augusta stay at Portland and let Doctor Clark do what he can. I have no faith in salt and water and besides if she came home to try that experiment, it would not be constantly attended to. By all means let her stay. It is possible that by taking the thing in hand thus early Doctor Clark may be able to do something for her. Poor girl, I can't bear to think of her being lame.

I send you a recipe for making a syrup the best, the very best thing I have ever seen, tasted, or heard of for a laxative. The receipt which I send made 6 bottles, champagne bottles, two of which I gave away, cost 50 cents a bottle.

## Syrup for Dyspepsia or Costiveness

- 8 oz. Lig. Guiac (Lignum vitae shavings)
- 2 oz. Rose Leaves
- 4 oz. Senna
- 4 oz. Strong extract of Sarsaparilla
- 2½ qts. Water
- 4 qts. Maple or sugar house molasses

Flavor with wintergreen.

To make it: Make a decoction by simmering the Lig. Guiac, Rose leaves and Senna in the water. Strain the decoction, and in it dissolve the sarsaparilla, or mix if fluid, and mix with the molasses and simmer until thoroughly mixed 10 or 15 minutes, and it is ready for use.

Dose—From one spoonful to a wine glass full—one, two or three times a day as the patient may find necessary.

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On "Early Rising"

Washington, April 11, '44.

Dear Wife,

I thank you very much for a lock of Johnny's hair. It is beautiful, fine and soft as silk and many shades darker than I supposed it was. I know he must be a good looking little fellow, but I care less about that than other things. Is he not good? He don't get angry and show temper at nothing, does he?

You are right in your conjectures that the information you had to communicate would give me pleasure. I was very glad to learn that for several weeks you have risen and breakfasted by 7 o'clock. Not that I would complain of your lying longer if you wished, for you know my sentiments upon that subject. I always knew of your habit and how much it apparently contributed to your comfort. I had, therefore, determined, on our marriage, that I had no right to complain of it and would not complain of it, which you know I never have done.

Nevertheless, if, of your own accord, you are inclined to rise early, I must admit that it gives me pleasure.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Exhibition of Colt's Submarine Battery

Washington, April 14, '44.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday everybody went to see the grand exhibition, to wit, the blowing up of a ship under full sail by means of Colt's submarine battery, and I, of course, among the rest. There were a few explosions before the blowing up of the ship, as matter of exhibition, by which the water was thrown into the air, a distance, I should think, of two hundred feet.

All things being ready, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon the ship was got under way, sailing up the east branch of the Potomac towards the Navy Yard. In a few minutes the helm was lashed and the crew left her. Once she careened, alone in her glory, for about five minutes after the men left her, when the explosion took place. The battery was let off when the bow of the ship was over it. The bow was apparently raised some 6 or 8 feet, breaking the ship in the center and coming down a perfect wreck. All the fore part of the ship seemed to be entirely demolished. The stern stuck up out of water apparently but little injured. The water was shoal, otherwise I suppose, the whole hull would have disappeared.

The experiment, on the whole, I suppose, may be regarded as a successful one, and Colt will, of course, become a Lion. The battery, as it is called, is, I believe, a keg or large quantity of powder sunk under the place where the vessel is to pass. This is connected by a tube with a galvanic battery on the shore and by which the powder under water is ignited at any desired moment. Its proposed use is to defend our harbors from attack by an enemy. A string of these batteries might be placed across the mouth of a harbor, over which no ship could pass without being blown up.

The idea that all these inventions are for the destruction of men as well as property, is horrible. But they carry with them, I think, one consolation, and that is, that the more perfect these instruments of destruction become, and the more the horrors of war increase, the chances for actual war will diminish. It being nearly meeting time I will leave my letter unfinished and perhaps add a word on my return.

Am sorry to be obliged to say that my knee is worse than it has ever been. The joint is becoming stiffer and weaker and is, moreover, just now not a little sore and painful. I wish Hewitt was here, I would set him to work upon it at once.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.



## Annexation of Texas

Washington, April 13, '44.

Dear Wife,

The treaty for the annexation of Texas to the United States has been signed but not yet sent to the Senate. I doubt if two-thirds of the Senators are in favor of it, which is necessary to secure its confirmation. Opinions, however, are daily changing and no one knows what the result may be.

Judge Niles is still here with us and declines taking his seat. He spent last evening in my room and talks as rationally as he ever did on any subject that may be started. His complaint is not insanity but hypochondria. We hope he will be well enough by and by to take his seat. If he does not, you know, the Whig legislature of Connecticut will choose a Whig in his place. This would be joy to the Whigs but mortification to us.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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On Business Matters

Washington, April 20, 1844.

Dear Wife,

I don't know how early in May the Rumery estate is to be sold, before which I should like to know how many acres, or about how many there are in the pasture adjoining mine. I wish, therefore, you would ask Davis to ascertain, or by looking at it to give me his judgment. Should the sale take place before I give further directions about it, I am willing Davis should bid as high as \$180 for it. Perhaps on ascertaining the quantity I may be willing to go higher.

One thing further I wish to suggest, and that is the sale of the buggy wagon. If you and the children have not become attached to it, I think, as soon as the travelling becomes dry, Davis had better wash it and carry it up to T. K. Lane and have it sold at auction.

I can get something when I get home, if needed, which will suit us much better.

Yours as ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**Fondness for Politics Not Diminished**

Washington, April 21, 1844.

Dear Wife,

Mr. Bulfinch having lost his father, Charles Bulfinch of Boston, did not preach today. In the forenoon we had Mr. Peabody, I believe that is the name, of New Bedford, and Mr. Moor, a Free Will Baptist clergyman of this city in the afternoon. Mr. Peabody's sermon was beautiful and excellent and if he had had sense enough to know when he was done the sermon would have done good, but it was spun out to such an intolerable length that vexation overcame all the previous good impressions. Mr. Moor was so-so—couldn't sleep under it more than half the time.

I dined today at your Uncle Richard's expecting to meet Mrs. Madison, but she was unable to go out. Cousin Mary sends her love. I invited her to go North with me this summer. Possibly she may. By the way, Cousin John Hartley was here last night and wanted me to let one of our girls come on and make them a visit, saying that they were very lonesome since Lucia went away. I told him I thought it was out of the question, but that I would name it to you.

You think my verses to Ellen show that I am not entirely devoted to politics. Hope, therefore, your regret will somewhat diminish. Again let me tell you that my madness in politics (if you think there be any) is not without method. I am not fond of constant turmoil and excitement but am always looking ahead to a haven of quiet happiness. If you fear that politics will supplant you in my affections you are mistaken. Everything in which I engage is subsidiary to the main desire of promoting and securing the happiness of those I love. I have no ambition as connected with myself that I could not crush in a moment if the happiness of wife or children required it.

Yours as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD

**Opposes Annexation of Texas**

Washington, April 28, 1844.

Dear Wife,

Mr. Stetson, one of our mess, has brought his wife, so we have now four ladies. Of course it is four times as agreeable as it would be without them.

You will see by the papers that we have lost another member of the House of Representatives, Mr. Bossier of Louisiana. Two others, Mr. Campbell of South Carolina and Mr. McKay of North Carolina, are quite sick.

Mr. Clay is here and many of his friends, who are on their way to the Baltimore Convention to be holden on Tuesday next. He had a greeting for me in the publication of my letter written to a Louisiana Democratic Association last February, a copy of which I sent you in the Globe.

Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren are both out in opposition to the annexation of Texas, and I am glad of it. Our people in Maine, I found by letters and otherwise, were getting to be strongly in favor of it. Mr. Van B.'s letter will check them a little and set them to thinking. Nothing can be clearer than that by adopting Texas we adopt the war between her and Mexico. Now when I consent to going to war, I want something better to stand on than the acquisition of Texas, which, under any circumstances, would be a little questionable. A bill has been reported to the House providing for the appointment of Commissioners to examine claims for French spoliations. If it pass, about which I have doubts, the great difficulty will have been gotten over. An appropriation for the payment of the claims would follow by and by.

Thine as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Morse Experimenting in Telegraphy

Washington, May 5, 1844.

Dear Sarah,

I have just received a letter from George which I enclose to you. If the old saying be true that "brevity is the soul of wit," what a very witty fellow George must be.

I was much delighted a day or two since in witnessing the operation of Prof. Morse's telegraphic apparatus. He has wires extending now from the Capitol, some 22 miles towards Baltimore, on the track of the railroad. At each end is what is called a galvanic Battery, by means of which and the connecting wires, persons may converse as readily as if standing ten feet only apart. When I went into his room, which is one of the lower rooms in the Capitol, he said his man at the other end

would not be ready to converse until after 5 minutes had elapsed. At the end of that time the machinery began to be operated upon by the galvanic battery at the other end 22 miles off. When a strip of paper was drawn off from a wheel and through rollers, a pronged hammer or whatever you might call it, kept striking up against the paper, making impressions upon it representing letters of the alphabet.

The first thing he, the man at the other end of the wires, did, was to write "junction," which I enclose. This was simply to let him know from which one of two places he was writing. After which Professor Morse asked him several questions, answers to which commenced immediately after the question was asked. "Where is Jim?" said Mr. Morse. "He went to Baltimore last night," was the immediate reply. Taking but little more time than it would to write down the matter with a pen.

It is said this would be the case if the wires extended round the globe. An instant of time would be sufficient for the passage of the electric fluid over the whole distance. All this you will see when you study natural philosophy. It is hard to explain such difficult matters in a letter.

When I come I can tell you more particularly about it. As it is about meeting time I must say I am very affectionately,  
Your Father and friend,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Traitors in Camp

Washington, May 5, 1844.

Dear Wife,

Johnny is one year old today, and as he took one step a week ago, I suppose he can almost run now.

Mr. Dummer was here last night and says Sarah Lord starts for home tomorrow, and that he and Cousin Mary Cleaves go with her as far as New York where they will spend a week.

Our troubles here thicken and multiply greatly and it is not easy to tell what the result will be. Our camp is full of traitors and there is danger in letting them remain and danger in exposing them. The latter course has been thought to be best. The great object of these fellows now is to prevent the nomination of Mr. V. B. who is the strong man, each in hopes that his favorite, whether it be Johnson, Cass, Stewart or another, may be the next successful one. I trust they will all be

disappointed. Would you believe it, I find myself, in these stormy times, one of five or six who consult about and give some direction to, affairs. This I attribute, not to talents, but to my associates' belief, whether true or not, in my honesty, and firmness and perhaps political sagacity. This will do to say to one who is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, and nobody else.

Yours as Ever,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Political Cauldron Boiling

Washington, May 8, 1844.

Dear Wife,

Don't all speak at once now, you and the flock around you—who wants some green peas? Wish I could send them to you, but inasmuch as I could not, why I did the next best thing yesterday, at dinner, to wit, ate them myself. But now just hold your lips together while I inform you that our dessert yesterday and today was strawberries and cream—i. e., southern cream, which is very nearly as good as Yankee skim-milk. The strawberries were rich and of a good size; the crushed sugar, of course white as snow and sweet as sugar; the milk as good as could be expected, being “the product of slave labor,” the right hand ready to replenish the saucer every three minutes. Wasn't this comfortable? I can only ease my conscience for provoking your appetite in this way, by considering that you and I are one. The Good Book says so. Then, if I have eaten strawberries and cream, haven't you? There now, don't that philosophy make you feel as comfortable as if you had just sat down your emptied saucer?

To be serious—if you have read the Globe, you will have seen that on the 30th of April, I think it was, I presented the credentials of Judge Niles. Objection was made to his being sworn. A little discussion arose in which I took part, a committee was appointed to investigate the case and there it rests for the present. He will undoubtedly be permitted to take his seat in a few days, as soon as the committee can get time to tend to the case.

The political cauldron still keeps boiling, sometimes threatening the overthrow of our party and again brightening

up. For myself I think I see a clear sky through the storm and my faith satisfies me that all will come out right at last.

These rascally steel pens make me look on paper like a stranger to you, I fear, but they are better than my quill pens, for these, the moment they are split, seem to be negatively electrified, the points standing as far from each other as possible, looking more like pitchforks than pens.

Love to you and ours in a hurry.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### A Shocking Death

Washington, May 12, '44.

I was shocked to learn by your letter received this morning of the death of your Uncle Dominicus. And such a death, too! From the circumstances which you relate, it would seem that he must have committed the act under some sudden impulse or at all events did not contemplate it in the morning. Immediately after breakfast I went up to your Uncle Richard's and communicated the sad news to them.

Tomorrow is the day when the resolution of the Senate fixing the day of adjournment is to be taken up in the House. I should not be surprised if they should extend the time to the 10th of June or possibly the 17th. I suppose I shall be obliged to remain until the close of the session, as there will be some very important questions to be acted upon perhaps the very last day of the session. The political skies remain somewhat clouded.

I can see little John tottling along to his mother's knees and jumping with delight to find that he can go alone. Poor Hammy, tell him the next time I write, I will endeavor to write better and plainer. Am sorry he was puzzled to find out his letter.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Attended Mrs. Madison's Party

Washington, May 19, 1844.

Dear Wife,

I regret to be obliged to say that Mr. Bulfinch has left us. His pastoral duties and services as instructor of a large school

were too much for his health and the parish is not able to give him an ample support independently of the school and he has left.

Judge Reddington and wife and Ann Longfellow are here. Mrs. R.'s health has improved greatly since she left home two or three weeks ago. Ann is very well apparently, except her voice which is somewhat husky yet. I met them last evening at Cousin John Hartley's. Our day of adjournment is not fixed yet, though I am strongly inclined to the belief that we shall ultimately settle down upon the 17th of June.

Yours as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, May 23, '44.

Dear Wife,

Night before last I attended a select party at Mrs. Madison's. Last night had an invitation to Doctor Sewall's and tonight to Mr. Dummer's. Didn't go to first and can't to last, I believe.

If you can't read this, have patience and I'll read it for you in a few weeks.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Polk Nominated for Presidency

Washington, May 29, '44.

Dear Wife,

I have but a minute to write in. This morning, or rather this afternoon, after 8 ineffectual ballotings, 7 yesterday, and one today, James K. Polk of Tennessee, was unanimously nominated for the Presidency.

This evening, say about 1/2 past 6, Mr. Wright was nominated for the Vice-Presidency, and in a minute or two afterward sent back to the Convention by Morse's telegraph an absolute refusal to be run. Gov. Morton, I think, will now be nominated and we shall have a good ticket.

Mrs. Cutts came down today and says Martha wants to go on with me. Have an invitation to dine with British Minister on Saturday. Shan't go, I think.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Voted on For Vice-President

Washington, May 30, '44.

Dear Wife,

To my astonishment I received yesterday in the Baltimore Convention the highest vote for Vice-President on the first trial, but not a majority. I had 9 states: to wit, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island, New York, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri, making 106 votes. Woodbury had 44; Dallas, 13; Cass, 39; Johnson, 26; Stewart, 23; Marcy, 5; self, 106. On second ballot, Dallas had 220; Fairfield, 30; Woodbury, 6. I am informed that I should have been nominated on 2d ballot if it had not been thought that my course when Governor in the controversy between Maine and Georgia and my views on the treaty would operate against me in the South. With the result I am entirely satisfied. It is honor enough for me to have been a candidate for nomination.

I am writing in the Senate and am happy to be able to say that the Senate have this moment concurred with the House in fixing the 17th of June as the day for adjournment.

This morning a bill was sent to me by Wm. Fischer as follows, viz.:

"Mrs. ——— Fairfield to Wm. Fischer, Dr.  
1841, July 1. To curling fluid .....\$1.00"

I wish I had time to crack some jokes upon this; it affords a fine subject. The mystery probably may be solved by inserting before your name, Mrs. Sumner L.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## No Desire to Be Vice-President

Washington, June 2d, '44.

Dear Wife,

Two weeks from tomorrow, Providence permitting, I trust I shall be on my way home.

I presume you were as much astonished as some other folks, not omitting myself, at my being a "prominent candidate for the Vice-Presidency" in the Baltimore Convention. What the deuce has got into people! They seem to be determined to consider me a very clever fellow to thrust honors upon me "whether I will or no." Yesterday it was reported here



that Dallas had declined, whereupon not a few here began to rejoice and to talk of my immediate nomination by a Congressional Convention. The rumor, however, turns out to be untrue, and I am glad to it. I would prefer a much humbler station, one better suited to my talents and tastes. "Ain't I modest?" Well, I don't care whether I am believed or not, I speak the truth.

Yesterday I met Mrs. Cutts and Miss Stross in the street. I could have brought away a bushel of compliments if I had gullibility enough to swallow them. Mrs. C. complains dreadfully of poverty and wants me to get some place for Stephen. He has been out of employment the whole session. Sam owns a farm 3 or 10 miles out of the city and lives on it. I don't see that she and her husband can do better than to doff their gentility and go on to the farm with Sam. Met Cousin John Hartley also and his wife yesterday. They are both well and happy. John has a good salary and his wife is an excellent manager, and so they get along, I should think, right comfortably.

Heard Mr. Buckingham again today. His sermon was as long as a turnpike and sleepy as a pillow of hops. He needs a little more worldly wisdom.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Texas Treaty Debate Ended

Washington, June 9, '44.

Dear Wife,

Last night we had an evening session for the first time, and terminated the debate on the Texas treaty. The vote was 15 for the ratification and 35 against it. I was among the nays. Col. Benton gave immediate notice of his intention to bring in a bill on Monday morning, providing for the annexation of Texas in a way which should not be attended with war nor violate our faith with Mexico. I can go for such a measure as that.

You will perceive that the papers insist upon it that I went to Philadelphia and in the dead of night and to the alarm of everybody announced to Mr. Dallas his nomination to the Vice-Presidency, while in fact I was snugly ensconced in my bed at Washington, dreaming of far more agreeable matters

than politics, to wit, of wife and children and all the dear delights of home. I don't know how the mistake originated, but I have not deemed it of sufficient consequence to make a public correction of it. When you wrote last you had not heard of my being a candidate in the Baltimore Convention. I can assure you I am much better pleased with the result than if I had been nominated.

Heard Mr. Buckingham again today at our church. Don't like him. His sermons are unendurably long. It is bad enough to sit and take his cold water without being obliged to drink a hogshead at a time. This, I learn, is his last Sabbath here.

Ever Yours,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Wouldn't Travel on Sabbath

Washington, June 15, '44.

Dear Wife,

I am pretty much over my ill turn. Hope to be entirely well before reaching home. Martha Cutts goes with me to Kennebunk. Cousin Mary can't go now,—but says she may come along by and by. Shall try to call on Cousins Hartley and Dummer before I leave.

Thank you for your very judicious suggestion against travelling on the Sabbath. It accords precisely with my own views and feelings. I had not intended to start on Saturday.

When shall I start? That's the question. As near as I can guess on Monday or Tuesday morning. If the business is pretty much all done up by tomorrow night, leaving little or nothing for Monday, I shall start on that day.

Yours Ever,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Senator Fairfield Campaigning

Waterville, Aug. 14, '44.

Dear Wife,

I arrived here last night after a very pleasant passage. My present arrangement is to go to Boston tomorrow afternoon by steamboat, and return home on Saturday by railroad. Should I change my plans I will endeavor to notify you of it.

J. F.

Norway, Sept. 3d.

Dear Wife,

My engagements remaining unfulfilled are at Casco tomorrow, Wednesday; Gray, Thursday; Freeport, Friday, and Saccarappa Saturday afternoon. I wish Davis or somebody to be at Donnell's tavern in Scarboro Saturday afternoon, where I shall endeavor to be by 6 o'clock. Health remains good. Glorious meeting today. Only 3,000 of the Oxford bears present. Wait for the rest till I see you.

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Portland, Sept. 5th.

Dear Wife,

I write to say that you need not send to Scarboro for me on Saturday. The Standish folks have persuaded the Saccarappa folks to let me go to the former place on Saturday afternoon, Col. Pool agreeing to see me home Saturday night.

I have just arrived here from Gray where I spoke today. Tomorrow I go to Freeport.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Goes to Boston Physician

U. S. Hotel, Boston, Oct. 15, '44.

Dear Wife,

Arrived here last evening about 10, "safe" if not "sound." This morning called on Dr. Hewett and had another examination of my knee. He says it is much worse than it was when he examined it a year and a half ago, and does not speak so strongly as he did as to an entire cure. The process that he deems the most effective and most certain to cure would require months, say 3 or 4, of confinement. That is out of the question with me at this time, at all events. The next best course, in his opinion, is to get rid of the difficulty by absorption. This, he says, may be done externally and internally (How it is to be done internally is beyond my comprehension). And I am inclined to think he prefers this course himself. If the cure should not be so radical, there will be much less danger in the process than in the other. Indeed, in this I presume there can be none.

He says he must have me with him a fortnight, at least, and I have concluded to stop and let him go to work. He commenced operations this forenoon, occupying less than an hour. Beginning with a hot bath of a very strong decoction of some very strong articles and following it with friction or a sort of animal magnetism manipulations and bathing with what smelt like alcohol or ether. On leaving he gave me two bottles from each of which I am to bathe and rub three times a day, the two kinds not interfering with each other, making, as you perceive, six times a day.

His house was full and consequently he could not take me in. I am at the U. S. Hotel now, but think I shall look out for a private boarding house tomorrow.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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“Husking Night”

Boston, Oct. 17, 1844.

Dear Wife,

After wearisome travellings and various discussions with landlords and landladies, at last here I am set down at “No. 24 Franklin Place” where Mr. Calef and Hannah boarded. Hewett and his operations are going on as usual. Every forenoon I go to his house, where my knee goes through the hot bath and then the process of friction by Hewett. After which 4 times a day thus far (ought to be 6) I bathe and rub myself. Can’t say that I feel any great improvement yet, but have confidence that the improvement will come. I talked with Hewett today about Augusta. He says send her along and I’ll cure her. When I return we will talk about it.

This is husking night! isn’t it? Oh, what a grand time you are to have—success to ye—“Away with melancholy” and let all hearts be tuned to happiness and husks.

Yours as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD

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Visit From Bancroft

Boston, Oct. 21, 1844.

Dear Wife,

I was very agreeably surprised today on going down to dinner to meet Mary Calef on the stairs. Mr. Calef I have not

seen yet. Mary sails tomorrow in the ship Milton for Mobile. She seems to be pleased with the idea of going, and I hope it will prove a happy expedient for restoring her to health.

Am sorry to say that I can feel and see no improvement as yet. Indeed, I have slept but little for the last three nights, such has been the pain in my knee and shin.

Yesterday I went to hear Mr. Gannett, but found Mr. Morrison of New Bedford. He gave us, however, a very good sermon for a metaphysical one. In the afternoon Gannett himself preached. He is lame and awkward in appearance but gave us such a sermon, practical though it was, as no one but a man of genius and fervent piety could give.

In the evening, Gough Green, the reformed gambler, held forth at the Odeon,—but I did not attend. Indeed, ever since I have been here there have been a variety of entertainments, intellectual and otherwise, going on in the evenings, but I have eschewed them all. I find it difficult enough to get about by day with my game leg, without risking the perils of the night.

Saturday night I had a long and interesting visit from Mr. Bancroft. I admire him, his greatness is so tempered by simplicity. I like him again because our thoughts are so much alike on political subjects and our views of political men.

J. F.

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### Excitement Among Millerites

Boston, Oct. 24, '44.

Dear Wife,

For the last two days I have had strong hopes of improvement. The knee is not so stiff or so weak as it was last week. This morning, however, I have those nervous pains in my shin and foot which have so long troubled me.

Mary Calef is still here, the vessel not having sailed for want of a wind. Lewella Bell is also here, and we are having fine times, I assure you. Mary's health is pretty good, and she appears to be in fine spirits. Lewella is the picture of health and beauty and charms us with her music and pleasantries. She well remembers and speaks of George and Walter and the sport they used to have in the old Tapley house. She and Mary accompany each other to Mobile. The ship in which they go (the Milton) is a large, noble looking ship, nearly new, and having very fine accommodations. I wish you would let

them know into Mr. Calef's that the ship has not sailed and why. I told Mary I would write today for that purpose.

Since I have been here there has been a good deal of excitement among the Millerites. The great day, however, is past and it is said that Himes, the principal, has gone to Europe with a large amount of money. There may be something in it, but exaggeration is to be expected now when so many are suffering the mortification of their delusion.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Returned to Washington

Washington, Nov. 29.

Dear Wife,

I hail once more from the great City, having arrived here last night at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7. Came directly to Mrs. Scott's, where I found only my old friend, Mr. King. I have taken my old room and shall probably keep it, especially as Mrs. Scott has been sprucing it up a little. Mr. Wright, I learn, very much to my regret, is not coming on. On looking for my letters for delivery I find some of them missing. I have the package that Edward Hartley brought down for his Father, a letter to Mary Cleaves and one to Mrs. Ela. These are all I find in the trunk or in pockets. Now where are the rest? I guess they must be in my wrapper pocket hanging in the entry. Do look and see and if they are there send them on as soon as possible.

Did I not also leave on the parlor table letters for Reuel Williams and some others? If so, I wish them put into the post-office. What a confounded careless fellow I am.

Yours as ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Mrs. Madison Grows Younger and Handsomer

Washington, Dec. 22d, 1844.

Dear Wife,

I have an invitation from Cousin Mary to dine with her today, when I am to meet Mrs. Madison, I believe. After my return, if I have time, I will give you some account of it. We dine at 2. Uncle Richard bought a great turkey and other things last week to give Mrs. Madison and me a dinner, but

in the night some one carried them all off. They were placed in a refrigerator standing in the back yard. Very cool, wasn't it?

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**5 O'clock.** Just returned. At dinner met Mrs. Madison, Anna Paine, Madison Cutts and wife and a Mr. Hayes, member of Congress from Pennsylvania. Had an excellent dinner and very pleasant time. Bill of fare, roast turkey, boiled chickens, boiled ham, stewed oysters, venison steak, etc. Mrs. M. is a pretty good trencher man, I can assure you. I thought she ate enormously. She appeared, though, younger and handsomer than I ever saw her before and was in fine spirits. Anna Paine is all life and animation, full of fun and up to all sorts of jokes.

Love to our dear little chips.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### George at Bowdoin

Washington, Dec. 23d, 1844.

Dear Wife,

I enclose George's term bill, the amount of which you can furnish him when he leaves for Brunswick. I like the account, etc., at the bottom with the exception of the "2 mornings absent without excuse." Let George make his excuse to you if he can.

**24th.** I have just received an invitation to dinner next Saturday, 6 o'clock, from Mr. Packenham, the British minister. Believe I shall accept it, though I had rather stay at home by a great deal.

Now don't laugh. There is nothing like the hair mittens. I get up pretty early, and after rubbing or washing with a wet towel and wiping dry, I spend from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour with the mitten. I "fancy" it has improved me much generally and particularly. Your steam engine lays snugly stowed away in the trunk. Its proximity has done some good, perhaps, without other use of it.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Dinner at British Minister's

Washington, Dec. 29, 1844.

Dear Sarah:

Tired of waiting for your letter, I have concluded to send you mine, hoping that you may thereby be waked up to a little effort for my gratification. I ought, however, to submit with tolerable patience to this absence of letters from you, inasmuch as I have you in propria persona before me every day at the breakfast, dinner and tea-table, grown up to twenty-one. "Why, Father, how you talk!" Wait a moment and let me explain. Opposite to me at the table every day sits Miss Lucalia Niles, niece of Judge Niles, between whom and you there is a very striking likeness. The shape of the head, color of hair and features of the face, are alike. The differences are that you have rather the blackest eye and she has the softest complexion. If I add to this, my opinion, that she is quite handsome, I suppose you will not be disposed to find fault with my aptitude at discovering resemblances.

Yesterday, agreeably to invitation, I went to dine with Mr. Packinham, the British minister. He is an old bachelor, say about 55 years old, and lives in the house owned and formerly occupied by Danl. Webster. The hour of dining was six. The door was opened by a servant dressed in uniform—say blue coat, faced with white, very similar to the uniform coats of our militia captains, white small clothes, white silk stockings and shoes. Another in the same uniform took my cloak and hat and a third, I believe, opened the parlor door and announced me by name, having first inquired what it was.

After exchanging salutations, I looked about and found the company to consist of the following persons: Seven Senators, Col. Benton, Gov. Woodbury, Mr. Allen, Mr. Haywood, Mr. Sturgeon, Mr. Semple and himself. Also, Mr. Ellsworth, commissioner of patents, Mr. Dickens, secretary of the Senate, Mr. Morse, the inventor of the famous electric telegraph, Mr. Greenhow, the author, Lieut. Fremont, who has several times crossed the Rocky Mountains and published accounts thereof, and one young gentleman whose name I did not learn.

The table was covered with a rich, massive service of pure silver, consisting of a large and elegant candelabra in the center and two smaller ones at either end of the table, large and elegant dishes holding oyster pies and things of that description. Our knives and forks were also of solid silver. The first



course was soup; 2d, fish, bass; 3d, "sweetbread" with tomato sauce; 4th, chicken curiously cooked; 5th, je ne sais quoi; 6th, canvas back ducks; 7th, boiled ham; 8th, oyster pie; 9th, saddle of mutton. All intermixed with jelled jams, sauces, etc., etc., and followed by ice creams, cakes, grapes, knick-knacks, etc., etc. I have not enumerated probably much more than half, and don't suppose I have them arranged in exact order, but it is as near as I can recollect.

As a matter of curiosity I ate a little from almost every dish and in consequence thereof had rather a sleepless night. Today, however, I found I could eat my allowance at dinner as well as others. We sat at table about two hours, a light, pleasant conversation going on the while. After leaving the table and retiring to the parlor again strong coffee was brought in. Soon after which we "old uns" made our bow and got home about 9 o'clock. How long the others staid, can't say. There, what do you think fo such a dinner as that? How would you and George like to show your skill in despatching it?

There was one thing about it, which I had forgotten, and which I particularly liked, to wit, there were no black odoriferous niggers about.

I think, however, this will be the last dinner party I shall attend this session. They will do for some folks better than they will for me.

Your Affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.



## CHAPTER X.

Early in the year of 1845 Senator Fairfield was re-elected to the U. S. Senate and with an unanimity that surprised and gratified him. During the forming of the new Cabinet that year there was much talk of making Mr. Fairfield Secretary of the Navy. He admits in the following letters to his wife that it is a position which he would like, as much, perhaps, because of the benefit the increased salary would be to his growing family, for whom he felt he ought to be making surer future provision, as for the honor and his liking for the task itself. That position would give him \$6,000 a year and he felt that he could make good use of it.

His rival was George Bancroft, the historian, for whom he has already expressed a liking in former letters. Mr. Bancroft had repeatedly declared that he was more than ready to give his chance to Fairfield. This is plainly stated in a letter to Mr. Fairfield, in which he said:

“Some persons are suggesting my name for consideration in making up the Cabinet. This is done by some personal friends with the kindest motives; by some with a view to counteract your wishes; by some for ulterior purposes. I cannot directly take notice of this myself in the present aspect of things; but I have written to several whose friendship I cherish and avowed to them my views with the same frankness with which I opened myself to you. I am convinced that a position like that at Berlin would be considered as better suited to my purposes of life than a seat in the cabinet; and I write this letter, of which you will make none but a discreet use, that you may be able, if opportunity offers, to interpret my feelings without fear of mistake.

“With regard to yourself, the opposition to you in Maine is comparatively feeble; I advise you through your friends to urge on the period of your re-election. That should be done at once at the meeting of your Legislature, and then you may safely leave affairs to their natural development.

"Mr. Henshaw's friends speak of him with some hope that he may one day resume the Navy Department, and as that could not be accomplished immediately, it is possible that some might wish to see the post filled temporarily. You do not need any assurance from me that I shall lend myself to no such purpose.

"Thanks for your maps and the pamphlet. Very valuable they are, to me. The Whigs are dreadfully savage, worse than I ever knew them. Write to me."

The letter marked "very private," is dated Boston, Dec. 26, 1844, and bears this signature:

*Faithfully yours*

*George Bancroft*

Senator Fairfield did leave things to their natural development. He was a man who never pushed his candidacy or worked for office. Notwithstanding Mr. Bancroft's protestations that he did not want the office, it was given to him and he accepted it. In doing this, Senator Fairfield, always fair and generous-minded, always maintained there was no hypocrisy in his attitude at the time he wrote the letter and he never laid it up against Bancroft for changing his mind. It was believed that Senator Fairfield was secretly disappointed that the secretaryship was given to another, but if so he covered his disappointment well, consoling himself with the thought that he could the sooner get home to his loved ones and that he still held a good office.

The disappointment of his friends, as usual in the case of his defeats, outweighed his own. The incident only increased





Great-Grandchildren of John Fairfield

his popularity and there were prophecies of his future Presidency. What the future would actually have brought him we can never know, for his career was cut off in its prime. The letters continue:





## Aspires to Seat in Cabinet

Washington, Jan. 3, 1845.

Dear Wife,

Your last letter, dated the 28th, was quite philosophical. And I must confess it requires some philosophy to live as you do, with all the family cares thrown upon you, having not only no help from, but not even the countenance of, your husband. But these are evils, Dear Wife, that are unavoidable for the present. We must hope for better things by and by.

The honors of public office, I don't care a rush about. My object now is to scrape a little something together for the benefit of those whom I love beyond all the world beside. How I shall succeed, time only can show. A seat in the Cabinet with \$6000 a year, if I have my health, would probably aid me in carrying my projects into effect, better than almost anything else that could be given me. About that, however, I shall not be sanguine. And if I can get my re-election to the Senate, I shall not have any great degree of solicitude about the other.

By night the swelling in my foot and ankle subsides, so that I can wear my boots, both boots. During the day, however, it (the ankle, not the boot) swells up again. No inflammation or soreness.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

I have a ten dollar bill of Saco money that I can send you when you want it.

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## Sees Mrs. Alexander Hamilton

Washington, Jan. 10, 1845.

Dear Wife,

I attended a large party at Blair's on night of 8th January, the only one I intended to attend for the session. It was a splendid affair. Got home at 12 and then sat up till one, reading letters. Yesterday the widow of Alexander Hamilton, near 90 years old, I believe, was in the gallery of the Senate. She looked like one of our plain old-fashioned ladies, cap and all. She appeared to take a deep interest in the debate, and is, I am told, a very intelligent and interesting lady.

It is rumored today that Clingman of North Carolina and Yancey of Alabama have gone somewhere out of the city or

rather out of the district to prepare for a duel. I fear there may be some truth in the rumor. Clingman is a bitter Whig and a few days ago made a bitter and abusive speech. Yancey replied and made, it is said, one of the most eloquent speeches ever made in that Hall. He was very severe and sarcastic upon Clingman who, it is said, means to seek his remedy by challenging Y. to fight him.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Consults Dr. Harris

Washington, Jan. 12, '45.

Dear Wife,

Judge Mason, Secretary of Navy, has been urging me for some time to permit him to introduce me to Doc. Harris, Chief of the Bureau of Medicine, etc., a branch of the Navy Department, for the purpose of procuring his opinion and advice upon my knee. He thinks Harris has not his superior in the United States, so yesterday I went with him. After examination, the Doctor said that the collection about the knee was water, and that he could cure it, making the joint as good as it ever was, whenever I would consent to lay by two months.

He said it would never do to use caustics and make a sore—that it would be attended with great danger. That a mere puncture was sufficient through which to draw off the water, and that then the air must be entirely excluded from it. That it must be kept tightly bound up and the leg not used for about two months. He thinks I might be a good deal benefited by a laced stocking which I can get made in Philadelphia, in which the whole leg is kept tightly bound. Capt. Tallcott of the Army, he says, had just such a knee, and has been entirely cured by him. All this is encouraging, and when I can get 2 months leisure I think the experiment will be tried. I keep up the use of the hair mitten yet, and find it useful, so far as regards my general health and by consequence, probably, the particular difficulty.

Nothing particularly new here, except the rumor that a duel is in process of being got up between Clingman of North Carolina and Yancey of Alabama. They are both in Maryland carrying on a correspondence preparatory to a duel.

I hope they will both be arrested and they probably will be before anything serious occurs.

In bonds of love and matrimony

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Yancey-Clingman Duel

Washington, Jan. 15, 1845.

Dear Wife

According to my letters today (Wednesday) is the day fixed for an election of U. S. Senator in Maine Legislature. So before this time the deed is done and I am re-elected, or I am not. My anxieties upon the subject are not very great. That may, however, be owing, in part, to the pretty strong probabilities that I have a very considerable majority of the Democrats in my favor. As, however, "there is many a slip between the cup and the lip" I will endeavor to be tolerably modest.

Yancey and Clingman exchanged shots and "nobody was kilt." The tragedy was turned into a farce.

Just had a call from Mr. Dummer, Almira in the meanwhile taking a ride. I see nobody who seems to be more interested in my re-election and appointment to the Cabinet than they are.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Re-elected to U. S. Senate

Washington, Jan. 19, '45.

Dear Wife,

Yesterday I received news of my re-election to the Senate, and with a degree of unanimity that I had not been anticipating. If anybody has reason to be grateful, am I not the one? Now, I feel but little solicitude about being invited to a seat in the new cabinet. With the latter place, to be sure, I could make most money, but then it has some offsets. My condition upon the whole, is rather comfortable, that is, an alternative between two good offices. Nothing has transpired to change the aspect of the case so far as regards the Secretaryship, since

I wrote last. Mr. Polk will not be here until about the 20th of February and I doubt if there be any announcement of appointments until after that time.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Annexation of Texas

Washington, Jan. 26, 1845.—The resolutions for the annexation of Texas passed the House yesterday by a vote of 119 to 98. I do not exactly like the resolutions, inasmuch as they have nearly the whole territory a slave territory. Think we shall amend them in the Senate. Our Legislature, I perceive, are discussing the question of instructions to the Maine delegation in Congress. It will be queer if the whole thing is settled here before they come to any conclusion among themselves.

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Washington, Jan. 30, 1845.—Dating my letter reminds me that this day I am 48 years old—"Tempus fugit"—and we fly with it.

Happy should we be if we could always truly say that the years marked our progress in wisdom and virtue as well as our progress towards the grave. But most of us live on to "Resolve, and re-resolve and die the same."

Dined once with the British minister and attended one party at Blair's. This is about the extent of my participation in high life.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Texas, Callers, Hopes and Fears

Washington, Feb. 2, 1845.

Dear Wife,

Talking as I do about the anticipated appointment, "should I not be dreadfully disappointed and mortified if I failed to receive it?" No, by no means, my dear child.

The truth is I think it is very doubtful what the President will do in this respect, and in the next place I don't care much what he does. If the appointment possesses many advantages,

it has also its offsets. To you, however, I need not enumerate them, they will occur to your mind as readily as to my own.

Nevertheless the balance is probably in favor of the appointment, so if it comes I will take it thankfully. If it do not, I will submit without murmuring or repining, and believe that all is for the best.

On Sunday we dine at 2 o'clock and immediately after, I commenced writing the above, intending to write at some length and afterward to go up to Mr. Ela's and take tea. But when I had gotten thus far Gen. Dix, senator from New York, and Judge Niles, came into my room and have been here talking, talking and talking until it is now near tea time. Judge N. is the most inveterate talker I ever knew. Stand a barrel of water on its head, pull out a small spile near the bottom, and the running stream will give you some idea of his stream of conversation. Genl. Dix, the successor of Mr. Wright, I like very much. Modest and unassuming, but a man of superior talents. The Legislature of Maine, it seems, has postponed indefinitely the resolutions introduced there to instruct its Senators how to vote upon the question of annexation of Texas. As they have left it entirely to my discretion, I am the more anxious to do what I believe they would have me do. My impression is that Texas will be admitted in some shape or other, and probably with my vote. Gen. Dix has just come to Judge Niles and me from Col. Benton to tell us confidentially that he intends tomorrow to introduce a new scheme and make a speech upon it—a scheme that all of us can go for. And we learn, moreover, that it will have the approbation of Gen. Jackson, which will be a great point gained.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Meets President-Elect Polk

Washington, Feb. 14, 1845.

Dear Wife,

The President arrived here last night. This morning Judge Niles and I called upon him. Found him just what he used to be, plain, frank, honest and agreeable. Did not see Mrs. Polk. She is a good deal used up by her journey. Nothing new as to Cabinet. A few days must give us some important developments.

Yours ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

**Doubts About Cabinet**

Washington, Feb. 16, 1845.

Dear Wife,

A friend has just been in to give me his opinion that I am not to be selected for one of the Cabinet. His reasons are these, Parmenter of Massachusetts received a letter a few days since from Mr. Bancroft, in which he positively said that he should not be in Washington until after the inauguration of President. Last night, however, he arrived, and Hallett of Boston and Parmenter intimate that they have good reason to believe that he has been invited to go into the cabinet, and has come on by invitation of the President for that purpose.

Now all this may be so, but I shall not give credence to it without the strongest proof. Bancroft, you know, has all along been corresponding confidentially with me, and has professed to be warmly in favor of my going into the cabinet, he not wishing the place himself, but having his eye on another thing. My friend thinks this is all gammon and that Bancroft has been playing double with me. I don't believe it. I have more faith in man. I have full confidence that in his letters to me he has been perfectly sincere and honest, and that time will demonstrate it. Tomorrow probably he will call on me, when I can guess the true state of the case if it is not communicated to me.

The interest taken in this matter by everybody as the time approaches for action, is very deep. Shall be glad when it is all over. I can derive some consolation from my failure should I fail, inasmuch as I shall sooner be at home.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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**Meets Bancroft at Mrs. Polk's**

Washington, Feb. 18, 1845.

Dear Wife,

I told you that Bancroft arrived Saturday night. Monday forenoon he called to see me and left his card, but while he was doing that I was calling upon him and leaving my card. Last night I called up again at Colman's where he stops and where the President also has quarters, and finding him (B.) out again, I improved the occasion to call on Mrs. Polk whom I had not

seen. While spending a very agreeable half hour with her, Bancroft came in. He was very cordial, and notwithstanding what has been insinuated, I believe perfectly sincere. I, of course, invited him to call upon me, and expected he would today, but he has not.

Judge Niles saw him yesterday and from the conversation the Judge gathered that he had been urged by certain persons (my opponents in Maine, I presume) to become a candidate for a place in the Cabinet. That, he was half inclined to, but was unwilling to thwart or interfere with my wishes. In this state of the case, I think the appointment lies between us. I hope to see him tonight, and bring him to an explanation. The President, it is thought, will announce his selection in two or three days.

There is hardly anything else talked of, and a deep interest is manifested, for on this the character and complexion of his administration is supposed to depend. Rumor is constantly making up tickets or lists of the Cabinet on half of which, perhaps, my name may be found.

Have an invitation tomorrow night to Mrs. Tyler's ball, but I won't go. Yesterday he sent in another nomination for a Collector in Maine! For one who will act so outrageously I can have no respect and can't conscientiously attend his balls or parties. For Thursday night have an invitation to Doctor Sewell's and another to Mrs. Ela's. Think I shall accept the latter, if any. Love to all.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Much Doubt on Cabinet

Washington, Feb. 20, '45.

Dear Wife,

I have seen Mr. Bancroft and am satisfied that he has changed his views and is now desirous of going into the Cabinet himself. I cannot and will not think he was insincere when he wrote me heretofore. His ambition is too strong to keep it in subjection to his former disposition to oblige me. What is to be the result of all this I cannot guess. The President still maintains his imperturbable silence. Everybody guesses his intentions but no one knows them. I shall be as well prepared now

to hear of the appointment of another as of my own, and in that case I shall the sooner be with my loved ones. I am prepared for anything. Is not my condition a happy one?

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Texas Annexation Bill Passes Senate

Washington, Feb. 28.

Dear Wife,

The bill providing for the annexation of Texas passed last night by a vote of 27 to 25. All the Democrats and 3 Whigs composed the majority.

It creates a time of general rejoicing here. During the voting, the Senate was thronged and the most intense interest prevailed. Nothing yet known about the Cabinet, but I fear Maine will have no lot or part in the matter, so expect me home along by and by.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Gives Up Cabinet Hopes

March 2, 1845.—Time only for a word. The letters throng in upon me so that weeks will be required to answer them. We are also up to our chins in business in the Senate. The session continued last night (Saturday) until 12 o'clock. Tomorrow is the last day of the session and the last of the Tyler dynasty, at which I rejoice. I am satisfied now that I am not to go into the Cabinet and I can assure you I feel quite reconciled to it. Home looms up at the reflection.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Bancroft Named for Cabinet

March 7, 1845.

Dear Wife,

Day before yesterday the Cabinet was nominated thus: Buchanan, Secretary of State; Walker, Secretary of Treasury;



Gov. Marcy, Secretary of War; Bancroft, Secretary of Navy; Jno. J. Mason, Attorney-General, and Case Johnson, Postmaster-General. All have been confirmed by the Senate except Bancroft, I think he will be on Monday next. The opposition to him does not come from me. On the contrary I have been appointed Chairman of Committee on Naval Affairs and have to defend him. Is not that a little curious?

We have adjourned over (wrongfully though) until Monday, so I shall get a little respite. For the last week or so, I have not been able to get more than 4 or 5 hours sleep out of the 24.

Last night we had a great fire here, burning the National theatre and the roofs and insides of several dwelling houses. The fire took, I believe, among the scenery while the play was being performed. Have not heard of anybody being injured.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### President Polk Explains

Washington, March 9, '45.

Dear Wife,

By special appointment of the President I went to see him at 5 o'clock yesterday and had a private interview with him. He was desirous of explaining the appointment of Bancroft, and of driving away any hard feelings on my part if I should entertain them. He was very kind and assured me that he had not passed over Maine in the formation of his Cabinet from any want of respect or esteem for me, for I had not a better friend on earth than he was, and he hoped some place would present itself during his four years which would suit me better than the one he now sought, etc., etc. Our interview was brief but very satisfactory. In all the appointments in our State, I shall have all the influence that I ought to have, and no mistake.

I have had one letter from George since he went to Brunswick and shall try to give him one before I leave Washington.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Some Maine Appointments

Senate Chamber, March 13, 1845.

Dear Wife,

Senator Bates of Massachusetts now lies dangerously ill. The President has requested me to remain a few days after the adjournment of the Senate, consequently I am unable to say precisely when I shall be at home.

Yesterday Capt. Jordan was nominated Collector of Customs at Saco. Today Osborne of Kennebunk was nominated for Collector at that place and one of my old Councillors, N. C. Fletcher, as Chaplain in the Navy. Our postmaster at Saco will not be appointed until after my return home.

Love to all.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

A. G. Jewett was yesterday nominated as Charge d'affaires to Peru.

## Death of Senator Bates of Massachusetts

Washington, March 17, '45.

Dear Wife,

Mr. Bates died last night about 6 o'clock and is to be buried tomorrow, or rather the funeral ceremonies will be performed and then the corpse will be taken to the cars and carried to Massachusetts.

In consequence of this the Senate will not probably adjourn until Thursday.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Hasting Back to Washington

Washington, April 12.

Dear Wife,

Thus far, I have succeeded pretty well in my objects and I am very glad I came on. I fear that most mischievous consequences would have resulted from my absence.

Washington, April 13, 1845.—Almost the first news that met me on my arrival here was the death of your Uncle Richard. He died last Monday after having been confined only a few days. He was buried yesterday. I attended the funeral and rode with Mrs. Madison. President Adams was one of the pall bearers.

Can't tell as yet when I may be home. My presence was necessary here, and I am very glad I came on.

---

Washington, April 18.—I shall probably leave here for home tomorrow, Sunday will stop me one day, and a visit to Gov. Wright at Albany, perhaps another day.

Dr. Nourse was appointed Collector at Bath today, and other arrangements made of which I am not at liberty now to speak. Some things are well and some not quite so well, but all might have been much worse.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Once More in Washington

Washington, Nov. 29, '45.

Dear Wife,

Once more located in my little 12 by 14, I embrace the very first leisure moment to commence my old and agreeable occupation. I reached here last night about 8 o'clock and came directly to Mrs. Satts', who I found very glad to see me and all prepared for us—I mean Judge Niles and myself. The Judge I fell in with at Philadelphia, having with him his bran new young, accomplished and amiable wife, to whom he was very slyly united on Wednesday last in New York, and having with him also his niece, Kate Robinson, both of whom, I suppose, are to spend the session with us. I will tell you more about them by and by. Mr. King, our good-natured bachelor, is to come here tonight, and a Mr. Gordon, another member from New York. Farther than this, our mess is not made up.

Called upon the President today but finding him busy in Cabinet meeting, went in to see Mrs. Polk. Had a very pleasant call and among others met our sweet cousin, Anna Payne. She wants to see you much and regretted that you had not

come on with me. Cousin Mary has been here a couple of weeks and is now at her Aunt Madison's. Richard is not married yet but expects to be, as Anna said, about the 16th of December.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Dec. 1, 1845.

Dear Wife,

Went to meeting twice yesterday carrying "Kate Robinson" with me. She is a very handsome, sensible, witty, humorous, amiable and excellent girl and if she were not engaged and expecting to be married shortly, would captivate half the beaux in Washington. Mrs. Niles, also, I like much. She is about 35 or 40 and is a woman of mind and good education. I think my old friend has made a very happy choice. Yesterday he gave me a detailed account of his courtship and marriage which I may give to you some time when leisure will permit.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Brother George's Case

Washington, Dec. 3, '45.

Dear Wife,

I am sorry to say that the verdict in Brother George's favor at Philadelphia does not seem to be so secure as I at first thought. I have received another letter from Mr. Wharton by which I learn that a motion for a new trial has first to be decided by the Judge who tried the case. Generally, of course, this is mere matter of form, because it is to be presumed that a Judge will adhere to the same doctrines for a few days at least. The Judge, in this case however, it seems, doubts the correctness of his ruling at the trial. That is to say, he doubts if it was correct in him to leave it to the Jury to determine whether Bro. George returned the machine within a reasonable time, that being a question of law which he should have determined himself. The point is to be argued in a few days and I am very fearful of the result.

Called last night at Mrs. Madison's, saw Cousins Mary and Anna Payne, both well and frisky. Richard is also stopping there. Expects to be married the 16th inst. and has invited me to the wedding. As the ceremony, however, is to be

performed at Norfolk, a day and night's journey from here, I shall ask to be excused.

I am having some shelves put up and fixing my room for a six years' residence, some alone and some with wife.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Called on President

Washington, Dec. 7, '45.

Dear Wife,

A few nights since I called at Mrs. Madison's, saw Mary and Anna, etc. The latter was very much pleased that you sent her your love. Mrs. M. appears about as she did last winter. The footprints of age are no more distinctly seen upon her brow than they were years ago. Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, also came in (an old bachelor, you know), and the girls plagued him almost to death, including among them Mrs. Gouverneur, daughter of President Monroe, and Mrs. Haskell, her daughter.

Called last evening to see the President and had an hour's private chat with him and was well satisfied with the result. The only addition to our mess since I wrote you last is that of Mr. and Mrs. Dillingham from Vermont. They are "nice" folks I believe, she being a Methodist. Mrs. Niles is a Presbyterian, Miss Robinson an Unitarian, and goes to meeting with me regularly, thus far.

Our minister, Mr. Augier, is very much of a man. His sermons are finely written, but at the same time are very forcible and pungent. His voice and manner are also good and, I think, draws a larger congregation than any of his predecessors.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Chosen Chairman Naval Committee

Washington, Dec. 9, '45.

Dear Wife,

Your humble servant was again chosen Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs. The honor is a good deal, but I dread the labor and responsibility.

Am sorry to say my lameness does not improve.

Since I wrote you last we have had additions to our mess. It now stands thus: Judge Niles, wife and niece; Senator Dickinson, wife and two daughters; Mr. Dillingham, representative from Vermont, with wife and little boy; Mr. King, Mr. Gordon and myself. We have one room not yet taken up. Hope to get Judge Pennybacker from Virginia.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Dined with Bancroft

Washington, Dec. 14, '45.

Dear Wife,

Day before yesterday dined with Mr. Bancroft. Had a very agreeable time, Mrs. B. being particularly agreeable.

Our mess remains as before. Kate Robinson is an excellent creature; shall be sorry to lose her from our mess, when she goes home to be married. Yesterday she helped me direct documents, one of which was to you. I continue to like Mrs. Judge Niles. Miss Virginia Robinson is a first rate pianoforte player and she and Kate both sing, so we have tolerably agreeable times.

My old friend Nancy has been after a batch of clothes. She is as homely and as good as ever.

Yours as Ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Things Look Belligerent

Washington, Dec. 17, '45.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday and the day before we had quite an animated debate the aspect of which many regard as somewhat belligerent. I always go for the most warlike measures you know, though really a peace man. For one, I do not apprehend war, but if it comes while we are only contending for what is true and right, why let it come. There are worse evils than war, and national dishonor is one of them.

Our session continued until 4 o'clock. Hungry as a bear, I have eaten, if not a peck of oyster patties and three-quarters of

a big turkey, accompanied by a gallon of water and followed by pies and tarts without number, then I am no Turk.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Called on New Cousin

Washington, Dec. 20, 1845.

Dear Sarah,

I called up this morning to see our new cousin, Mrs. Richard D. Cutts at Mrs. Madison's where they are to stay for the present. Her name was Martha Jefferson something, I have forgotten what. She is rather handsome, at all events very good looking.

Richard is as happy as a clam on Cape Cod beach, and bears jokes extremely well. Cousin Anna Payne is full of her fun and Mrs. Madison looks as though she had retrograded in years about a quarter of a century. Cousin Mary had gone out and I did not see her. Whenever I have seen her, she has been full of inquiries about my children and Saco matters.

A Mrs. Bun who keeps a school in the city has sent me an invitation to attend a concert of her pupils on Tuesday evening next. If my engagements will let me go, I shall anticipate much pleasure. Perhaps I may write you about it.

Your Affectionate Father,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Declined French Claims Chairmanship

Washington, Dec. 23d, '45.

My Dear Wife,

What will you say when I tell you that I yesterday introduced you into the Senate of the United States in a few remarks that I deemed it necessary to make. Can you imagine how or wherefore it was done? I guess not. And yet it was certainly done. And I hope your vanity will not be wounded, when I tell you that it created no extraordinary sensation at all. The Senators kept right along, some reading, some writing and some taking snuff, just as if nothing had happened!

Seriously, upon sober reflection, I felt that I could not properly act as Chairman of the Select Committee on French claims, interested as I was. I therefore stated the facts that by the death, within a few weeks, of a relative of my wife, she had become entitled to 1-60th part of the claim of Thos. Cutts,

and though the laws of Maine secured to the wife her property both real and personal, yet the interest of the husband in this instance, might be of such a character, in the opinion of the Senate, as to disqualify him from acting or voting upon the subject. Upon this statement the Senate excused me from acting, and Mr. Webster was appointed in my stead.

Thursday, Christmas day, I am engaged to dine with Mrs. Madison, Friday with the President, and Saturday with Mr. Corcoran, the rich banker.

Shall try to write some of the children tomorrow.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

#### Dines with President

Washington, Dec. 28, '45.

My Dear Wife,

Thursday, Christmas, I dined at Mrs. Madison's, was the only guest. Had a capital old-fashioned frolic. Mrs. Madison to redeem a pledge had to take off her shoes, place them in the middle of the floor and run and jump over them, which she did with a good deal of agility for a lady of 80. On Friday dined with the President. The company consisted of about 30 ladies and gentlemen. Particular ladies were assigned to particular gentlemen and their places at the table designated. Mrs. McClemand, wife of a member from Illinois, was assigned to me and placed next to the President on his left, Mrs. Niles occupying the right. I found Mrs. Mc. a very sprightly, intelligent and interesting lady. On my other hand was Mrs. Walker, the wife of the private secretary of the President, celebrated for her beauty. I found her also quite chatty and agreeable. Mrs. Mc. asked me when I was married, told her 1825—"the very year," said she, "that I was born!"

On Saturday I dined with Mr. Corcoran, the great Banker. Found a very select company. Col. Benton, Allen and myself of the Senate, Hilliard from the House, Judge Woodbury, Secretaries Buchanan and Bancroft, Commodore Morris and the Portuguese, Dutch and Brazilian Ministers.

I have not seen such gorgeous furniture in Washington. Nor have I seen such a splendid dinner served up. Have an invitation for Capt. Wilkes' party on Monday, but think I shall not go.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST YEAR OF PRESIDENT POLK'S ADMINISTRATION

It will be noticed from Senator Fairfield's correspondence in the year 1846 that he seemed to lose interest in Washington life, especially in its social affairs; that politics wearied him and that he esteemed his position as Senator of the United States higher than he did any prospects of succession to the place in the Cabinet, which George Bancroft, the historian, was about to give over, through weariness.

As a matter of fact, Senator Fairfield was chiefly interested in his Naval Bill, providing for an augmentation of the United States Navy, although he had an incidental interest and concern in the war with Mexico (1846-1848). His first mention of the Mexican War is in a letter to his wife of May 18th, 1846, in which he says, "The news just received from our army is that Taylor with a part of his force went down to Point Isabel to get provision. After he had left, the remainder were attacked by the Mexicans. The latter were repulsed and Matamoros was battered down and burned, etc." "This," adds Senator Fairfield, "I have had from a friend verbally. The papers may give different accounts."

History says that on March 12th, 1846, under orders from the U. S. Government, Taylor advanced into territory, the possession of which was then in dispute. After a march of sixteen days he reached the Rio Grande at a point opposite to the Mexican city of Matamoros. This was March 28th. This was construed as an offensive by the Mexicans and was the de facto beginning of the Mexican War. The battle to which Senator Fairfield refers is Matamoros or Palo Alto. General Taylor had about 3000 men. Leaving a regiment and two companies of artillery, early in May, 1846, to garrison Fort Brown, which was an earthwork in front of Matamoros, he proceeded with the remainder of his command to Point Isabel, in order to effect his communications. During his absence, the Mexicans

attacked the fort vigorously but to no avail. As Taylor was returning May 8th, he encountered General Arista, the Mexican leader, who with 6,000 men and ten guns barred the road, at a place nine miles from Matamoros, known as Palo Alto. Taylor's force numbered 2300 officers and men and ten guns. After a fight of four hours, Arista fell back through Resaca de la Palma with a loss of 252 men and officers. The American casualties comprised seven killed and 47 wounded. On the following day Taylor continued his march and by a series of brilliant encounters finally took the city of Matamoros on May 17th. On May 18th Taylor crossed the Rio Grande and took possession of the city.

This is the incident to which Senator Fairfield refers in his letter of the same day. Senator Fairfield wrote no letters home during the earlier period of the Mexican War excitement, from April 26th to May 16th, 1846. On May 11th President Polk sent to Congress his famous message in which he declared that Mexico had invaded the territory of the United States and had shed American blood on American soil. Two days later, Congress issued its formal declaration of war.

Mr. Fairfield's Naval Bill was the object of his chief solicitude—that and his rapidly failing health. This bill indicates that Senator Fairfield was one of the early advocates of a "bigger navy." In it he advocated the construction of ten steamships, vessels of war, to be constructed of iron, to wit; three of the class of frigates, five of the class of sloops of war, two of a smaller class. His bill also authorized the President any time before the commencement of the next session of Congress, if the public exigencies should require, to cause to be completed all the frigates and sloops of war now upon the stocks, and to repair and put into active service all the sloops or vessels of war, now in ordinary." This bill carried an appropriation of \$5,625,000. Senator Fairfield introduced this bill in a vigorous speech in the U. S. Senate January 28th, 1846.

President James Knox Polk had been inaugurated in 1845, a staunch Democrat, formerly a stout adherent of General Jack-

son, Speaker of the 24th and 25th Congresses, an industrious man and a consummate politician. He stuck by Van Buren through all his difficulties, and after Van Buren's nomination became politically impossible, became a compromise candidate in the Democratic convention of 1844, unanimously nominated on the ninth ballot as the man to beat Henry Clay, the candidate of the Whigs. He carried the country by 170 electoral votes to Clay's 105, and with him was elected George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania as Vice-President.

This had been a great relief to the feelings of Fairfield and his friends; for the election of General Harrison in 1840 was so severe a blow to the Democrats that for a time it had stunned them and abased them; for they felt themselves measurably betrayed and fooled by their own tactics. The Whigs had come into power in masquerade. Instead of putting one of their true leaders, such as Clay, into the nomination they had copied a leaf out of the book of the Jacksonian democracy and had nominated a western soldier whose rugged strength made him a popular favorite. In reality they had nominated a Whig Jackson, with hardly a single tie to the Whig party, and they elected him in a noisy, riotous campaign of torch-light parades, barbecues and general "hooray." Their emblems were hard-cider and the log cabin, "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" a staged effect of democracy. With Harrison and Tyler they had also a majority of both houses of Congress, narrow margins that made them uncomfortable. Fairfield was out of Congress a portion of this administration, returning as will be recalled in the last years of President Tyler's term, Tyler succeeding to the Presidency on the death of General Harrison, only about a month after his inauguration.

Tyler was a President to whom no Whig looked for leadership. He was a Southern Democrat opposed to the bank on general principles; but he had held away from his leader in the matter of deposits and credits and had opposed Jackson's blows at Calhoun and the doctrines of South Carolina. He was nominated Vice-President in an attempt to unite with the Whigs

a section of opposition to radical Jacksonianism, which they believed might add to the chances of success. In the mid-term elections, the Whigs lost their command of Congress and here they were ; led by a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress after all.

Mr. Fairfield was chairman of the committee of the Democratic Convention which he attended in 1844, to notify George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania of his nomination as Vice-President. On his return from Philadelphia he told an amusing story of his experiences of this occasion. This story is related in the book known as "Perley's Reminiscences" by Ben: Perley Poore, a famous Washington newspaper correspondent of that period: "The committee reached Philadelphia about three o'clock in the morning and were piloted to Mr. Dallas's house by his friend, Senator Robert J. Walker. Loud knocks at the door brought Mr. Dallas to the chamber window. Recognizing Mr. Walker and fearing that his daughter, who was in Washington, was ill, he hastened down stairs, half dressed, and in slippers, when to his utter amazement, in walked sixty or more gentlemen, two by two with the tread of soldiers, passing him by and entering his front parlor, all maintaining the most absolute silence. Mr. Dallas, not having the slightest conception of their object, stood thunderstruck. Mr. Walker then led him into the back parlor. "My dear Walker," said he in amazement, "what is the matter?" "Wait one moment, if you please, Dallas; wait one moment if you please." In a few moments the folding doors connecting the parlors were thrown back, and in the front parlor, which had meanwhile been lighted up, Mr. Dallas saw a semi-circle of gentlemen, who greeted him with applause. Governor Fairfield then stepped forward and briefly informed Mr. Dallas what the action of the convention had been. The candidate for Vice-President, who had recovered from momentary surprise, eloquently acknowledged the compliment paid him, and promised to reply more formally by letter. He then opened his side-board and all joined in pledging "success to the ticket."

At the "birth night" ball, February 22, 1845, President Tyler was accompanied by President-elect Polk. Mrs. Madison, of whom Mr. Fairfield always speaks so pleasantly, was also present with Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. A few nights later President Tyler gave a parting ball at the White House, his young and handsome wife receiving the guests with distinguished grace. Mr. Polk was not present but the Vice-President-elect, Mr. Dallas, with his splendid crown of white hair, towered above all other guests, except General Scott and "Long John" Wentworth. This night ended the "cavalier" reign within the White House, which was soon ruled with the Puritan austerity of Mrs. Polk.

Mr. Polk was inaugurated on a rainy day, the fourth of March, 1845, Pennsylvania Avenue being so slippery with mud that many soldiers fell ingloriously on the march. President Polk was a spare man of unpretending appearance and middle stature, with a rather small head, full angular brow, penetrating dark eyes and a firm mouth. He was calm, cold, intrepid in moral character. He was ambitious and successful, methodical and remarkably industrious.

There were two inaugural balls in honor of the new President's accession, one at \$10.00 a ticket and the other at \$2.00 a ticket. The \$10.00 ball was at Carusi's Saloon, of which Mr. Fairfield speaks often in his letters. One of the features of the ball was the dress worn by Madame De Bodisco, wife of the Russian minister, "superb court dress which she had worn on her bridal visit to St. Petersburg, and which contrasted strongly with the attire of Mrs. Polk, which was very plain. There was a great scandal over the ball at \$2.00 a ticket, held at the National Theatre, which ended in a riot, and where pick-pockets stole hats, coats, canes and pocketbooks. A suggestion of the social life at the White House may be inferred, from the statement of Mr. Poore, that Mrs. Polk was a strict Presbyterian, that she shunned what she regarded as "the vanities of the world" and that while she did not possess the queenly grace of Mrs. Madison or the warm-hearted hospitality of Mrs. Tyler,

she presided over the White House with great dignity. She was of medium height with very black hair, dark eyes and complexion, and formal yet graceful deportment.

The most important men in Washington life during the Polk administration, which was the last that Mr. Fairfield ever knew, were James Buchanan and William Learned Marcy. Mr. Buchanan was Secretary of State, a bachelor, and in full training for the Presidency, which he subsequently attained. Mr. Marcy was Secretary of War and was called the "wheel horse" of President Polk's cabinet. He used to write his most important dispatches in the library of his own house, where he usually sat in his dressing gown with an old red handkerchief on the table before him. One could judge of the relative activity of his mind by the frequency of his application to the snuff box. Silas Wright was offered the position of Secretary of the Treasury but declined it, having been recently elected Governor of New York. Robert J. Walker, Senator from Mississippi, who had advocated the admission of Texas and opposed the protective tariff, was made Secretary of the Treasury. George Bancroft, the historian, was appointed Secretary of the Navy, and Cave Johnson of Tennessee, Postmaster-General.

During his term the Oregon boundary dispute was settled with England, a subject to which Senator Fairfield frequently refers, the United States accepting the parallel of 49 N. as the northern limit, although the party cry of the Democrats who elected Polk had been for "54.40 or fight."

Frequent references are made by Senator Fairfield to the Tariff law of 1846, with references to men in Congress who resigned from their seats, rather than vote as they felt regarding this Tariff, in opposition to the mandates of their constituents. This Tariff was modeled on the principles of Tariff for Revenue Only and the establishment of an independent treasury system. The famous debate over the Wilmot Proviso, and the bill to organize the Territory of Oregon were incidental to this period.

This was an age of distinguished men in Washington and the names that run through the pages of these memoirs are those that posterity yet cherishes.

In the presidential terms of Tyler and Polk, during part of which Mr. Fairfield was Governor of Maine and part of which he was United States Senator, Henry A. Wise, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster and John Quincy Adams were potent men. Mr. Wise was Tyler's chief adviser and it was he who forced Calhoun on Tyler as Secretary of State, directly after the Princeton disaster. Stephen A. Douglas had just entered Congress, later to be the chief adversary of Lincoln in the great debates over slavery. In Congress in this period were Hamilton Fish of New York, Alexander Ramsay—a worthy descendant of the Pennsylvania Dutch; the loquacious Garrett Davis of Kentucky, the emaciated Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, who apparently had not a day to live, yet who lived on for many years; John Wentworth of New Hampshire, transplanted to the prairies of Illinois; Andrew Johnson, subsequently to be President on the death of Lincoln; John Slidell of New Orleans; Robert Dale Owen, the visionary socialist and communist from Indiana; Howell Cobb of Georgia and Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, who were even then laying the foundations for the Southern Confederacy; the brilliant Robert C. Schenck of Ohio and the genial Isaac E. Holmes of South Carolina, who softened many of the asperities of debate by their kindly comments in an undertone.

This was the environment of Governor Fairfield and this is the background against which these casual letters are to be read.





## A Pleasant Mess

Washington, Jan. 7, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Balls and parties are beginning to abound, but those, you know, I eschew, the first peremptorily and the latter when I can and be civil. I have an invitation to dine with Mr. 5th Auditor Pleasonton next Saturday, but as I have advised the President to remove him, I think I shall ask to be excused. A dinner is hardly sop enough to stop my mouth, in such a case.

Our mess continues to be very agreeable. Kate Robinson is full of life and animation. Virginia Dickinson plays and sings and is very agreeable and matron ladies are very little older than they should be. King is fat, hearty and good natured as ever. Gov. Dickinson is a good punster and not a bad story teller. Of Judge Niles I can say "Richard's himself again." Our good Methodist friends, Mr. and Mrs. Dillingham, have shaken many of the puckers out of their risible muscles and nothing is wanting but your company to make me as happy as a—senator.

I have heard that there is a young collegiate from Bowdoin spending his vacation with you. If it be so, I should be very happy to cultivate his acquaintance. Give him my best respects and tell him that a letter from him will be most graciously received and duly answered.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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## Birth of Daughter Anna

Washington, Jan. 14, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

I have not words to express my gratification at the news communicated to me in a letter just received from Doctor Goodwin, to wit, that on Saturday night about 9 o'clock, after an illness of yourself of about three hours, a little daughter was added to our present string of jewels, as a Roman matron once called her children. The same happy information was given in Augusta's interesting note received at the same time.

For this, my dear wife, and our other multiplied favors, we cannot be too truly thankful.

Augusta says it has Father's eyes and Mother's nose. It is, of course, a beauty. What shall we call her, says Augusta. If I have my way the name shall be Anna Payne. Sarah says, I understand, that it should be Kate Robinson. If you should object to the first, I have no objection to the last, for which Kate prays very hard. For myself I cannot hesitate between the two, though I must confess I like very much the name of Kate and the original Kate here is an excellent girl and a great favorite of mine. Was she weighed? If so, how much? Do, some of you, write daily or often and let me know all about both young and old Anna.

I have not time to say more now. God bless you and all the dear pledges of our love.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Fairfield's Naval Bill

Washington, Jan. 21, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Tonight the President has his first levee. I had rather be whipped than go, but circumstances render it unavoidable. There will be no dancing and no refreshment of any kind. The dish will be standing, marching, talking, walking, &c., &c., until everybody is tired to death, especially those who have lame knees, and then go home.

On Friday night Mr. Buchanan, Secretary of State, who, you know, is an old bachelor, gives a large party at Carusi's saloon. I send you his card. Think I shan't go.

My bill providing for an augmentation of our naval force was taken up today and assigned for next Tuesday. Upon this motion quite a debate sprang up, in which I slightly participated.

How is my sweet little Anna? If you can find nobody to love her at home, send her on here by mail, I can assure her a welcome reception from one at least.

Tell George, I saw Professor Upham<sup>1</sup> here yesterday, and what may surprise him somewhat, tell him the Professor spoke very well of him.

<sup>1</sup>Professor Thomas Croswell Upham, a distinguished teacher of Mental and Moral Philosophy, Bowdoin College, author of a much-used text-book of the times, "Elements of Mental Philosophy (1831)," commonly known as "Upham's Philosophy," and of many other similar works, of advanced thought.

Did I tell you that I had a letter from Mr. Wharton informing me that the verdict recovered in Philadelphia had been set aside and a new trial ordered. What will be the result now, no one can tell. I believe the trial is expected in February. It is possible I may be there.

There is a report that Bancroft is to leave the Navy Department and go to Prussia. I doubt some whether it be well founded, but if it is, I feel no interest in it. The vacant place will probably not be offered to me and if it should be, I should not accept it. My present position is much better.

Thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### The Ninth Wonder

Washington, Jan. 23d, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

I rejoice to learn that you are getting along so smartly. Take good care of the "9th wonder." In my imagination I can see her "as plain as day" and could draw her profile as thus: I find on trial, I can't make what I want to. Thank you for adopting my name, notwithstanding your joke about first and second mother, but let it be spelt and pronounced Anna Payne, making two syllables of the first.

I have sent Sarah a paper today, directing it to Sarah E., as she signed her last letter to me. I know not what it means unless she designs to change Thornton to Emery, after Aunt Emery, to which I have no objection if you have not, or to C. for Cutts.

Mrs. Madison was at the President's levee and looked as young as half the people there. She is a most remarkable woman. I have not been there since Christmas and got a good scolding for it from Richard's wife. Last Sunday went and took tea with Mr. and Mrs. Ela and afterward called and spent an hour at Dummer's. All well.

Am preparing for a speech and so have but little time to spare.

As Ever, Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**Preparing a Speech**

Washington, Jan. 25, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I have but a moment to give you today, being very busy in examining documents, etc., and preparing for my speech on Tuesday. Oh, how I wish it was over. I fear I must fall far short of what my friends seem to be expecting of me. Let me have your prayers.

My friend, Judge Niles and family here, are in no little trouble. It seems that a Mr. Grant of Hartford, a relative of theirs and for a long time a resident in the family of the Judge, one of whom they evidently thought much, and to whom they were much attached, especially Kate Robinson, has failed in business, dragging in the Judge for some two or three thousand dollars. And what is worse than all that, it is supposed has been forging the name of his father, if not of others. It throws something of a gloom over our little circle but I trust will not last long.

Mr. Buchanan gave a great party on Friday night at Carusi's saloon at which it was supposed there were present about 1500. I was not fool enough to be there, I can tell you. I think I have done with balls and parties for this winter.

Ever Thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**A Wedding Brewing**

Washington, Jan. 28, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I received your note this morning, and feel rejoiced that you are getting along so comfortably, and that, too, without a regular nurse, for I suppose Sarah would be unwilling to take the title tho' she performed the duties of the office.

I shall begin to count weeks now when I am to see you. My present impression is that if business here will permit, and nothing occurs at home to make one time better than another, I may select about the middle of March.

And so Davis and Hepsy are to be married right away? Having made the cake, pray why don't you fit up the other

front room and let them have a good frolic? Oh, I wish I was at home. I would have a real good old-fashioned wedding and a dance.

Ever thine,

JOHN.

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### Speech Is Complimented

Washington, Jan. 31, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Have you seen my speech yet? I shall have it by Monday I think, in pamphlet form and will then send you one. Whether it was published in the semi-weekly Union, as it was in the Daily, I do not know. I get a good many compliments for it, but how sincere they are no one can know.

My bill has been under debate since Tuesday, one or two days more I think may be taken up with it, and then I shall probably consent to let it lie over without taking a vote upon it, until the 10th of February, when the resolution for giving notice to England, etc., will be taken up. After which I shall make another speech in reply to those who have spoken against the measure.

Saw Mrs. Dummer yesterday at the Capitol. She was with Cousin Moses and appeared very well. I can't find time to go about much, and so get a good many scoldings. Have not been to Mrs. Madison's since Christmas. Have you any choice about the time of my coming home? If so, speak freely. Perhaps I can arrange matters here so as to suit you. I shall also write to Bro. Emery and ascertain if one time would be preferable to another on the score of business.

I don't see why Davis and Hepsey should want to leave unless they intend to buy a farm. At all events I hope they will stay, until I come home and make new arrangements.

Has George his last quarter bill and do you know what money you will want? You must preach economy to him, for at the rate he has been going on it will cost me \$200 more to get him through college, than it costs for most other boys of whom I have inquired. How does my sweet little Anna Payne and all the rest? Can little Lucy talk yet? Oh, how I long to see you all. But patience and red baize, you know, is the old proverb.

Ever thine,

JOHN.

**Advice to Son George**

Washington, Feb. 1, 1846.

Dear George.

I am not sure whether I answered your "solitary and alone" epistle, as Col. Benton would say, or not. No matter, having a leisure moment I feel inclined to devote it in a brief line or two to yourself. And first let me say that I had the pleasure of meeting one of your Professors here the other day, Mr. Uphams, though but for a moment. I was very glad to hear him speak well of you and trust that you will never give him cause to speak otherwise. Oh, if children only knew how the heart of a parent bounds with delight at hearing their praise, and how it sinks and is distressed at the recital of their misdeeds, I know they would strive harder to do right, and shrink dreadfully at the idea of wrong-doing.

I have been looking for President Wood,<sup>1</sup> having understood that he was to spend a portion of his vacation here. As yet, however, he has not made his appearance. I should have been very happy to see him.

When does your next term commence? I hope, George, you will write me oftener, when you get to Brunswick, than you have from home. Give me particulars. Whom do you room with, if anybody? Whom board with and at what price? and who are your fellow-boarders? Your studies, arrangements of time, professors and tutors, to whom you recite, and "a' that and a' that" as Burns would say. I want to know. Don't fail to tell me all about it. After what has passed between us heretofore about economy, running in debt, etc., and your promises upon the subject. I have no more to say now. I feel a strong confidence that you will keep your word and give me no more cause of complaint.

I hope, George, you will be constant in your attendance at Mr. Wheeler's meeting at Topsham. No matter if it be some way off. The exercise will do you no harm.

Tell your mother I have just received a letter from Mr. Wharton, in which he says that the Court, at which your Uncle George's suit is to be tried, commences its session a week from tomorrow, the 9th of February, and he thinks that this may be

President Leonard Woods, D.D., of Bowdoin College; Gov. Fairfield has made a common error in the name of this distinguished educator, who was a remarkable conversationalist, preacher and lecturer.

the first trial. If it be possible for me to leave here, I shall attend the trial. My presence, may, in various ways, be useful. Besides, I hope the ride may not prove detrimental to my health.

Mr. Amory Edwards informs me he is going out to Rio Janeiro and will take letters to Bro. George. And for the purpose of writing him, I break off yours somewhat abruptly.

Your Affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Feb. 4, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I write from the Senate and as Allen of Ohio is making a speech directly behind me, it would not be strange if I should fill it, my letter, I mean, with thunder. Of all the roarers that ever I heard, I think he stands No. 1. There is nothing in nature with which to compare him that I know of except the falls of Niagara.

Other business has crowded out my bill for the War Steamers for the last two days. Tomorrow, I presume, it will be resumed again. I shall probably feel obliged to make another speech upon it, by and by.

The President's second levee is tonight and I have also an invitation to a party at Commodore Shubric's. I have, however, determined to attend neither.

On Saturday I have an invitation for dinner at Bancroft's. This, I think I shall accept.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Starts for Philadelphia

Washington, Feb. 8, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday, I dined with Mr. Bancroft. Had a very pleasant and agreeable time. Our second course was halibut, apparently as hard and fresh as though just taken from the water.

To avoid travelling on the Sabbath, I shall start this evening for Philadelphia and ride all night, reaching Philadelphia,

I believe, about daylight. I don't dread it much, as I have the power of sleeping in the cars almost as well as in a bed. The dangers, I suppose, are greater, but I see no way to avoid them, as it is supposed our case will be the first one for trial tomorrow morning.

Mrs. Madison has just lost a sister—a widow Todd. Anna Payne, I understand, also is sick and has not been able to leave her chamber for two weeks or more.

I shall write you from Philadelphia.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### The Suit Settled

Philadelphia, Feb. 9, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Here I am safe and sound in the City of Brotherly Love having reached here about 3 o'clock this morning. My trip was not a very unpleasant one, inasmuch as I am able, you know, to spend my time in sleep and pleasant dreams.

I have been disappointed in not finding our case ready for trial. Mr. Wharton now thinks it will not come on before Thursday, if so soon. I shall be at a loss what to do, if the case is not settled. I have this evening, however, been holding a conference with Mr. Merrick with a view to an adjustment and my impression is that it may result favorably. He offers \$2,700, payable on time. I have offered to take \$3,000 and pay the cost, about \$30, and Mr. Wharton's fees, which will be I don't know what, perhaps \$300. Mr. Merrick has agreed to consult his partner, and let me know by one o'clock tomorrow. I am rather inclined to think that either of these offers will be better than to go to trial again, inasmuch as the Judge has decided the point against us, that George did not return the machine in due season, as a matter of law. Hence under the new ruling of the Court, all we can recover is the difference between the defective machine and a good one, leaving the old machine on our hands.

It is late bed time and so I will postpone the finishing of this letter until after I get an answer from Merrick. Good night.

Feb. 10.—I have only time to say that the suit is settled. They pay \$3,000 in 8, 10 and 12 months. Mr. Wharton's charge



is \$200, leaving about \$2800 clear. There is, I believe, some \$14 cost that I have to pay. Under all the circumstances the adjustment is a favorable one. Laus Deo.

Ever thine,

JOHN.

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### Messages to the Children

Washington, Feb. 12, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Leaving Philadelphia yesterday morning, I reached this place, last night, about 8 o'clock, in good health and feeling well for having made my visit to Philadelphia so successful.

This morning your last letter was received. Am glad to find you so smart as to ride out.

Hope you will get George away without much trouble. Has he said anything about the watch? If he wants it, you may let him have it. Hope the effect will not be unfavorable.

And so the baby is a little troublesome, is she? A trollop! I'll see to her when I come home. Poor Hammy, too, it seems, is offended because I have not written him. I was not aware of my neglect and will try to remedy it, by and by. Tell him, in the meantime, that I bought for him at Philadelphia "The Fortunes of Frank Fairfield," which I think he will like very much. Will send it by first opportunity.

Ever thine,

JOHN.

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### A Comforting Sermon

Washington, Feb. 15, '46.

My Dear Anna,

I have just returned from meeting, where I heard one of the most eloquent and excellent sermons that I ever had the pleasure of listening to. Mr. Dewey preached from the text: "It is appointed unto all men once to die." His leading idea was that death was not a penalty, a doom, a calamity, but an ordinance of God, an "appointment" in the general economy of the Universe, designed for the benefit and glory of humanity. He considered it in a variety of moods with a great variety, beauty

and force of illustration. No one could come away without feeling himself of more consequence and that without vain boasting and feeling better reconciled to the ills of life and the event of death.

His allusion to death as it invades the family circle, brought tears to my eyes, but joy beamed through my tears as he proceeded to show how, instead of severing the bond that connects us, it only strengthens it, consecrates the memory of those who have gone, enshrines them in our hearts, perpetuates their virtues and reunites us in Heaven. Oh, it was a glorious discourse! I wish you could have heard it. He only arrived last night, but the House was crowded. I shall look for a pile-up tonight.

By the way, I suppose you have seen by the papers, the death of Mrs. Todd, the sister of Mrs. Madison. She was the wife of Judge Todd, formerly a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, who, I believe, was also a cousin to Mrs. Madison's first husband, whose name you know was also Todd. Mrs. M. I understand, in consequence, does not see company. She will, however, probably see me, and I intend soon to call. Richard is about going to housekeeping. Mary will hover between the two, that is, her aunt's and Richard's.

I have asked, I don't know how many times, when George is going to Brunswick, but I get no answer. I want, also, regular bulletins about the health, condition, appearance, etc., etc., of Miss Anna Payne.

Did I ever tell you that the February number of the Democratic Review, is to contain my likeness or rather what is called my likeness. I have been furnished with several copies of the picture and I do think it is horrible. It is not only no likeness but represents an ugly man enough. It is a real monkey, outlandish face, I think. As soon as I saw it, I wrote immediately to O'Sullivan to suppress it if not too late. I fear it was too late. In a day or two, however, we shall see. I send you one of them. I have many others but I think I shall never dare to give them away. Let me know at once, what you think of it.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**Plagued by Nominations for Maine**

Washington, Feb. 18, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I am plagued to death with the nominations for Maine. I have, in the first place, to fight the battle before the President, then before a committee of the Senate and lastly before the Senate itself. Thus far I have been successful and hope my good luck will continue.

Oh, dear, Oh dear! Would you believe it? I have had to change my glasses numbered 30 for a pair numbered 25. Is there no recipe for advancing age? Should you discover anything of that sort, I hope you will not keep it all to yourself. Only think, if while I was growing older you should be growing younger? I should very much fear we should reach a point when you would cease to love me. So remember, if you discover the philosopher's stone, we are to participate jointly in its benefits, and I will make the same promise on my part. My specs work beautifully, the glasses are very clear and easy to the eye.

We are having a visit from Gov. Anderson, arrived yesterday, very glad to see him, but sorry we could not find room for him in our mess. By the way, Mrs. Dillingham has left us and Miss Robinson and Miss Dickerson are to leave us the first of April or thereabouts to be married. Their absence will make a great hole in our society. Judge Johnson of Belfast with his daughter came with Gov. Anderson. The daughter has the reputation of being a great beauty.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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**Fears George Is Extravagant**

Washington, Feb. 20, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Yours was received last night in which you informed me of the cashing of Dr. Nourse's check,—the receipt of the Wiggin money, and above all, of giving George \$100.

What upon earth could he want so much for! I was astounded. But I suppose you have looked into the particulars and know that it was needed. I shall write him again and insist on accounts being regularly and truly kept and upon a rigid

system of economy. I will sooner take him from College than permit him to remain to acquire habits of extravagance, to say nothing of dissipation.

It seems you have been enjoying a tremendous snow storm. The papers inform us of a good many shipwrecks with a great loss of lives.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Oregon Question Nears Settlement

Washington, Feb. 22d, '46.

My Dear Wife,

22d—Washington's birthday, isn't it? Dr. Dewey preached at the Capitol today, had a full house, and gave us a splendid sermon.

The probabilities against a war are daily increasing and I should not be surprised if very soon a treaty is concluded by which the whole Oregon question will be settled.

I see by the papers today that the Democratic Review is out without my likeness, or rather unlikeness. I rejoice that my request to suppress it was not too late. I suppose you have received one of the pictures, I sent you one by mail.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Four Maine Governors in Washington

Washington, March 1, 1846.

My dear Wife,

I received a line from you day before yesterday in which I perceive you have been permitting some one else to hold the pen. Who could it be? I thought I recognized the handwriting but not the style. I refer to the very flatfooted contradiction about my inquiries as to George's going to Brunswick. However, I forgive the author whoever it was, as I am confident no unkindness was intended, and because it is more than probable that I was wrong in the matter. The only explanation I can give is that my questions were addressed to some of the children instead of to yourself. If that is not so, then I had the questions in mind but never committed them to paper.

By Sarah's letter it seems she is to go into the kitchen. I like the idea of her learning everything in the way of household matters, but really you must not think of getting along without a girl. It will never do. With your baby to take care of, you will do a great deal more than you ought to do, either for your health or comfort.

I want you to tell me again the color of the baby's eyes and hair, complexion, resemblance, etc., etc. I want to form some opinion of her before I see her.

I am very sorry to hear that poor Augusta's lameness is not quite so well. Your course is probably right. If another trial of Colby's system does not succeed, I think we should try Hewett.

Night before last I was at Judge Parris', where there were near 40 persons, and all from Maine but two, to wit Mr. Ela, and Dr. Gilman, who married a daughter of Judge P. And what, perhaps, may be regarded as another curious coincidence was the presence of four Governors of Maine. One live one and three dead ones—to wit: Gov. Parris, Gov. Dunlap, Gov. F. & Gov. Anderson.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### On Receiving Baby's Sock

Washington, March 8, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Thank you for the dear little specimen you sent me of Anna Payne. You know it is said of naturalists that show them a single bone of an animal and they will give you its genus, species, and describe it with almost as much particularity as if it stood before them. My imagination will enable me to go a good way in building a superstructure upon the sock, but I confess myself unable from the sock to imagine the color of the baby's hair.

I re-enclose it as Miss Anna may want it more than I do. Besides, it makes me homesick to look at it. You remember my story of the green hand at sea who, after being out a month or so, used to go down into the hold and smell of the ballast, as being the nearest approach to home that he could get. I regarded the sock much in the same light. It smells of home most delightfully. I am glad to find that you and the girls are

so independent and are enabled to get along without a new Hepsey or any other help. It is a good thing to know how things should be done and to do them upon a pinch. Our girls should fully understand and appreciate this. However, I hope you will not extend this experiment too far. You cannot get along without help, and good help, too, and you must not think of it.

Am glad our Society have a singing school. Hope you will let our children go if practicable.

Think you are right about Augusta. If Colby can't help her and that without delay, we must send her to Boston.

If company, nor anything else prevents, I think I shall go up and see Cousin Richard tonight, who has gone to house-keeping. Cousin Mary is at present with him.

Mrs. Madison has been in mourning for a sister, and Anna Payne has been sick, so I have a tolerable excuse for not going there since Christmas.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Reports a Suicide

Washington, March 20.

My Dear Wife,

We are having a most delicious day, if such a term can properly be applied to weather. Doors are open, windows up, fires out, crocuses blooming, grass springing, birds warbling, women shopping, etc., etc.

I regret to be obliged to pass from this beautiful picture to one so sad as that presented by a suicide. The day before yesterday Commodore Crane severed his ties with this world by cutting his throat. The cause no one knows unless it is to be found in his long physical suffering by gout and other complaints. He has left a wife, but no children. His pecuniary circumstances were comfortable.

A few days since Mr. Ezra Holden's card was laid upon my table, by which I was also informed where he was to be found, viz., at Gadsby's. I returned his call the next day, he being out. I left my card for him. This man, I am just informed, is dead. He died this morning of mania a potu. He was brought up in the Argus office. Afterwards kept a book store in Portland and for several years has published the Saturday



To Anna Payne

Some dull prosaic soul inquires  
"What is there in a name?"

Much - Much - it in my soul inspires  
To think of Anna Payne -

I met with one, "long time ago"  
Who bore that happy name;  
I woo'd her heart - & won it too -  
I married "Anna Payne" -

Long years elapsed - The Sunny South  
Drew me from frosty Maine  
But here, again, "in luck" I met  
Another "Anna Payne"

And if I frankly now confess,  
I loved her for her name,  
Don't think there's nothing else to love  
In Southern "Anna Payne".



She's all that eye, or heart, could wish  
To light up young love's flame,  
She's fair - has wit, is wise, is good -  
But still, - I love her name,

John Fairfield

The above lines were penned by John Fairfield to Dolly Madison's young niece, Anna Payne, who bore the same name as his wife, the two having been named for Anna Payne Cutts, sister of Dolly Madison and wife of Richard Cutts, Mrs. Fairfield's uncle. This Anna Payne, who inspired the verses, was a southerner and spent much time with her aunt, Mrs. Madison. It was at Mrs. Madison's home Mr. Fairfield met her. He speaks with admiration of her a number of times in his letters to his wife and in one of them mentions these verses.



Courier at Philadelphia, a very valuable family paper. These cases are sad enough and abound in instruction to us. I received a letter yesterday from George which I enclose. I dislike very much his suggestion about a clerkship and have written him pretty plainly upon the subject.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Made Speech Off-Hand

Washington, March 24th.

My Dear Wife,

I made a little speech today upon the subject of the fishing bounties, which you will see in a Union which I will send you. It was entirely off hand and without a minute for reflection. If it is published as it ought to be it will not appear very bad. There was some talk today about endeavoring tomorrow to fix upon a day for taking the question on the Oregon resolutions. When that is done I can begin to make my calculations about going home, I hope.

I sent you yesterday, the lines I have written for Anna Payne's Album, but have not yet put them in the book. How do you like them?

Love to all.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, March 27, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Yours is rec'd. I think you were very moderate in your purchases and I enclose you a check for \$100 for which Uncle Seth will give you the money. Am sorry you could not get the side saddle. As Uncle James had one of his own, it appears to me he might have been liberal enough to let you have this one. Yesterday an understanding was entered into to take the question on the Oregon resolutions on Friday of next week, which will be the 3d of April, I believe. Immediately after that, I shall call up my War Steamer Bill. How long a discussion it will provoke it is impossible now to foresee. I cannot, however, think it will exceed from one to five days. When that

is disposed of, I shall start for home like a streak of lightning. So that I think there can be but little doubt of my being at home by the middle of April and perhaps by the 10th.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, March 29.

My Dear Wife,

Had the pleasure of a letter from Augusta today, but none from you. She says you are almost tired out and I don't wonder at it, being, as you are, without a girl. You must have one before I come home and no mistake. Why would not Hepsy come down and stay while I am at home, if no longer? Tell her, I insist upon it. I can't get along a single week without Hepsy. Am sorry to learn that old Dick is no better. Poor old fellow, I fear he has "eat most of his wild oats." Well, when I come home I will try to get you a new horse. Perhaps I might get one cheap in Boston, at this time of year.

Mrs. Richard Cobb and daughter of Boston, are in the City. Having heard that she said should like to have me wait upon her to the President's, I, day before yesterday, made a call upon her, and offered my services. She was a little too unwell to go that night and goes Tuesday night which is the next regular one. She is very ladylike and handsome, and "entres nous," learn she says that she was very much pleased with me. A rich, handsome widow! Only think of that! I scarcely ever perpetrate a joke upon such subjects, without, upon the second thought, thinking it to be wrong. So you will consider the above as sponged.

I wrote you two days since that the prospect was I might be at home by the middle of April, if not sooner. Should anything occur to change this prospect I will inform you of it.

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### An April Fool Joke

Washington, April 1, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

On dating my letter the thought occurred of sending you a blank envelope. But, upon "sober second thought," as Mr. Van Buren says, I have concluded that you and I are a little too old to be made April fools of.

The bell ringing for dinner after writing thus far I went out and found a very pretty cake, a present from Anna Payne. I felt, of course, highly gratified. On tasting it, however, I found it full of salt and everything else that could make it offensive. I was not only thus fooled by Anna, but was also fool enough to spit out my bite of it, with a wry face instead of smacking my lips and sending it round the table.

Wonder if I shall get any fooleries from home or did you all forget the first of April.

I have nothing new to tell you. Gen'l Cass made a great speech yesterday on Oregon and so forth. Col. Benton made a queer one today. Last evening, I went to the President's with Mrs. Cobb and her daughter. They were both highly delighted as I took a little pains to have some attention paid to them. Mrs. Cobb, you know, was the daughter of Abial Wood of Wiscasset, and is now the widow of Richard Cobb, formerly of Portland, but who for many years resided in Boston. The President and his lady were both very gracious and gained golden opinions.

The great Texan Senator, Gen'l Houston or President Houston, was there. He wears a sort of Indian blanket, very beautiful, and appears as though he represented an Indian tribe, instead of a sovereign State. Nevertheless, thus far, I am pleased with him. He has eccentricities, but he is a fine looking man, and unquestionably possesses a good deal of talent. His colleague, Gen'l Rusk, is nearly as tall, say 6 ft. 3 or 4 in., but I suspect is not so much of a man.

I begin to fear we may not get the vote on Oregon by Friday. Today has been lost from the regular debate.

Your Affectionate Husband,

J.

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Washington, April 3d, 1846.

My Dear Anna,

Sorry you remain without a girl, but as Sarah is learning to make a good brown loaf, we may well exclaim, "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good." I suspect you will have Hepsy before I get home. When will that be, do you say? Oh dear! I am farther from certainty now upon the subject than ever. Today was the day assigned for taking the vote upon the Oregon resolutions but from present prospects, if we can

get it by the last of next week, I shall regard it as fortunate. Tomorrow McDuffie is to speak and Webster on Monday.

By the way, you say nothing of Augusta, but I suppose you have recommenced your experiments with her. I do hope and pray that she may be benefited by them, though I must confess my faith is not very strong.

So the babe, little Miss Annie Payne, grows fast and grows good. Am glad to hear it. Fancy I can see how she looks. Would give all my old shoes and throw in a hat besides, for one good kiss. Marty, Luly and Johnny I can see as distinctly as ever—their talk, their smile, walk, etc., etc.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

My company having left I will add a word or two. And, *imprimis*, had you not better take the side saddle of Uncle James at what he would give? Or would it be better to buy a new one, which I suppose would cost \$15? Leave it all to you. We shall probably be obliged to have one of some sort as horse-back riding, I think, will be almost indispensable for Augusta.

I was engaged to go to Mrs. Madison's last evening, but was so lame I could not. My lameness for three days has been rather worse, paining me also by night.

Ever thine,

J. F.

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### Fairfield Answers Webster

Washington, April 10, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I write from the Senate. I am getting to be quite talkative. Day before yesterday I made a short speech upon a bill changing the duties of the naval bureaus and now I have just finished a speech of about an hour in answer to Mr. Webster upon the Northeastern boundary question. It is some credit to be engaged in a contest with the "Godlike," but in addition to that can't say much. However, you will judge of the speech yourself, as I will tomorrow send you a paper containing it.

Have rec'd your note giving an account of the fire. It is well that Adams was out of town, for as his goods were insured, many would have been uncharitable enough to have charged him with setting the fire himself.

It grieves me much to hear you say poor Augusta's troubles are spreading and that her elbows are now affected. If something effectual is not soon accomplished by the sweating process she must go to Boston.

Ever thine,

J. F.

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### Thinks Webster's Reply Ineffectual

Washington, April 12, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I sent you a paper yesterday containing my little speech on the Ashburton treaty. I wish I could have sent you a better one, but you must be content with such as I have. I shall print it in pamphlet form, with a note appended, improving it somewhat. Webster replied to it very mildly and very ineffectually, as I thought. The Whigs probably think otherwise. Tomorrow we are to have a speech from Upham, and I begin to feel some confidence in getting the vote this week.

Last night I was up to Mrs. Madison's and had a very pleasant evening, though Mrs. M. was alone. Anna was visiting at Commodore Morris'. Mrs. M. is in apparently fine health and spirits and is as magnificent as ever.

I think I shall not attempt to write poetry again, if I can get no better compliments for it than Sarah's. And, by the way, you did not say which piece it was about, that written to Cousin Mary or Anna Payne.

As I have many, or rather several other letters, to write today, I will break the thread here and ask you to reel up what I have spun.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### From Speeches to Pigs

Washington, April 14, '46.

My Dear Wife,

We begin to see daylight. Yesterday it was agreed to take the vote on the Oregon resolutions on Thursday next—say, the day after tomorrow. After that I shall permit nothing to interrupt my arrangements for going home but two or

three nominations now pending, viz.: Gov. Morton's, J. H. Wright's and Dr. Nourse's, and these I hope will be determined without much delay.

Miss Harper left us four or five days ago and this morning Miss Virginia Dickinson did the same uncivil thing. Miss Robinson goes soon and then we shall be left for the lady branch of our mess with Mrs. Niles and Mrs. Dickinson alone, and the latter an invalid. These losses will be severely felt by all of us, not omitting myself, although I spend but very little of my time in the parlor.

I write from the Senate where Wescott is making a speech on the Oregon resolution and is so highly charged with electricity that his queue sticks out behind at an angle of 90 degrees with his back, looking something like a pump handle. Tomorrow we are to have one from the veteran, Gen'l Houston. I anticipate for him crowded galleries. Did you have patience to wade through mine upon the Ashburton treaty? I assure you I shall not think hard of it if you did not. How glad I shall be when I escape from the region of speeches and get into the region of pigs and calves. By the way, I have heard nothing of pigs this spring, how is it? Are we to have any?

Thine as Ever,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### Dick's Demise

Washington, April 17, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Thank you for your note received today, but regret very, very much to learn that "poor old Dick has breathed his last." My affection for him had a good foundation. He loved me and more than that he served me well. There never was a more faithful creature. Now that he is dead and gone, his virtues cluster about the memory in great profusion. Think how much he has contributed to our pleasure, how useful he has been in the "field" if not in the "cabinet," how careful he always was of the children, how considerate he has been upon all occasions, except now and then in refusing to be caught when I was in a hurry, how gentle, how sagacious, how kind and good, alas poor Dick! I loved thee living—I'll mourn thee dead. Though thou hadst many excellent and shining qualities, I can say of thee as Hal



said of Falstaff, "we could have better spared a better" horse. To change the subject:

"From grave to gay,  
From lively to severe:"

Am glad to hear that the baby is growing and is "a cunning little thing," but sorry to hear that you are still without "help." Glad to learn that Augusta is a little better, but sorry to find that she is still so lame. Happy that Johnny is fat and good natured, but not so happy at the idea of all the children staying away from school. Rejoice that you are able to work, but regret that you have to work so hard. Oh, these butts! What ugly things they are and how full life is of them, good and evil, roses and thorns, sweet and bitter are inextricably commingled in all the scenes and events of life. Wise and happy is he whose regrets for the latter do not exceed his gratitude for the former or prevent his rightful enjoyment of them. But, intending to write a letter and not a sermon, I pass on:

Yesterday the question was taken in the Senate on the Oregon resolutions, and, would you believe it! I voted against them! In which I found myself in company with my colleague, Mr. Evans, but for very different reasons. He voted against the resolutions because they were too strong and I, because they were too weak.

This out of the way, I begin to feel homewardish. I think, as soon as the action of the Senate can be had on Dr. Nourse's nomination, I shall set my face against the East wind "like a flint." When that will be "not knowing, can't say," but hope it will be by the middle of the week. I shall be highly honored with my escort inasmuch as I am to have Cousin Mary Cleaves all the way and Miss Robinson to New York, and perhaps to Hartford. Am I not highly favored?

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Went to the Circus

Washington, April 21.

My Dear Wife,

One event has occurred today which will hasten my return home and were it not for this effect among others I should regret it deeply. I mean the rejection of Dr. Nourse by the Sen-

ate. We had a hard battle. I did the best I could, but a combination of Whigs and spurious Democrats was too much for us. Unless something occurs to prevent my present arrangement I think I may get away from here by Monday next—the 28th—reaching home by the first of May. I am anxious to vote on Gov. Morton's nominations and would like to move my war steamer bill before I go—both of which I think may be done this week. However, I shall write you again once or twice before I start, when I can probably speak more definitely.

Mr. J. M. Clayton has made a good speech on the claim for French spoliations. I hope a bill may pass this session but have very strong doubts about it.

I have attended but few amusements here, but a few nights since could not resist the inclination to go to the circus, performing here for a week from the Philadelphia Company. There were between three and four thousand people there and among them many members of Congress and much of the elite of the City.

Tomorrow night our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Beale, gives a party, and I think I shall yield to his pressing invitation to attend. I have an invitation also for dinner next Saturday with Mr. Buchanan. So you see after denying myself for a good while, I am about to repay myself for lost time with interest.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, April 26.

My Dear Anna,

The prospect now is that I may be able to leave here on Tuesday next. A motion has been made to reconsider the vote by which Dr. Nourse's nomination was rejected. We shall endeavor to have this acted upon tomorrow. If we succeed in this I shall be ready to go the next day. I have heretofore told you, I believe, of two companions I am to have. The prospect now is that I may have two more. A Mr. Sylvester has just been in to ask me to take charge of his daughter, and some one told me last night that Mrs. Dunlap was thinking of offering herself to me. Four ladies, four trunks and thirteen bandboxes I am inclined to think will give me something to do. Aren't I a good-natured man?

We are having a cold rain storm today. I fear it may be snow with you. Yesterday morning I changed my thick under-vest to thin, and my woolen drawers to cotton. Now don't laugh and say I told you so, but the truth is that before 10 o'clock the weather changed, it became as cold as Greenland and I had to change "back again."

Probably this is the last you will receive before seeing me. Love to all.

Ever thine,

JOHN.

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### Delayed by a Washout

Washington, May 16, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

I reached here last night (Friday) one day earlier than I had anticipated but not until after 12 o'clock at night, when we should have regularly reached here at 7. The reason whereof is this. A bright morning sun went into a cloud before noon. About 2 o'clock the rain began to come down in torrents and continued its outpouring without intermission through the day and night. Per consequence a deep cut in the road extending some mile or two was filled (comparatively) with water, so that the track was covered to the depth of a foot. After making this water passage through great perils, we reached a point within about 3 miles of Washington where the mud had washed in, covering the rails two feet. And there, as the boy said who was learning to spell, having reached m-u-d, we stuck. The "distress whistle" was blown, but no one came to our relief.

A man was then dispatched on foot to the city for aid and for near five mortal hours we had to wait until relief came in the shape of negroes and shovels. However, as we reached here safely at last, perhaps it is best to say no more about the matter. Gratitude at not being compelled to wait all night, is far better than unavailing complaints at having to wait half the night. I found the mess all statu quo, with the exception of some half dozen of its best members. All were right glad to see me, apparently, and I have the vanity to believe, really.

Have just had a call from Cousin Mary and Isabella Batchelder.

Went to my trunk and got all the things supposed to belong to Cousin Mary, one package of which she opened with

great avidity, supposing it to contain wedding cake, but lo and behold! nothing was found within but my—charcoal! What a laugh and shout and boxed ears followed you may guess. They regarded it as a hoax of mine, when in truth it was one of my blunders.

Everybody exclaims: "How you have improved!" and indeed I am fully convinced, whether the fact be so or not, that I am many years younger than when I left Washington some three weeks ago.

My room has been whitewashed during my absence, the bed has put on a new dress and everything looks nice and clean.

I found a mail that would fill a diver eel pot and shall have to work night and day for a long time to catch up with my correspondence.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Trouble in Mexico

Washington, May 18, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Green peas, strawberries and cr—no, milk, etc., etc. Don't your mouth water? Such has been my fare since my return. I wish right sincerely you could participate with me.

The news just received from our army is that Taylor with a part of his force, having left his encampment at Matamoros, went down to Point Isabel to get his provision. After he had left, the remainder in command of Capt. Ringgold were attacked by the Mexicans. The latter were repulsed and Matamoros was battered down and burnt so that hardly houses enough are left to protect the sick. Taylor was on his way back to the camp, and when the vessel left, cannonading was heard in the direction of Matamoros; so it is probable that the attack of the Mexicans was renewed upon Ringgold. This I have had verbally from a friend. The papers may give a little different detail. The next news will be looked for with great interest.

Cousin Moses has received his appointment to a clerkship in the P. O. Department and is very happy about it.

As many inquiries are made for you as if they were all intimate acquaintances of yours. Written upon the run.

Ever Yours,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

## Sail Down the Potomac

Washington, May 22, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday I took a sail down the Potomac in the Massachusetts from Boston. A ship combining the two forces of steam and wind. Forbes wants to sell her to the government and so invited the naval committees and some naval officers to witness her powers. Had a delightful time. Another invitation to go again tomorrow with the ladies, but cannot. Plenty of business on hand, I can tell you. Have also an invitation to a menagerie but can't go. Do. to the National Fair where I shall go, although it is a sort of humbug affair designed to have some effect upon the tariff.

Remember what I told you about Brother Emery's note. You must collect that to rig out George with and before he goes I will send you the needful for Brunswick.

Thine ever

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Calls Gen. Scott an Old Granny

Washington, May 24, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Today we have a confirmation of the news of yesterday that two battles had been fought between our troops and the Mexicans on the 8th and 9th of May, in which our troops were signally victorious. The particulars you will see by the papers. Maj. Ringgold of Baltimore and several other valuable officers on our side killed, in all men and officers about 60, while on the other side there are several hundred. Gen. Scott has gone to take command of the Army, much to my regret. He has seen his day and is now too much of an old granny. Besides, as Mrs. Gaines says, I never knew a man to be much whose mouth you could cover with a button.

Some expect to make a speech tomorrow on my war steamer bill, so must abbreviate this letter and set about making some preparations.

Very truly,

Your Husband and Prochein Amie,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

**Attends Big Fair**

Washington, May 26.

My Dear Wife,

Hot, hotter, hottest!! For two or three days eggs might be pretty thoroughly roasted in the sun. I have not doffed my flannel, but I must confess it is pretty hard to keep it on today. As an offset, if one needed, we have an abundance of strawberries and for two days past, cucumbers. I would go without a week if I could only pass you a dish of each. Isn't that tolerably magnanimous?

Last night after visiting the President, called at Mrs. Madison's. She is complaining and Anna Payne is sick abed. Cousin Mary is right well. I was not able to give her any message or vote of thanks from you or the girls for her generous presents for I believe I received none from you for that purpose. I came near melting in walking home, and of course of leaving a great grease spot on the sidewalk.

The great Fair here is all the go. I went in before they had their things arranged and may go again. I saw a bedstead, cost \$2,500, chamber furniture to match. I think I could sleep sounder on a two and three penny bedstead in the north corner of the west chamber of an old house on Beach street.

Ever yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**Troops Winning in Mexico**

Washington, May 31, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Am right glad you have been successful in obtaining "help." Hope she may have the bump of inhabitiveness as strongly developed as Hepsey. Bob ought to be ashamed of himself. I have no objection to his being polite, but he need not carry the accomplishment so far as to be falling on his knees to little school girls. Well, under the circumstances, you will perceive the propriety of using him altogether in the wagon or carriage.

You ask if the war is to prolong the session. I hope not. Day before yesterday Hannegan introduced a resolution into the Senate fixing upon the 20th of July for the adjournment. Dayton moved to amend by inserting 20th of June. After

some little talk the whole matter was postponed to the 8th, one week from tomorrow. The probability I think, is, that the 20th of July may be fixed upon. Certainly nothing short of it, but as old Ritchie says, nous venons. I shall soon begin to count the weeks that separate me from my beloved ones.

Let me know how Augusta gets along under Dr. Colby. I will some time this week send you some money, as it seems the Doctor has exhausted you. I forget precisely how much George wanted but if I send you \$125 it will probably be all you will want for the present. If you do want more let me know and it shall be forthcoming. I enclose George's term bill which I believe is about what we reckoned.

Our troops are winning honors thick and fast in Texas. The war, if prosecuted as vigorously as I think it will be, will be a short one.

Gov. Morton has been confirmed. Good! I have not been expecting it, but think Calhoun has become a little frightened at his position and thinks it best to stay his hand.

Hope you have not forgotten to have some mushmelons planted; lettuce sowed, etc., etc.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Maine Officers Killed

Washington, June 7, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

I suppose you get papers enough to give you the news from the seat of war. Nothing else constitutes news here now. Our army has covered itself with glory. Maine, however, has suffered more than her share among the officers. Lieut. Chadbourne who was killed was a son of Ichabod R. Chadbourne of Eastport, and Capt. Page who was so badly wounded, having his lower jaw shot away, was from Fryeburg. Notwithstanding this, in the appointment of officers for the new Mounted Riflemen, Maine, and indeed New England, got nothing. This is treating us rather shabbily and causes a good deal of complaint.

Tomorrow, the Senate will take up the resolutions fixing a day of adjournment. My impression is, that the 20th of July will be selected. I think I shall vote for it, although some of our party scold a good deal about it, especially the Southern

men, who say, if we do that, nothing will be done with the tariff. But I am not owing the Southern gentlemen any special favor just at this time.

Washington is really getting to be rather a dull place. Most of the ladies are gone and parties, balls and public entertainments seem to have subsided, while business grows more pressing and wearisome.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### French Spoliations Claims

Washington, June 9, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Finding Senators engaged in rather a dry discussion, I avail myself of the moment to drop you a line or two. Yesterday the bill appropriating five millions of dollars in the public lands to the Claimants for French spoliations was carried by a majority of 4, myself not voting, feeling myself restrained by the small interest which you have. What will be its fate in the House is now very doubtful. Its friends, however, seem to feel much confidence in its success. A short time will determine.

Yesterday, also, the resolution for fixing a day of adjournment was taken up, and after discussion was postponed another week. You must not scold when I tell you that I voted for the postponement. It was very hard for me to do so, but the debates gave it such a political aspect, that I felt bound to yield my own feelings and opinions to those of my friends. I hope, however, that on Monday next, the 20th of July will be agreed on.

George, I suppose, is gone. Tell Sarah to write and let me know something about Miss Haines' school. How does Augusta get along? Is little Anna's head as square as a horse block yet? Or does it change?

My dear wife, ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

### The Oregon Question Again

Washington, June 11, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday, the President sent us confidentially, a message, accompanied by a proposition of the British Govt. for the set-



tlement of the Oregon question. It will probably be under discussion several days. Of the particular terms, you know, I am not at liberty to speak, the subject being, at present, in secret session. Nor of the result can I speak with certainty. My impression, however, is that the proposition will be agreed to substantially and so the whole matter ended. But this I know, that my Country shall never be disgraced by my vote, if I know what I am about.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Took an Electric Treatment

Washington, June 14, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

There was a fellow here two or three nights ago, pretending to be an astrologer. Says some 6 years ago he wrote to me for the day, month and year I was born, in order to make some calculations touching my fortune and that I did not answer. I have no recollection of it, have you? He said, after making some calculations, that we should not have fair weather until after the 14th (today).

There is a Mr. Coad here from Philadelphia with apparatus invented by himself for administering the electric fluid in an unbroken stream, to any extent, and without shocks. I let him have my committee room to exhibit in and he has twice tried it upon my knee. It is produced by a galvanic battery. I hold the two poles, one positive, the other negative, each side of the knee, and the electric fluid passes from one to the other through the knee joint. There is no shock nor is the sensation more disagreeable than two hot irons would produce. It sometimes agitated the limb so that I could hardly hold it still. The immediate effect is very favorable. Stiffness is removed and the knee strengthened, but the effect is not permanent. Coad, however, is satisfied that by perseverance my knee may be fully cured. Who knows but it might be a good thing for Augusta?

Tomorrow we take up the resolution for adjournment. My impression now is that I shall go for it, let who will scold. I have no idea, for one, of staying here all summer.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Treaty Confirmed

Washington, June 19, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Nothing new. Treaty is confirmed. Rumor says by vote of 41 to 14. If there is any glory in it, let those wear it who have won it. I covet none of it.

Another picture auction tomorrow night, am afraid to trust myself there. Hope to hear from some of the children soon. "Brevity is the soul of"—short letters.

Affectionately your husband,

J. F.

## Illness of Cousin Anna

Washington, July 3d, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Last night I called at Mrs. Madison's and Mr. Dummer's. At the former, I regretted to learn that Anna Payne was dangerously ill. I believe she has not been very well since early in the spring, but she has been confined to her bed but about three weeks. I have not seen her, I believe, since March, then she was complaining a little, but appeared pretty well. Cousin Mary calls her case one of consumption, but it strikes me it must be a severe case of dysentery, or hemorrhage of the bowels. The Doctor, they say, gives them but very little encouragement. I was there not more than five minutes and Cousin Mary was sent for, the girl saying that Anna was worse.

I regret also very much to inform you that Mr. Ward was called to Virginia to see Lauriston who was there for the purpose of keeping school. He found him feeble, and more than that, his mind affected, probably much as his mother's was. He did not recognize his Father. Mr. W. brought him to this City and placed him in the hospital, where he will be well taken care of. Probably the most judicious thing he could have done.

Mrs. Dummer was just recovering from the effect of her trial of Coad's galvanic apparatus, about 10 days ago. It does not agree with her at all.

I have something curious to tell, which is just brought to my mind by John's bringing me a note requiring an answer. A gentleman, perhaps for himself and others, has requested me to consent to have my bust taken in plaster. I consented and a

few days since he came with a carriage and carried me about 2½ miles to one of the most beautiful country seats I ever saw, owned by a Mr. Stone, who for many years was an engraver in this City and has retired with a large fortune. Being a man of genius and having a particular fondness for sculpture he is now passing his time very pleasantly in making busts.

He commenced taking measurements of my head that day and has been at my room once since to complete them. His note is to inform me that the clay is up, and that he wishes for a sitting tomorrow morning. He says that he shall want about 24 hours sitting, say about 2 hours at a time. He proposed the other day that I should go out early in the morning and breakfast with him. This will be delightful, especially when the weather is good and I can go on horseback. The bust will be just the size of life. A complete model, you know, is first made of clay and upon this the mould is made in which the busts are run. Perhaps you had better not say much about it at present.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### An Agreeable July Fourth

Washington, July 5, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday was the glorious fourth and what has been very unusual, it rained half the day. At ½ past 6 in the morning I started for Stone's, arrived there at 7, breakfasted with him, sat down to the bust where he kept me until dinner, say 2 o'clock. After dinner he made me take the chair again where he kept me as long as I could keep my eyes open, after which, say at 4 o'clock, he sent me home. His relative, an old maid, read a fine story to us. His sister, another old maid, kept the flies off from me and upon the whole, I spent a very agreeable Fourth of July. He is to let me know when he wants me again.

Have not heard from Anna Paine since I was up there on Thursday or Friday. If I can get waked up enough, shall walk up there by and by. Mrs. Ogle Taylor, a near neighbor of Mrs. Madison's, I learn, died very suddenly yesterday. She went into the bath well, for aught that any one knew. Afterward was found in her room on the floor senseless and soon after died.

The great tariff bill has passed the House. I fear it will take a good deal of time in the Senate. We are determined, however, to try our resolution for adjournment again tomorrow.

Ever thy Affectionate Husband.

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### Anna Payne Reported Dead

Washington, July 8.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday morning at the breakfast table Mrs. Scott told me that Anna Payne was dead, and after going to the Senate Chamber, I wrote you a letter informing you of the fact. Not finding the news confirmed, however, during the day, I began to doubt its correctness, and so retained my letter. Last night I went up to Mrs. Madison's and was told by the servant that she was living but very low.

The weather has now got to be very warm. So much so as to enable me (almost to the vexation of other members) to say that it is very comfortable.

Yesterday the House voted to fix the day of adjournment at the 3d of August and afterwards reconsidered it, and postponed the matter to a week from next Monday. Oh! the block-heads! I wish I was a Doctor and could have the physicing of them a little while. I think I could set their eyes and their hearts homeward pretty soon. Nevertheless, I am still inclined to think we may adjourn about the time named.

We are now beginning to have apricots, apples and pears among our fruit. Blackberries and raspberries are about disappearing. Apricots resemble a peach having a plum stone, nectarines are plums on a peach stone. Is this new or can you say "Who didn't know that?"

Your Affectionate

HUSBAND.

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### Negro Humor

July 10, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

This morning while I was dressing Mr. Stone's son called for me with his buggy and took me out to the studio. Break-

fasted there and sat about 2 hours. Stone is proceeding admirably. You can almost hear the bust speak now. We are getting along pretty well now with business and I begin to have some hope of getting home before autumn.

Yesterday I made a little speech upon the question of taking the Texan officers into our Navy with their Texan rank. I send you a Union containing it.

Have not heard from Anna Payne today.

Cousin Moses has just come in laughing "to kill" at some negro remarks he had just heard. One was going along pluming himself upon a new dress, white gloves, etc., etc. Another, a little envious perhaps, says, "Ah, you poor nigger, all you brought 'tother day was \$150." So you see nigger merit is measured by price. Another negro was sitting on his hack at the door of the Post Office Department when Pakenham's servant drove up and told him to get out of the way. He refused, said he paid the Corporation \$10 for the right to drive his hack and he had as good a right to the shade as any one. "You need not tink you can cheat us poor hack niggers out of our rights as your Master cheated Congress out of Oregon," & so forth.

Ever thy Affectionate

HUSBAND.

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### Fairfield's Bust Nearly Completed

Washington, July 16, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

I have the pleasure to inform you that the Senate has just passed the resolution by a large majority fixing the day of adjournment on the 10th of August. This was farther off than suited me, but no better terms could be obtained.

Last night I walked up to Mrs. Madison's to inquire about Anna. They say she continues about the same. Upon the whole, I should think there was now much hope of her. Cousin Mary is well and talks a little about going North with me.

This morning I went out to Stone's again. He is getting an excellent head, I think, or I should rather say, an excellent likeness.

You ask about my galvanic operations. I have had but one operation since I wrote you last about it and that was night before last. The night before that I lay awake all night with

pain in my legs. Not wishing to pass such another I went to O'Reilly's who succeeds Coad, and stood fire for about half an hour, went home and had a good night's sleep. So much for galvanism. Have not time to follow it up, especially as we have changed our hour of meeting to 10, nor do I see how I can go out to Stone's any more.

I write from the Senate while a prosy tariff speech is ding-  
ing in my ears, so excuse me if I stop here.

Ever Your Affectionate

HUSBAND.

### Anna Payne Recovering

Washington, July 22d.

My Dear Wife,

Madison Cutts was here last night and said they began to have strong hopes that Anna Paine would recover. Cousin Moses came in soon afterward bringing news from Mrs. Hartley, not so favorable. He says Mr. Ela told him they feared she would not recover.

In consequence of the Senate's meeting at 10, I had yesterday morning to get up at 5 o'clock and ride on horseback to Stone's. Gave him two hours and a half sitting. breakfasted with him, and returned by half-past nine. Expect to do the same again tomorrow morning if the weather is suitable. Had a hard fight today in executive session upon the nomination of Joseph H. Jordan as Collector at Frenchman's Bay in our State, but ultimately carried the nomination by 3 majority. Some of the most interesting sessions we have are the secret ones. The tariff bill is creating a good deal of excitement. It will probably be carried by the casting vote of the Vice-President. Have just received a letter from George, which I enclose. It is better written, I think, than his former letters. I can't go the watch trade, though. I shall send him five dollars.

Every once in a while they get up a report that I am going into the Navy Department. It is all gammon. I don't think the President contemplates making such an offer, and if he should, I should tell him I preferred my present position to anything in his gift.

Ever Your Affectionate

HUSBAND.

**Made Speech on Navy Pension Bill**

Washington, July 23d, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I write from the Senate, and almost directly under the pelt-  
ing of a speech from Gov. Bagby against the Harbor Bill. Yes-  
terday I had the honor to make a speech on the Navy pension  
bill, and tho' I say it myself, one of my best, for a short one,  
and yet not a word of it is reported in the Union.

Night before last, I had the pleasure to meet a large num-  
ber of the old Commodores at Mr. Bancroft's. It was a noble  
sight and a most agreeable time we had.

Anna Payne, I hear, can walk across the chamber. Have  
not heard from Mrs. Hartley since I wrote last, either to you  
or to Augusta.

Ever Your Affectionate

HUSBAND.

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**Excitement Over Tariff**

Washington, July 26, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I regret to be obliged to inform you that Mrs. Hartley died  
last night and Cousin John has just left in the cars with the  
corpse, so that he will probably reach Saco, one mail before this  
letter. He seems to bear up under the loss pretty well but in  
my opinion it will be more and more afflictive to him for a long  
time to come.

Anna Paine, I have not heard from since I wrote you last.  
We are having very exciting times. The tariff is trembling  
upon the verge of success and defeat. It is rather difficult  
to say what will be the end. We have been calculating all along  
that it was to be carried by the casting vote of the Vice-  
President. Yesterday, however, Haywood of North Carolina  
sent in his resignation.

All sorts of stories are in circulation as to the means used  
to bring this about. For myself, however, though I think he  
has acted very foolishly, I believe him to be entirely honest and  
conscientious about it. Jannagan, however, of Tennessee, a  
Whig, is instructed to go for the Bill, by a democratic Legisla-  
ture. If he obeys, as he probably will, the bill is safe yet.

Ever thine.

J. F.

Washington, July 28, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

We are in a state of very considerable excitement, I assure you, growing out of the new tariff bill. The Senate, for a long time has been considered to be equally divided, and that the fate of the bill would depend upon the vote of the Vice-President. On Saturday, however, Haywood of North Carolina resigned, rather than vote upon the bill against his party one way or his conscience the other way, and Janngan, a Whig, who has been instructed by a democratic Legislature to vote for the bill, is continually backing and filling, so that all are in doubt what he will finally do. Under these circumstances there is, of course, not a little excitement.

Tell Augusta I have received another letter from her, for which I am much obliged. She says you have received from Uncle Emery \$270, and want to know what is best to do with it. I think it would be better for you to ask Uncle Seth to buy you stock in the Manufacturers' Bank. As it will probably be about \$100 a share, you may draw upon my funds in the Bank for enough to make up three shares. If Uncle Seth should doubt whether this is the best way for you to invest, you can then let it remain until I get home. If stock is bought, the certificates will, of course, be made out in your name. I want you to keep all your property in your own name.

I called up to Mrs. Madison's last night. Anna is better and will probably recover. Rode out to Stone's this morning horseback. Had a delightful ride, rising at half-past 4. How would you like that?

Servier, who sits by my side, thinks I am a very cool fellow to be writing my wife in a state of such excitement.

Ever Your Affectionate

Husband.

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### French Claim Bill Passed

Aug. 4, 1846.

Dear Wifey,

The French claim bill has passed both Houses and is now a law.

It appropriates five millions of dollars in public lands. Laus Deo.

In haste ever thy

Affectionate Husband.



## A Difficult Passage to Washington

Washington, Dec. 6, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I am happy to be able to say that I reached this City last evening safely and in a condition of health somewhat improved. There has been no repetition of my nightly attacks of any consequence since I left home and I begin to entertain strong hopes of staving them off entirely or for the present at least.

Our passage on was not entirely free from obstruction and difficulty. I left Boston, you know, on Wednesday morning for the Long Island route. When we reached Allyn's Point at Norwich, the place from which the ill-fated Atlantic sailed, we found no boat to take us over to Long Island and had to wait in the cars for one nearly two hours. After she arrived we found her very slow and what was worse got aground on the Long Island side of the sound and had to lie nearly two hours before the boat could be got off, so that we did not reach Greenport until after dark.

When there we found that a baggage car of the train going North had run off the track and we had to wait a long time for the track to be cleared. In consequence of all these mishaps we did not reach New York until one-half past 2 in the morning when we should have reached it at 8 in the evening. Our baggage we had to leave in the cars and did not get it early enough in the morning to take the train for Philadelphia and so had to wait and take the night train. Since then things have gone well enough.

I stopped at Philadelphia on Friday and dined with Mr. Pettit in company with a Russian Count and Baron. The Count is soon to be married to a Miss McKnight of Bordentown. The Baron certainly cannot marry anybody until he "gets out of the woods." He is now buried up in hair.

Took the morning train yesterday (Saturday) and reached this city about 8. Found Mrs. Scott hauled up with a lame ankle. Mrs. King, Mr. Gordon and Mr. ———, Vermont, had already arrived and taken their old quarters. Have seen nothing of Judge Niles or Gov. Dickerson. Cousins John Hartley and Moses Titcomb met me at the Depot.

Had a magnificent sermon from Dr. Dewey this morning and I anticipate another this evening. He has as much true warmth of piety as he has of splendid talents.

Perhaps Augusta had better postpone going to Hewett's until spring when you can make sister Mary a visit and go in to Boston and see Augusta often.

Your Affectionate

Husband.

### The Senator is "Worstest"

Washington, Dec. 8, '46.

My Dear Wife,

You may expect, for the present at least, to be a good deal bored with my complaints. So let me say that yesterday I felt finely. Thought I was going to get well at once. Today I am worse, worsor, worstest, troubled with flatulency, low spirits, etc., etc., etc. Did I tell you that Dr. Peirson put me on a somewhat restricted diet? He says in his memorandum "For diet use plain food, avoiding gross articles, such as fat, gravy, melted butter, etc., and all flatulent substances such as cabbage, turnip, baked beans, pickles and the like. Avoid pastry and made dishes. Abstain from coffee and green tea."

There, what do you think of that? How would you like it? For myself, I can conform to his directions without any difficulty. Gravy is the only thing I part with, with much reluctance. In conversation, he added some other things such as hot bread, etc., etc., so I am now confining myself to the Graham loaf. I like it very well, but think they extract too much of the bran. It is that mainly, I think, which gives it its efficacy. The Doctor also prescribed a medicine composed of aloes, myrrh and some kind of tincture of iron—a teaspoonful in water just before eating—a teaspoonful of soda in water on going to bed.

Cousin Richard called last evening. Cousin Mary and all the rest, he says are very well. Hope to be able to go and see them soon. President's message came in today. Very good, I think, tho rather too long.

Affectionately,

Your Husband.

### Uses a Lard Lamp

Washington, Dec. 13, '46.

My Dear Wife,

You will be pleased to hear that my health is still improving and persevering in the diet prescribed by Dr. Peirson and

a liberal and faithful use of hair mittens (which I have bought) with cold water baths, I hope to be as well as ever, in a short time.

I keep a light burning all night and Mr. Gordon who sleeps in the adjoining chamber is appraised of my difficulty and will come to my aid if necessary. Mrs. Scott also sleeps in a room directly under mine and says she will be on hand in a moment at my tap upon the floor.

For a light I have bought a lard lamp and like it much. I am inclined to think you might introduce it at home with good economy. The light is white and soft, almost, as gas. My lamp will hold about 2 cents worth of lard and but a little more than one-third of it is consumed in a night. The lamp is so constructed that the lard will burn until entirely consumed. My lamp is common tin, painted. The wick is flat and is placed beneath a tin holder something like this (sketch here). This runs down into the cold lard near to the bottom of the lamp and being heated by the blaze keeps the lard melted sufficiently to burn well.

We have had a most capital sermon today from Dr. Dewey. House full. I observed Mrs. Madison among the multitude. Have not yet called upon her. Understand that Anna Payne is quite well again. Called at the President's night before last, small party, but a very cheerful one. Never saw the President and Mrs. P. in better spirits. The City, by the way, is very dull. Never saw the public houses so little thronged. Very few of the members have their wives or children with them and the lovers of high life are anticipating a dull winter.

Our mess at present is Judge Niles (and lady next week), Gov. Dickerson, Yules and myself of the Senate, and King, Gordon, and Dillingham of the House. Yules is to come tomorrow with his wife. Mrs. Scott has still two rooms vacant.

Tomorrow is assigned for the choice of our Committees. Expect a hard day's work and a day of grievance and disappointment to many. I wish all felt as easy and indifferent as I do upon the subject.

By the way, a Mr. Hume is pressing me to let Dr. McGrunder operate upon my knee. He had precisely such an one which the Doctor has entirely cured. I can't bear to think, in my present health, of 3 weeks' confinement to my chamber. However, I

am determined to consult the Doctor and see what encouragement he can hold out. If you can read this, give me credit for letter No. 5 and believe me to be

Ever your affectionate

Husband.

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Examined by Dr. Magruder

Washington, Dec. 15, '46.

My Dear Wife,

On calling a few days since at the 6th Auditor's office, Mr. Washington's, he inquired very particularly about my knees, seemed to take great interest in the case and said he had a clerk in the office who, a few months since, had just such a knee which had been entirely cured by a Dr. McGruder of this City. He sent for the Clerk who confirmed all that Washington had told me. They both pressed me hard to let him operate upon me. Day before yesterday, Hume, the Clerk, came to my room and urged me most strenuously to go and see Dr. McGruder. being sure, he said, that he could cure me.

In consequence of all which, I took some pains to find out who and what this Dr. McGruder was. The result is that he is regarded here as an exceedingly skilful physician and surgeon, is rather rough and odd, but a kind-hearted man, and one in whom his employers have great confidence. I learn also that he is physician for Pakenham, the British minister, Bodicke, the Russian minister, Papor, the French minister, and was physician for Fox before he died. In addition to all this I find his reputation to be first rate among the citizens.

Whereupon today I took Hume with me and called upon him. I liked his looks much. He is no dandy, but he has a broad, good-natured Scotch face and looks like a man of genius. Said he, "I should have known you without an introduction." "How so, my dear sir?" "Because I have seen your head out at Stone's."

Well, after some conversation, he said he would prefer calling on me at my rooms this afternoon when he would examine my knees and give me his opinion. At 4 o'clock, he called, examined, etc., and says the case is one of dropsy and that he can cure it. I told you the other day that they had not been better for years. Strange to say, the next day they were hardly ever worse and now my legs and ankles are much swollen. He says the dropsy is beginning to spread and will

soon extend upwards to the abdomen unless something is done. In the case of Hume, he put an instrument entirely through the knee under the pan. In my case he said he should not. Would merely make an incision and draw off the water. He says I shall not be confined more than a week and that mainly to prevent my catching cold. He speaks with perfect confidence of success, and I am free to say that he has inspired me with a similar confidence.

The result of all which is, that he is to come here next Saturday to fix on a day next week when he will come and perform the operation. I asked him, in reference to a particular matter (*entre nous*) whether I should want a nurse or any one to take care of me, and he said no—not at all. So you see I am fairly committed. The deed is to be done. I am determined on the trial, especially as he says there is not the least danger of producing a stiff joint or doing any other injury. He has given me some medicine to take to prepare me for the operation for which I have discarded everything else. I am all anxiety until the day arrives.

As ever,

Your Affectionate Husband.

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### Arranges for George to Come to Washington

Washington, Dec. 16, '46.

My Dear Wife,

Mrs. Scott says that if I will let George come on and take him into my bed, she will charge but \$3 a week for him. In view of this and the convenience of having him with me just now, I have concluded to let him come unless you should see some strong objection to it. I have marked my letter private in order that if you should think George had better not come on you can destroy it and say nothing of its contents to any one. I suppose he is now at home; if so, the sooner he comes the better. You can probably get what clothes he wants at the shop in Saco, if not, he can buy them in Boston. He will probably want a frock coat, pants and overcoat. His dress coat, I think, had better be postponed for the present. I enclose you a check for \$100. After you have fitted George out with clothes you can give him \$30 in money.

If you think best for him to come on, write me immediately on the receipt of this. I want to know, one or two mails

in advance of the time of his starting. I will write him by this or the next mail, giving him some directions. I will enclose the letter to you, which you can give him or not according to circumstances.

My health, I think, continues improving, except my lameness. That just now is very bad. The swelling extends to my ankles and feet, and has compelled me to buy some thin merino socks. If George comes on, you had better send, by him, my worsted socks.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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Washington, Dec. 17, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I wrote you yesterday saying that if you saw no insuperable objection to George's coming to W. I was willing he should set out, and that the sooner he came the better. A violent storm occurring has induced me to write again by next succeeding mail, to say that there is no such urgent necessity for his coming as would justify his setting out when the passage might be attended with danger or even with much discomfort. Last night, for instance, would have been dangerous upon the Sound. I do not know when it began to storm, but this morning when I waked, I found some 3 or 4 inches of snow on the ground, and snow then falling fast. It has since turned to rain and I hope will carry all the snow off.

I received your note this morning which gave me much pleasure. The "blues" are not upon me very hard now, but I'll assure you a letter from you will always tend to dissipate any little gathering clouds. Had forgotten about George's term and supposed him to be at home. It seems, however, that you will be likely to get my letters written yesterday as early as, if not before, he returns.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

The items about Black Charley, the curtains, children, etc., etc. are all interesting. How is Lion and how does he behave? I wrote you about Augusta some days since, giving my opinion that Augusta had better not go to Hewett's until spring or summer when you could go to Lexington and make a long visit, going to Boston often to see her. However, I am not very sanguine in my opinion and will leave all to you.





UNITARIAN CHURCH, SACO  
which John Fairfield was instrumental in founding and which the Fairfield  
family attended



THE FAIRFIELD PEW  
in Unitarian Church, Saco



## Date Set for Operation

Washington, Dec. 19, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Today, for the first time, I have called at Cousin Richard's and at Mrs. Madison's. Did not see Mary, she being engaged at church decorating it for Christmas. Richard has a boy, a few weeks old, of which he and his wife are proud enough. Mrs. Madison appeared to be well and Anna Payne extremely so. Never saw her looking better. They were both preparing to ride out so that I stopped but a moment.

Dr. McGruder has just been here agreeably to his appointment and has designated Tuesday next at 11 o'clock to perform his operation upon my knees. He still speaks with the utmost confidence of a cure. Cousin Moses will probably sleep with me until George comes, i. e., should it seem to be at all necessary.

Sunday—The foregoing was not early enough for the mail last night and as we have no Sunday mail, this will not go until tomorrow.

Mr. Burnap of Baltimore, preached for us today, a very good philosophical essay from the text "The rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all."

I feel pretty well today and begin to have confidence in my full restoration—i. e., to my ordinary state of health, perhaps better if Dr. McGruder's operation should prove successful, for I am not sure that the difficulty in the knee may not be the source of my other troubles.

I shall endeavor to write you again on Tuesday after the operation or the next day. Hume says the Dr. gave him something after his operation which made him sleep several hours. I may possibly in the same way be prevented from writing to you on Tuesday. Love to little Marty, Luly & Donny, and all the rest.

Ever Your Affectionate

Husband.

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The Senator's Knee Operated On

Washington, Dec. 22d, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

"The long agony is over," as once was said upon a more important occasion. My knees have been operated upon and so

far as we can now judge with the most perfect success. It is now 12 o'clock, meridian, an hour not having elapsed since the operation was performed.

I am sitting up in my bed, with very little pain, and devoting the first moments, after thanks to my Heavenly Father, to gratifying and allaying what I know must be the anxiety of my dear wife. When the Doctor got ready to put in his knife, "Now," said he, "if I am right in my opinions of your case a yellow gelatinous fluid will follow the knife." He then inserted the instrument on the outside of the knee joint and just above it and his prediction was fully verified. From both knees there was drawn about a pint and a half of yellow fluid, nearly the consistency of the white of an egg, not quite so thick. He says that at least a pint more will yet be drawn off. He then bandaged my knee and leg below it tightly, and left me, saying that he will call again this evening and relieve the bandages, one of which already begins to give me considerable pain.

Cousins Moses Titcomb and Richard Cutts were present at the operation and are delighted with Dr. McGruder and the apparent success of the operation. Richard pressed me very hard to call in Dr. Hall as advising physician, but I declined, having full confidence in McGruder's honest face, strong good sense, his simplicity and want of pretension, and apparent frankness and honesty.

I will leave the next page to add anything that may occur before the hour of sending to the mail.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

4 O'clock. Nothing to add. Just time to send to P. O.

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### A "Port Wine" Operation

Washington, Dec. 23, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

I have just received yours of the 20th. If your calculations were correct, George would start this morning and may be expected here by Saturday night. Shall be glad to see him, wish he was here now.

The Doctor has just left me. He opened my knees again, in new places, and drew off about another pint of blood and matter and poked pieces of cloth into the orifices to keep them

open. He hurt me much more today than he did yesterday and the irritation caused by the pieces of cloth in the holes is by no means agreeable, I can tell you. He has postponed the operation with the Port wine until tomorrow. As I understand him, the coming away of the wine will be accompanied by the remaining fluids and the knees will then be in a proper condition to heal, or rather for the parts so long separated to come together again.

Cousin Moses slept with me last night and probably will continue to until George comes on. I am troubled with wakeful spells occasionally, but not more so than I was at home. If you were only here, I should feel quite happy. Nevertheless, I ought not to complain. Under all the circumstances I am getting along very well.

I had a letter from Augusta a few days since, written, I should think, the day before the burning of the meeting house. She appears quite happy and says she would like to stay all winter and study with Uncle Whitman, which I think would not be an injudicious move, if you should not conclude to put her to Hewett's now.

By the way, if her disease is like mine, I should be in favor of having the knee opened. Of all that, however, we can confer again. The weather is, and has been for several days delightful, so I presume there is not much doubt of George's starting this morning.

Affectionately,

Your Husband.

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Washington, Dec. 24, '46.

My Dear Sarah,

Thank you for yours received some time since but must postpone answer until I am in better condition to write. My principal object now is to give you a bulletin of my health. This morning the Doctor opened my right leg upon the inside but got nothing but blood. He then with a syringe forced cold water into it and afterwards Port wine, both of which were almost immediately ejected, and the leg bound up. The operation this morning was very severe and my leg is yet, say 3 o'clock, in a good deal of pain. To the left leg he did nothing more, believing that there had been already inflammation enough.

Excuse me for brevity. Will try to make up for it another time. My confidence in the Doctor remains undiminished and believe I am getting along better than could be expected.

Your Affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The Operation Successful

Washington, Dec. 25, 1846.

My Dear Wife,

Am happy in being able to inform you that thus far, the operation proves successful. Yesterday the Doctor made a new opening which brought on my old neuralgic pain which lasted all day. In the evening, by direction of the Doctor, I enveloped one knee with a bread and milk poultice. This relieved the pain, and was followed by one of the best night's sleep I have had since leaving home. Consequently today, I am bright, cheerful and full of hope. The Doctor has just been in, but has done nothing, says everything is working to his satisfaction. There is considerable inflammation in both knees, but no more, the Doctor says, than he wants to make the parts knit well together.

I walk my chamber a good deal, by direction, for the purpose of producing irritation and consequent inflammation,—the very thing that most other surgeons seem to dread. I have a capital appetite for breakfast—but for dinner I have hard work to dispose of a small bowl of gruel, taking nothing at tea time.

Cousin Moses continues to sleep with me, and is very kind and attentive. Tomorrow night I hope I shall have George. His letter was received this morning, by which I learn that he was to start Wednesday, day before yesterday morning. The letter, I suppose, passed him in Boston where he probably passed the night. Today is Christmas and the weather is mild, but a rain storm I can see, is brewing. George may have some of it tomorrow, but he will be across Long Island Sound, which is some comfort. I have an invitation to dine with the President on Wednesday next, but suppose I shall have to forego that pleasure, although my week will then have been out which the Doctor limited for my confinement.

Had a call at the door some days ago from Cousin Mary. She appears to be in prime health and in good spirits.

Ever thine,

I write every day.

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Caucus in the Sick Room

Washington, Dec. 26, '46.

My Dear Wife,

About an hour since I found half the democratic Senators rushing into my room, to hold a caucus, by appointment of General Cass without a word to me upon the subject. We have had, however, an agreeable consultation and pleasant time of it. And now as all are gone I will spend the next few minutes in writing you.

The Doctor came while they were here, and I had to withdraw to an adjoining chamber. The opening on the left knee I found very sore and beginning to fester. On opening it, however, we found that the piece of cotton cloth had never been extracted. I told him on Wednesday that it was out, and he took it for granted that I was right. That part of the knee has, of course, been very sore. Upon the whole, I am getting along finely. Slept well again last night and feel 20 years younger than I did a week ago. The Doctor thinks I may safely go out on Monday. I almost fear he is a little too liberal and shall endeavor to be careful.

I see by the New York Herald that George was at New York on Thursday night. Of course I shall expect him here this evening. He will come just in time to do a job which the Doctor has this morning directed, that is, to bathe my legs in bay rum and then rub them well. The weather today is delightful, quite contrary to my expectations and George will, of course, have a pleasant passage.

The report is that Bailey of Virginia and Davis of Kentucky have gone out to fight a duel. Poor fools. I pity them and sincerely hope that nothing worse will result than a flesh wound to each. It is said that Bailey was arrested and gave bail, that Davis avoided the officer and went to Baltimore where, it is supposed, Bailey will follow him despite of his bonds.

The law upon this subject is very severe here now, and I hope it will be enforced.

When George comes I hope I shall be able to make him do a part of the writing.

Your Affectionate

Husband.

## Announcing George's Arrival

Washington, Dec. 27, '46.

My Dear Wife,

You will be happy, I know, to learn that no danger thus far, appears to attend the operation upon my knees. The inflammation has nearly ceased and the healing process appears to be going on gradually and healthily. The knees, to be sure, are still swollen—but the swelling is mainly, I apprehend, in consequence of the incisions, or the sores made by them. It will probably be months before an entire restoration to the original strength of the joints,—though for most purposes I may be considered well.

George arrived last night about half past 7, having had a safe and pleasant journey, both by land and water. He has been today to hear Dr. Dewey. He paid a pretty extravagant price for his clothes, it appears to me, or perhaps I should rather say, he bought better than he need to have done, to wit, \$18 for his frock coat, \$18 for his overcoat and \$3.75 for his vest. However, they are quite large and I hope he may be able to keep (at least the great coat) many years.

Last night I had a call from Mr. Dummer and Cousin Mary Cleaves. Mr. D. brought me his pocket full of big apples which were very acceptable.

Regret very much poor Luly has burned her face. Hope you used Connel's pain extractor, for if there is any faith in certificates it would have instantly relieved the pain. I tell George he must write by and by and I suppose he will. The Doctor says I may go to the Senate tomorrow, but I doubt if I shall avail myself of his liberality. Tomorrow morning, he says, he shall bandage both knees tightly.

Found George very handy last night in bathing my legs in bay rum and this morning in rubbing my back with a hair mitten. But enough and more than enough of this everlasting talk about myself. If you find me tiresome, give me a hint and let me try to amend.

Yours in the bonds of love and matrimony,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Unhappy Sequel to a Duel

Washington, Dec. 29, '46.

My Dear Wife,

I omitted to write you yesterday, and directed George to take my place, which he did. He has now gone to the P. O. Dept. to visit Cousin Moses. so I will drop you a line myself.

My knees are getting along better than I expected, which you would probably infer from the fact that yesterday, Monday, one day within the week set by the Doctor, I went to the Senate Chamber. The joints are now considerably swollen and are bandaged tightly, I suppose to reduce the swelling and to aid the healing process.

I have not been to the Senate today, understanding that there was to be no session, in consequence of the death of Senator Barrow from Louisiana. This death has been sudden and melancholy. It is not three days, General Dix told me, since he was boasting of a constitution that was capable of resisting any and everything. Now he is a corpse. His death was caused by bilious colic. He went to Baltimore with Garrett Davis and Bailey. While there he was attacked with the bilious colic and died last night. What an unfortunate sequel to the unfortunate drama of the abortive duel!

Poor Barrow! of all the men in the Senate, he is the last whom I would have selected for so early a death. He was, say, 6 feet 2 or 3 inches tall and otherwise large; he had a very broad chest and was a man of great muscular power and always appeared to be in the very best of health. No order has yet been taken for his funeral.

Last night I had a very pleasant call from Mrs. Ela, accompanied by Cousin John. George has had an abundance of invitations and will soon, I suppose, begin to avail himself of some of them. He caught a slight cold coming on and I, not finding any corrective in my medicine chest, advised him to take a couple of pills which he essayed to do, but was unable. He tried them with water and without, with apple, etc., etc., but it was no go, he could not get one of them down, scolding nor ridiculing had any effect. I send you a letter I have received from Augusta.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

## Dined with President

Washington, Dec. 31, '46.

My Dear Wife,

By a misunderstanding between George and myself you had no letter yesterday, or rather there was none written yesterday. In the way of news, the duel between Davis and Bailey turned out to be no duel, probably just as the chivalrous parties wanted. These Southern men, while they like to have the reputation of fighters, do not like actual fighting better than others. Mr. Barrow was buried today with all the usual forms and ceremonies.

Yesterday, contrary to my expectations I dined with the President. I did not, however, risk so much without the advice of the Doctor. Today I went to the Senate, attended the funeral and afterward with George went and dined with Cousin Richard. Tomorrow is New Year's day, when all the world will be agog. I think I shall participate but little in the festivities (if so they may be called) of the occasion.

My lameness is about the same as it has been for three days. There is a little soreness, some pain and weakness. I walked tonight, however, from Cousin Richard's. I do nothing now but bathe the legs in rum and afterward in a solution of potash I believe, and bandage tightly. I have a good appetite and am doing pretty well.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.





SARAH FAIRFIELD HAMILTON  
Daughter of John Fairfield



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CLOSING YEAR OF SENATOR FAIRFIELD'S LIFE—1847.

The last letter that Senator Fairfield ever wrote was on December 23d, 1847, the Senator stopping in the middle of a letter, which never was completed. "So no more tonight—" were his last written words.

The letters of his closing year of life are pathetically suggestive of pain and growing concern as to the state of his health. They breathe a fonder affection for home and assume the personal note almost exclusively.

The letters of 1847 begin shortly after the first surgical operation was performed on his knee. This must have been temporarily successful, for at the close of the spring session of 1847 he returned to Maine feeling better and looking younger.

On the way to Maine, early in 1847, he stopped in Boston, to consult a prominent Boston physician as to the health of their daughter Augusta who was staying with her uncle's family in Lexington, Mass. Mrs. Fairfield met the Senator in Boston. The daughter Augusta, to whom reference is made so often in these letters, was about fourteen years old at the time when she began to show symptoms of a trouble very like that of her father. Thereafter she was always an invalid, and died in early womanhood. Her sister, Miss Martha Fairfield, now (1922) a resident of Washington, D. C., writes of this Augusta, "She was a beautiful character, always cheerful and sunny, with her father's courage and joyousness. Her wheel-chair was always the happy center of the family circle."

Senator Fairfield left eight children. The oldest son, Walter, was drowned when sixteen years of age. He gave his life to save a comrade in a canoe accident. In all of Senator Fairfield's early letters he made frequent reference to Walter. These references cease at a certain point in this correspondence. It is evident that Governor Fairfield was at home in Saco, Maine, at the time of this family tragedy.

The associations of Governor Fairfield with his children were intimate and happy. He wrote them often and many of the letters in this collection were addressed to them. These letters show tender interest in their every-day pursuits and are filled with good counsels of frugality, thrift and religious admonition.

Miss Martha Fairfield cherishes a copy of some stanzas written by her father, for his children to sing as a morning hymn at their family devotions. She remembers sitting on a little cricket at his feet on these occasions and singing this song which so well expresses the mild and beneficent theology of John Fairfield, at a time when the old and stern theology prevailed. Miss Fairfield says also, "My father, at an early age, turned from the church of which his grandfather had been the only minister for thirty years, and with some other young men founded the Unitarian Church at Saco, saying that he could not bring up his children on what seemed to him terrible doctrines.

The morning hymn to which Miss Fairfield refers is as follows:

#### A MORNING HYMN

Again a flood of golden light  
Succeeds the sombre shades of night.  
Refreshing slumber's gentle reign  
Gives way to active life again.

Father in Heaven, thy loving grace  
In each event of life we trace;  
Asleep, awake, we need not fear,  
A father's love is always near.

To thee, O Father, now we raise  
Our notes of gratitude and praise.  
O! may the day we now begin  
Be free from sorrow and from sin.

He was also given, in his spare moments, to the writing of charades for the diversion of his children and friends. Each member of the family had his or her name cleverly worked into a charade. The "dearest name in the world" inspired this:

Between two interjections place  
Two times the end of pain;  
And then I think you'll plainly trace  
A much-loved, pretty name.

This was the charade version of his daughter Martha's name:

My first's a place where merchants meet,  
To buy and sell and gain;  
To this an interjection add,  
'Twill make my daughter's name.

This, the reader will readily guess, is Augusta:  
I take a month of flowers and fruit,  
And place it first in order;  
An article to this I'll suit,  
And write another daughter.

For his eldest daughter he composed this:  
From snow-clad mountains gently rolls  
Its tribute to the sea,  
A nobler stream of nobler Maine—  
Its half my first shall be.  
One-third a stream of Scottish fame  
Will make another letter;  
An exclamation gives a name,  
You scarce could spell it better.

The following was written to delight the Senator's beloved "Hammy:":

My first is one who braved the flood,  
In Noah's noble barque;  
And, landing safe on Ararat,  
Descended from the Ark.  
My next a vegetable is—  
But for rhyme and meter,  
I'll further add, without its aid,  
We could not have a Peter.  
My third is sought by brigands bold,  
To hide their ill-got gain;  
The whole, when fairly ranged and told,  
Will show my son his name.

During the summer of 1847, Senator Fairfield took charge of the Maine Democrat during the absence of the editor. It was in this connection that he wrote the series of "Letters of O. K." which were collected in a book and given to his wife. He returned to Washington for what proved to be his last session, on the first of December. He wrote but four more letters, particularly chatty, making but little mention of his illness, although it was apparent to him that his condition was by no means reassuring. He says in one case that his health was "as good at least as when I left home."

## New Year's Calls

Washington, Jan. 1, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

There—hit it right, the first time writing—that is to say, have written 1847 instead of 1846.

The weather is delightful. In going to make some calls put on George's coat (which by the way just fits me) and found it uncomfortably warm. The day will compare very well with our early days in September.

I have called at the Vice-President's, Mrs. Madison's, Mr. Dickens' our Secretary, Mr. Rives', Gov. Parris' and Col. Benton's and have just returned somewhat fatigued. I could not undertake to crowd my way through the throng at the President's with my game legs. George is out upon an expedition with Moses. I met them a short time ago and urged them to call at Mrs. Madison's where I suspect they are now gone.

I never saw Mrs. M. looking better, Anna Paine and Cousin Mary supported her,—i. e, in a military sense, not that they have hold of her.

When George returns, will make him write some of you if I can. I wish he had more of an inclination to write. Of my lameness I am obliged to say that the joints are yet weak, and it is with some difficulty that I can walk a considerable distance, but I still have confidence that they are improving, and that an entire cure is in prospect.

Ever Yours,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

Had almost forgotten to wish you and all our household a happy New Year.

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## George Having a Good Time

Washington, Jan. 3d, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

As George wrote yesterday it has become my turn today. As Ego, I, I, myself, have been the absorbing topic of my letters, I begin by saying that I am getting along "as well as could be expected." Nay, better than that. There is now no inflammation in the knees, the swelling is subsiding gradually, and the only pain is an occasional one of my old neuralgic

pains. I walk well, at least as well as I did before the operation, which is saying a good deal, when you consider how tightly my legs are bandaged. The Doctor has not been here for two days, shall expect him today. The only thing now done is to bathe in New Rum, and a kind of alkali. George is of some service though he gets terribly sleepy before we finish at 11 o'clock. Have been at church today and heard the inimitable Dr. Dewey. Of all the men whom I ever heard preach he is my favorite. He draws crowded houses and is doing a great amount of good.

George is busy examining curiosities at the Patent Office, and seems to be enjoying himself. This week he means to attend more to the debates in the Senate and House of Representatives. I shall take him with me to the President's, I believe, on Tuesday evening.

New Year's day he and Moses strolled about, but I suspect made but few calls. Moses has two things in his composition that keep him back, to wit, diffidence and laziness.

I called at Mrs. Madison's New Year's day. Never saw her looking better. The President's jam I very prudently declined attempting to penetrate.

One month nearer seeing my dear, dear home than I was. Two months will soon slip away. I begin to anticipate with great delight (if my knees are cured) the taking hold actively of my agricultural pursuits. I am persuaded it is the only way to ensure good health, without which, what is wealth or fame?

Tomorrow I intend to take my seat in the Senate and go to work. I have several bills to report from Committee on Naval Affairs which may give me something to do.

In reply to your inquiry I know not who and what "Margaret" is. Who is the author? I have never seen or heard of the work.

Yours in love and marriage.

J. F.

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### Knees Are Improving

Washington, Jan. 5, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday, I believe, escaped without a letter either from myself or George. He says he will write today. I am happy in being able to say that my knees are gradually improving. The swelling is subsiding and the joints gaining strength. I



walk today better than I have for years, I think. It may be imaginary,—but I hope not. At all events I know I am improving. I spend over an hour morning and evening in bathing in New Rum and afterward with an alkali. If I have told you this seven times before, hope you will pardon me.

The weather here continues to be delightful. George and I are talking of attending a party tonight at Capt. McCauley's at the Navy Yard.

Yesterday, I understand, a young man, son of a Judge residing at Richmond, Va., committed suicide. I have no information of the cause or particulars farther than that he went into a "Pistol Gallery," as it is called—a sort of shooting school—and after firing 11 shots at a mark, the 12th he put through his own head. Poor fellow! Intemperance and gaming lie at the bottom of most of these things. Don't know how it may be here.

I write from the Senate and as an order has passed to go into executive session I must close.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Plans for Augusta

Washington, Jan. 8, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

I was willing to leave everything in regard to Augusta to you, having more confidence in your judgment than my own. However, as you seem to insist on my views, I will give them freely. I enclose a letter received today from Bro. Whitman from which it appears that Augusta is happy where she is, and is in better health. Moreover, she is now studying Latin, etc., with her uncle and is probably doing better than she would anywhere else.

The winter will be an uncomfortable time for you to go to Lexington and to pass in and out to and from Boston once or twice a week and it may be a bad time to leave Annie.

Upon the whole, it appears to me, it would be better to permit Augusta to remain where she is until spring (say March, if that suits you better than any other month) when you can go up and make your visit and superintend the operations upon Augusta at Hewett's. After my return, which will be early in March, I can go up with you, if necessary.

If we take this course, perhaps it would be better to suggest to Mr. W. that Augusta should be a boarder and a pupil, instead of a visitor. However, upon this point, I am not clear. In regard to Augusta's ailment, I am confident, it differs entirely from mine. I doubt if any water or fluid is collected about her joints.

If I am right in this, no surgical operation would be required. Hewett's course is probably the best that could be adopted. There—"them is my sentiments, Mr. Speaker." If you differ from me, say so, and wherein. You will find me very tractable. I am happy to repeat that I am still improving. I was so imprudent at McCauley's party night before last, as to eat a hearty oyster supper about 11 o'clock, for which I suffered all day yesterday. A good night's sleep, however, has dissipated the effects and today I am feeling remarkably well, and walking better than I have for years.

I got a letter out of George yesterday for Sarah, but there are so many things to take up one's attention here, that I cannot promise myself success in attempts to draw one from him daily. I owe my dear little Martha a letter which I must write very soon. Her letters have amused George very much. To me, they have certainly been quite interesting.

Your Affectionate

Husband.

If you should deem it better, from any considerations, to meet me in Boston, so let it be.

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### Calls Mexicans "Rascally"

Washington, Jan. 10, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Oh, what magnificent preaching we are having. Never in my life, have I heard preaching half so interesting, or half so well calculated to do good. I shall go to meeting again this evening if I have to wade knee deep in the snow.

Congress is very dilatory in all its proceedings. Nearly half of the session is gone, and yet nothing of importance accomplished. I wish the war could be brought to a close, but I fear very much that it is to be procrastinated indefinitely. The Mexican Congress has met—and has declared they will not treat for peace while any of our troops remain in Mexico or any of our ships remain upon her coast. War, then, and war to the

knife and the hilt must be the consequence. She said once before, if our ships were withdrawn from her coast she would receive a minister from the U. S. The ships were withdrawn and then she refused to receive the Minister. The truth is, the Mexicans are a rascally, perfidious race. No reliance can be placed in their most solemn compacts. They are little better than a band of pirates and robbers.

I had a call from Mrs. Chas. Cutts the other day. First, to tell me that she called her last session to pay me my \$5 but found me out, etc., etc., will pay it soon. Second, to ask my advice about her proposed attempt to raise money on her furniture to help Mrs. Madison!!! Think of that! I could not help laughing in her face. She immediately dropped that topic and did not again recur to it. How ridiculous! Suppose Mrs. M. is poor. She has friends by whom she could raise money at any time; while poor Mrs. C. is much more destitute than Mrs. M. and without the means of raising the wind I presume except to a very limited extent say a few dollars. But the whole thing is in character just like her!

Bulletin No. 40,—save one. Knees growing better. Have not seen the Doctor since a week last Thursday and don't know what has become of him.

Ever thy affectionate  
Husband.

### Death of Judge Pennybacker

Washington, Jan. 12, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

I have the melancholy intelligence to communicate of another death in our body. Judge Pennybacker of Virginia died last night after an illness of only a few weeks. At the commencement of the session perhaps no two men would be more likely to be selected from the Senate for long life than Barrow and Pennybacker. Now! alas! neither of them are among the living. Truly the race is not always to the swift or the battle to the strong. The death of Mr. Pennybacker will be announced today, when the Senate will adjourn over today until tomorrow, probably.

Night before last we had a fall of some eight inches of snow, which makes capital sleighing. Never saw better in this

city. Being under the necessity of going to the War Department, I took 25 cents' worth in a big, oblong willow basket, drawn by two queue-up-tailed nags.

I received another letter from Martha this morning for which I am much obliged to her. I think she improves in writing very fast.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

Archer has just made his announcement, and the funeral is to be tomorrow.

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Washington, Jan. 16.

My Dear Wife,

The weather is very changeable and everybody is continually catching cold. My brushing and washing in the mornings I believe saves me. They are, I think, the best preservatives. Wish you would try them yourself, one or both.

George has had a cold ever since he has been here, attended with sore lips. Tonight, I mean to dose him well with cayenne.

Have not seen my Doctor yet, it being a fortnight yesterday since he was here. I don't know that I suffer from his absence. My limbs, I think, are gradually gaining, though not quite so fast as I could wish.

When ought George to start for home? His term commences about the middle of February, and I suppose it would be well enough for him to be at home one or two weeks before going to Brunswick. Consequently, unless you have some suggestion to make to the contrary, I shall start him off towards the close of this month. It would, perhaps, be well to give him one day at Lexington.

I shall be glad when the time arrives for me to set my face homeward also. The attractions of home seem to me to deepen and gather force, the older I grow and I will add what I said to O'Sullivan last night, who is now revelling in his honeymoon,—that although I had been married over twenty-one years, I could say with truth that I loved my wife better now than I did the first month of my marriage. There,—was not that a pretty gallant speech? Don't you "owe me one"? O'Sullivan was delighted to hear me say so and has no doubt he can say the same at the end of 21 years. Perhaps he may—I hope he may.

Not knowing anything of his wife I ought not to doubt it. He, himself, is an excellent fellow and moreover is an excellent friend of mine.

I write from the Senate, while Badger of North Carolina is making a speech against the Bill providing for the appointment of a Lieutenant General.

Yours in the bonds of love and wedlock,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

### Visit to Annapolis

Washington, Jan. 19, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Grand levee of the President tonight. Visit of Naval Affairs Committee to Annapolis postponed until tomorrow. Special train got up for us. In addition to examination of Naval School, there is to be a grand naval ball. If I should attend it and dance you shall be duly informed thereof by the earliest mail thereafterwards.

Another member of Congress almost dead. SIMONS of South Carolina has been suffering, I am told, for several days with mania a potu.

George and I went night before last to hear Lover, the author of several amusing books. The audience laughed heartily at stories old as Methuselah, but the whole affair was a humbug. Balls, parties, concerts, theatres, etc., etc., are abounding. Have attended only the one named and McCaulay's party. Next Saturday, however, dine with Mr. Buchanan. Although something of a politician, yet like a dinner party about as well as any party.

George will probably leave on Wednesday, one week from today. This will enable him to spend one day at Lexington and get home on Saturday night, the thirtieth. This also will give him about a fortnight at home before going to Brunswick.

Ever Yours,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

Washington, Jan. 22, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday morning I went to Annapolis as I contemplated. Had a very pleasant time, but am suffering from late hours

and extra eating and drinking. Returned this morning, time enough for the session. The ball was a most magnificent one. The school is first rate. Upon the whole I was very much gratified.

Ever thine,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Mr. Buchanan's Dream

Washington, Jan. 28, '47.

My Dear Wife,

I have already written you that George's departure is to be delayed another week, so I hope you will not worry about him. He is enjoying himself very well, but in a very quiet, steady way. Not at all disposed, so far as I know, to any unlawful or improper indulgences.

I think you have done right in informing Augusta that she might *stay* at Lexington until I return. Am glad, also, that you have concluded to meet me in Boston or Lexington. I am sure that Augusta will need you for a while.

Let me suggest that you should get some one who can take your place and devote herself entirely to Annie. Sarah, I should think, could take charge of the rest.

George and I have an invitation to a small party at Mrs. Dickens' on Saturday evening next. Mrs. D., the wife of our Secretary, I mean. We go, of course.

By the way, I have often laughed at a dream of Mr. Buchanan which he related to us the other day at his dinner. That is to say: He dreamed that he had a shirt made of gun cotton and a big, ugly looking fellow was continually in chase of him with a red hot poker to blow him up. A Daniel might perhaps connect it with his waking thoughts in a manner not entirely complimentary to the Secretary.

I cannot close without alluding to my knees, and I am happy to say the two last days they have been much better than they have been since the operation, while the two days before they were worse. If things go on as favorably as they have for the two last days, you and I will dance a jig when we have the pleasure of meeting.

Ever thine,  
J. FAIRFIELD.

## Completes a Half Century

Washington, Jan. 31, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday was my fiftieth birthday. Half a century have I lived. Half a century been subject to all the vicissitudes of life. Half a century have I suffered and enjoyed. "Half a century!" In what solemn tones it strikes upon my ear. How old and sombre it looks upon paper. I can almost see the moss gathering about it and fancy a necessity for the chisel of Scott's "Old Mortality." I am, nevertheless, unable to indulge in any sorrowful reflections of the past or gloomy forebodings for the future. Though a cloud has occasionally overshadowed my path—and for brief periods, the way before me has appeared dark,—yet on the whole, my life, thus far, has been a happy one—and in looking back, I can find nothing but causes for gratitude, deep and heart-felt gratitude to my Heavenly Father. In my wife and children I find the most abundant source of gratitude for the past and solicitude for their welfare and happiness in the future, mingles with every thought by day and every dream by night. Two pages to this topic, however, I believe, is about enough. I have no news, moral or political, that I know of. The weather, a universal topic, you know, is very fine. Today is Sunday, and we have had two magnificent sermons from Dr. Dewey. I long for Sunday to come round. Such treats, intellectual as well as moral and religious, I have never enjoyed before in the shape of preaching. The Doctor is a whole head and shoulders above any man living in the ministry, and in my opinion is superior to Dr. Channing. Mrs. Niles went with me tonight, and though a strong Presbyterian, she admitted that she was perfectly fascinated.

George, I suppose, will leave some day this week. Last night we both attended a small party at Mr. Dickens' and today we dined with Cousin Richard. After dinner I walked up to Dr. Magruder's, say two miles or more, and back again. George went to meeting with Cousin Mary and afterward to Mrs. Madison's. We have yet to visit the Navy Yard and the Observatory.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

**The Senator's Youthful Appearance**

Washington, Sept. 5.

My Dear Wife,

I have nothing to tell you today but an anecdote which I got at Gov. Marcy's dinner yesterday. I sat near Professor Henry, who has lately been chosen superintendent of the Smithsonian Institution in this city. He asked me if I had any of my family with me. I told him no; that my son had just left for home, who had been spending his college vacation with me. "College!" said he, "is it possible that you have children old enough to go to College! Why you must have begun young." "Why," said I, "how old would you take me to be?" "About 35," said he. His astonishment was great on being informed that I had completed my half century last Saturday.

On telling the anecdote at the breakfast table this morning Mrs. Niles said it was manifest that I was 10 years younger this session than I was last session. The Judge said he could not answer to that but he was sure I was at least 5 years younger now than I was at the commencement of the session.

From all this you will draw your own inferences.

George had a pretty windy day yesterday, but I trust he got along safely.

If you can't decipher this, lay it aside and I will help you when I get home.

Ever thine,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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**The Starving Irish**

Washington, Feb. 8, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

George left on Wednesday and a windy time he had of it. Not having heard anything to the contrary I presume he got along safely.

Last night I walked up to Ela's and took tea. In the evening, tho it rained hard, went and heard an excellent sermon from Dr. Dewey. I have also met the Doctor two or three times in private circles and I find him to be as playful and agreeable as he is profound and learned in the pulpit.



Tomorrow night there is to be a meeting to raise subscriptions for the poor Irish who are absolutely dying of starvation. The descriptions of their sufferings are horrible and we cannot be held guiltless, if, with such an abundance as we have in this country, we do not contribute to their aid.

I regret to be obliged to say that we are likely to lose another Senator. Dixon H. Lewis, the fat man, is now lying in a lethargic state, from which his friends fear he will be never fully aroused. He was in the Senate about a week ago, though not very well. Everybody has seen that his prospects for a much longer continuance of life were rather poor.

Hope to hear from George immediately upon his reaching home.

Ever Yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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### Carried Through Two Bills

Washington, Feb. 16, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Yesterday I had the good fortune of carrying through two important Bills reported by my Committee,—a bill granting pensions to widows under certain circumstances, and a bill providing for the building of four war steamers. They created a pretty little discussion in which I participated and carried my measures against the expectation of everybody. The Naval appropriation bill comes up tomorrow when for one day at least, I shall be pretty busy.

Last night I attended a jamb—literally a jamb—and at Mr. Secretary Mason's. I can eat now as much ice-cream, Charlotte Russe and even boned turkey and chicken salad as other folks without being troubled by it afterward either asleep or awake. I know nothing now to prevent my leaving here on the 4th of March and meeting you either at Boston or Lexington on Friday or Saturday. If you stop at Boston, you will, of course, go to the Tremont House. Of this, however, we will talk further by and by. And, by the way, why don't you talk? I have not received a letter from you for a fortnight, I think.

I suppose Sarah is all agog to get her ring and pin. George lost some of our most interesting debates. I regretted that he could not have been here.

Love to all.

Ever thine,

J. FAIRFIELD.

## Plans for Meeting

Washington, Feb. 24, '47.

My Dear Wife,

Our session will terminate just one week from today, that is, Wednesday night at 12 o'clock. My present intention is to start the next morning at 5 o'clock and, having good luck and no interruptions, to reach Boston on Friday night.

I think you had better come to Boston on Friday and stay there Friday night. On Saturday we can see Hewett and then go to Lexington. Stop at the Tremont.

Col. Benton is just going to commence a crack speech, everybody is on the tiptoe of expectation.

Soule of Louisiana made a most eloquent speech day before yesterday. He is a Frenchman, or rather was born in France, speaks with a brogue which renders him quite interesting.

Ever yours,

J. FAIRFIELD.

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 Begins His Last Session

Friday Night, Washington, Dec. 2d, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Here I am again snug and safe in my old quarters—and right glad I am for a chance to rest and to get a modicum of sleep, very little of which precious article have I been favored with since leaving home. On Monday I stopped and dined with Mr. and Mrs. Batchelder and a right pleasant time I had of it. I think they are very agreeably situated, and appear to be very happy. The farm, though small, is a very good one. The house is very convenient and comfortable, it's old-fashionable-ness don't hurt it any. They were very sorry that neither you nor one of the children came with me.

The next day I went out and spent a good part of the day in Lexington. Sister Mary and family are all well (Oh, I forgot to say that Aunt Augusta is as fat as one of Hepsey's lumps of butter—and the story of the dimples, I verily believe is no fiction). Mr. Whitman went to Boston on business by the same cars that brot me, returning at 3 o'clock, and at 4, left again with me to deliver a lecture at Medford, so I saw but little of him. All were delighted with my family picture and I hope you will not fail to go up to Ormsby's and have yours and

Annie's retaken. You can probably send it on to me by Mr. Haines, who, I understood, was talking of coming on in a few weeks.

On Wednesday after leaving Boston, we had a tolerably pleasant day, though it was constantly threatening to be worse. We did not cross the sound as I had anticipated, that route not being in operation now. On Thursday and Friday we had pretty constant rain, but in good, comfortable cars it made but little difference to us. Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Hammons came with me from Boston. They will both look at rooms here tomorrow morning and I am in great hopes of having them both for messmates. Judge Niles and wife are expected tomorrow, who take their old room. There is no one else here or engaged except a Mr. Collins and wife from New York, whom I have not yet seen. Mrs. Scott is very well and apparently improved from last year.

Cousin Moses was the first to see me. He is fat, hearty and good-natured as ever. He says our friends are all well except Mrs. Dummer, who has sprained her ankle and is quite unwell. My own health since I started has been pretty good, and my appetite enormous.

Oh, how the wind whistles about my feet and ankles. If I should undertake to quote from Shakespeare just now I should begin "List, oh, list." My room has been newly painted, whitewashed, etc. but my old patchings and listings have all disappeared consequently the wind is as antic as a young colt and as noisy as a brazen trumpet. I'll bridle it tomorrow.

I will write you again soon. With the hope that you and all of you will throw laziness to the winds and write me very, very often, I remain

Yours as ever,

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Gas Lighting Put Into Capitol

Washington, Dec. 4, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

Our minister is a boy the name of Allen, son of the Allen who is the author of Allen's questions. But though a boy in stature and personal appearance, he is a giant in intellect. Seldom have I listened to a sermon more crowded with thought, or one more beautifully and forcibly written.

Crutchet's big light on the dome of the capitol I don't think much of. It affords a tolerable light immediately about the capitol, but the light is not extended so far as had been anticipated.

The Senate Chamber was lighted up last evening with gas, and looked splendidly. The light proceeds from a sort of chandelier suspended in the center and quite up to the ceiling. This alone makes light enough to write by and read the finest print in any part of the chamber.

Thus far our mess is composed of Mr. and Mrs. Collins and Mr. Lawrence from New York, Mr. Hammons from Maine and myself. Judge Niles and wife have spoken rooms and are expected here tonight.

Mr. Bradbury is balancing whether to come here or go to Gilbert's. All are anticipating the collection of a great many people, and a brilliant winter. Landladies, therefore, are a little exorbitant as to prices. I should not be surprised at a good deal of disappointment on their part by and by.

When shall I have a letter from home? Who will write first? Don't all speak at once.

Your Affectionate

Husband.

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### Scores Politics in the Pulpit

Washington, Dec. 16, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

A letter from you is like medicine for the soul, I know how little time you have to write, but really I cannot relinquish the hopes of one letter from you a week. Am happy to inform you that my health is as good, at least, as when I left home. Strange that I have not seen Dr. Magruder yet.

Tell George I thank him for his letter and am glad to learn that he takes good care of Billy. When I come home in the spring I shall want a good horse to ride.

How did you like the new painting of the sleigh? I did not see it. It was to be a little darker than the old color and a light color inside.

None of you tell me how much the hog weighed. Perhaps, however, he was not weighed at all. I should have set him at about 425. Have not heard from any quarter what was done with the \$100 I left with George for Uncle Seth. Suppose, however, I shall hear from Uncle Seth soon.

If I had been at home when Tenney preached I should have left the meeting house. I was right glad to see that Hanscom put the lash on to Dwight about right. If such men want to become politicians, let them doff the parson's robes and go into the arena where they can take knocks as well as give them. But "nuff ced."

Yours forever,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### Last Letter to Sarah

Washington, Dec. 19, 1847.

My Dear Sarah,

I am unable to answer your letter today, for a reason which you can probably guess:

"Sharp optics it must need, I ween,  
To see what is not to be seen."

However, I presume what with your studies and what with household work your time is pretty fully occupied. I excuse you, therefore, and will only ask you for a letter when you can spare time as well as not from other engagements of more importance.

Yesterday, for the first time, I called at Cousin Richard's. Saw only Cousin Mary, Mrs C. being too unwell to make her appearance. I carried up my family picture which seemed to afford Mary great pleasure. She thought it was admirably done and insisted on my leaving it with her to show to Mrs. Madison. By the way, where is your mother's new one? Tell your mother I have written to Mr. Haines to inform her of the time he intends leaving for Washington in order that she may send whatever she may wish to send. Among other things I had hoped for a new picture of your mother. George says Ormsby says he would have to lose the plate. Very well, pay him for another plate. I hope it will be done. The rest of you must not be offended when I tell you that Mrs. Scott picks out Lucy and Johnny as the handsomest of the group. Madison Cutts wants me to lend it to him for the purpose of having another taken from it.

How do you get along at the Academy? Does Mr. P. tell as many stories as ever? He will, I suspect, learn you all to be talkers. I hope you will improve well your present opportunities whatever they may be, as preparatory to going to a school

abroad next year. They have some pretty good schools here but they are too expensive for my short purse.

Your Affectionate Father,  
JOHN FAIRFIELD.

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### The Final Operation

Washington, Dec. 23d, 1847.

My Dear Wife,

We have nothing new here of any importance. On Thursday the Senate regularly adjourns over to Monday, so that we have considerable leisure. And yet with newspaper letters, errands at the Departments, calls, etc, we have not a great deal of spare time.

Mrs. Madison's bill, giving her \$25,000 for her husband's papers, was introduced into the Senate today and will probably pass on Monday. I am almost ashamed to say that I have not called upon her yet, and as I am to be "operated upon" probably shall not call upon her for weeks.

Dr. Magruder called to see me today for the first time. His confidence in his ability to cure me is not only undiminished but strengthened by the success of other cases which he has had. So it is all arranged. He is to be here tomorrow morning and operate upon my knees. He is unwilling that I should inhale ether and that project is abandoned. He says in addition to his prejudices against it, that in my case it would do no good, inasmuch as the vitriol is to be kept in the cavities of the knee twelve hours or more, and that the pain will be more severe at the close than at the commencement. Oh, dear! What a prospect I have before me. The fire burning into my flesh for 12 hours!

It is hard to think of, but I submit willingly under the probable chance of a cure. Cousin Moses and Mr. Hammons are to be here.

I did intend to send this letter by this night's mail, but not wishing to give you 24 hours' anxiety about me, I think I will keep it until after the operation and then finish it, so that you will have the annunciation and result together. So no more tonight ———

And indeed no more forever! The Senator died from this surgical operation, after a few hours of intense suffering. As has been said often in reference to Senator Fairfield's death, he was the victim of gross malpractice. The shock to Mrs. Fairfield was intensified from the fact that she was not aware that her husband was contemplating this surgical operation, at the hands of Dr. Magruder.

The funeral services of Senator Fairfield took place at his residence in Saco. The Senate and its officers, the delegation from the State and other members of the House and friends accompanied his body from his boarding house to the depot, where it was received by the Hon. Mr. Clark, one of the members of the House of Representatives from Maine and accompanied by him to Saco. A Washington paper of that date said:

"The solemn procession which, on Tuesday last, followed the last remains of Senator Fairfield, afforded a most impressive tribute to his worth. The long array of mourners on foot, told an earnest tale of national loss; for there was mingled the Chief Magistrate of the Union, with the principal officers of the nation—its senators, its representatives, and its citizens—all intent to evince sincere respect to the memory, and sorrow for the loss, of one suddenly withdrawn from the councils of his country, where his purity of purpose and patriotism were ever respected, even by political opponents.

"It had been the request of Governor Fairfield's most heavily-afflicted family that his remains should be sent on, to be entombed in the family vault at home. This desire was signified, by telegraph from Maine, to the committee appointed to celebrate his obsequies here. Hence, as announced by this paper, the funeral procession moved, at half-past four o'clock, P.M., from the late lodgings of the deceased, through Pennsylvania avenue, clad in snow, to the railroad depot, where the coffin was placed in charge of the Hon. Franklin Clark, member from Maine, to return his remains to his native State which had so often and so long honored him while living, and will mourn him dead.

“We know not when we have been more impressed with the solemn effect of a funeral procession. It was not alone that we knew the worth of the deceased—that we remembered the enthusiasm which pervaded the whole nation at Governor Fairfield’s firm and patriotic stand when England was thought to have invaded the soil of Maine—that we vividly recollected the moment of patriotic excitement in the House of Representatives which gave Mr. Van Buren, the President, fifty thousand men and ten millions of dollars to second the call of this same Governor Fairfield, should British troops tread the soil of the State of Maine, of which he was then chief magistrate; but that we felt, as all felt, how just, how sincere was that tribute which commingled the wise and the good of all parties—the exalted in station and the humblest in station—in this most impressive republican demonstration of respect to worth and patriotism.”



## APPENDIX I.

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### THE NORTHEASTERN BOUNDARY DISPUTE

BY JOHN FRANCIS SPRAGUE

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A serious disagreement existed between the United States and Great Britain from the treaty of peace (1783) to the Webster-Ashburton treaty (1842), respecting the boundary line between what is now, and what was in 1841, the State of Maine and Canada, and known in history as the Northeast Frontier.

The beginning of this story of a serious international disagreement and diplomatic struggle for a half century crowded with exciting events and at times shadowed by clouds of war, starts when, on the 10th of September, 1621, James I. granted to Sir William Alexander a certain territory under the name of Nova Scotia, afterwards known in North American history as Acadia.

The "eastern boundary" of the United States, as described in the peace treaty of 1783, differed in vital respects from the western boundary of this grant, as set forth therein.

Sir Ferdinando Gorges received his grant of territory from Charles I., by the name of "Province or Country of Mayne," April 3, 1639, which was purchased in the year 1674 by the colony of Massachusetts.

By the twelfth article of the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, "the Most Christian King of France" ceded to the Queen of England in perpetuity, Acadia or Nova Scotia entire, "according to its ancient boundaries."

But what its ancient boundaries were, was for nearly fifty years after that a matter of dispute between England and France, and more especially between the pioneers and settlers of New France and the Massachusetts Colony and the inhabitants of the Province of Maine, who had settled east of the Kennebec river.

The Governor of New France contended that the ancient bounds of Acadia extended as far west as the Kennebec river under the grant of Charles I. to Gorges, and had never been changed by any act of England.

Attempts at a settlement were made between the two governments at various times, but the results were futile.

When Wolfe conquered Quebec in 1759, all of Canada passed to the domain of the English by conquest and the minor question of boundary lines was lost sight of and remained obscure for thirty or more years thereafter.

Incidental to this long contention as to what was the westerly line of Acadia, was the destruction of the Jesuit mission at Norridgewock and the killing of its missionary, Father Sebastian Rale, in 1724, by the Massachusetts colonists.

### The Northeastern Boundary Situation

At the opening of the 19th century or a few years thereafter, when complex boundary questions were arising, marking the beginning of what is known in the history of Maine and of the country as the "Northeastern Boundary Controversy," this entire subject was in a chaotic state.

The second article of the peace treaty of 1783 contains these words:

"And that all disputes which might arise in future, on the subject of the boundaries of the said United States may be prevented, it is hereby agreed and declared, that the following are and shall be their boundaries, viz: From the northwest angle of Nova Scotia, viz., that angle which is formed by a line drawn due north from the source of St. Croix River to the Highlands; along the said Highlands which divide those rivers and empty themselves into the Atlantic Ocean, to the northwesternmost head of Connecticut River. \* \* \*"

From the first a misunderstanding regarding the correct interpretation of the second article of this treaty appears to have existed between the inhabitants of that part of Nova Scotia which is now the Province of New Brunswick, and the people of what is now the State of Maine. At the close of the War of 1812, the Treaty of Ghent (1814) recognized this contention, which was acute between the two peoples for more than half a century.

The fifth article of this treaty was as follows:

Article V.—Whereas neither that point of the Highlands lying due north from the source of the river St. Croix, and designated in the former treaty of peace between the two powers as the northwest angle of Nova Scotia, nor the northwesternmost head of Connecticut River, has yet been

ascertained; and whereas that part of the boundary line between the dominions of the two powers which extends from the source of the River St. Croix directly north to the above mentioned northwest angle of Nova Scotia, thence down along the middle of that river to the forty-fifth degree of north latitude; thence by a line due west on said latitude until it strikes the river Iroquois or Cataraguay, has not yet been surveyed: It is agreed that for these several purposes two commissioners shall be appointed, sworn and authorized to act exactly in the manner directed with respect to those mentioned in the next preceding article, unless otherwise specified in the present article. The said commissioners shall meet at St. Andrews, in the Province of New Brunswick, and shall have power to adjourn to such other place or places as they shall think fit. The said commissioners shall have power to ascertain and determine the points above mentioned, in conformity with the provisions of the said treaty of peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, and shall cause the boundary aforesaid, from the source of the River St. Croix to the River Iroquois or Cataraguay, to be surveyed and marked according to the said provisions. The said commissioners shall make a map of the said boundary, and annex to it a declaration under their hands and seals, certifying it to be the true map of the said boundary, and particularizing the latitude and longitude of the northwest angle of Nova Scotia, of the northwesternmost head of Connecticut River, and of such other points of the said boundary as they may deem proper. And both parties agree to consider such map and declaration as finally and conclusively fixing the said boundary. And in the event of the said two commissioners differing, or both or either of them refusing, declining or wilfully omitting to act, such reports, declarations or statements shall be made by them, or either of them, and such REFERENCE TO A FRIENDLY SOVEREIGN OR STATE shall be made in all respects as in the latter part of the fourth article is contained, and in as full a manner as if the same was herein repeated.

The two governments appointed commissioners conformably with this provision.

This commission, after sitting for five years, could not even agree on a plan for a general map of the country exhibiting the boundaries respectively claimed by each party; much less could

they settle any of the matters referred to them. They accordingly dissolved and made separate reports to both governments, stating the points on which they differed and the grounds of their difference.

Soon after the close of the War of 1812, settlements, not only in the northeastern parts of the District of Maine, but in Nova Scotia and Quebec as well, began to increase; business was expanding and land under both flags was becoming more valuable. All of these things tended to re-awaken the interest in the question of boundary lines between the two dominions.

Maine became a state in 1820, and by the Articles of Separation the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reserved to herself one-half of the unincorporated lands within the Province of Maine. Hence, not only the inhabitants of eastern Maine, but both State governments were intensely interested in having the matter decided.

Finally, the statesmen of both the United States and Great Britain concluded that a condition had arisen which made it necessary to refer the points of difference to a friendly sovereign under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent; and on the 29th day of September, 1827, a convention to that effect was concluded.

The King of the Netherlands was selected as arbiter, and when he heard the case of the high contracting parties, changes of magnitude had taken place both in the American and English possessions since the treaty of 1783. The District of Maine was independent of the mother Commonwealth of Massachusetts and had entered upon her career as a sovereign state of the Union. Nova Scotia had been divided and a new province erected called New Brunswick, within the borders of which was the territory about which the contention had arisen, and Quebec had been made into two provinces, then known as Upper Canada and Lower Canada.

He was to construe the provisions of the treaty of 1713. The potential points which he was to decide and which were for more than 20 years, subsequent to 1820, ever accentuating in vehemence and bitterness were:

1. What was the "north-west angle of Nova Scotia"?
2. The "Source" of the St. Croix River?
3. What were the "Highlands" which "divide those rivers that empty themselves into the River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean"?
4. What was the "Northwesternmost head of the Connecticut River."

### The "Highlands" Causes Confusion.

It was undoubtedly unfortunate for all parties to this imbroglio, that, in designating the northerly boundary between the territory of Massachusetts (Province of Maine) and Nova Scotia, in the treaty of 1783, the term "Highlands" should have been used. It should be observed that this word was not used in these treaties except in the sense of dividing rivers, and that in the early grants the intention of making the St. Lawrence River the northerly boundary of Maine seemed to be apparent.

This was the position taken by the American commissioners before the King of the Netherlands, and it was furthermore contended by them that taking the whole article together, the word "Highlands" as therein expressed, referred to an unexplored country and was applicable to any ground, whatever might be its nature or elevation, along which the line dividing the rivers was necessarily more elevated than those rivers and their banks, was sufficient to entitle it to the designation of "Highlands" in relation to those rivers.

The British theory from first to last was that "Highlands" represented a mountainous or hilly country or district. They would not admit its American significance as a continuous line dividing rivers, regardless of whether such line was mountainous or not.

The north line would terminate at Mars Hill as the British construed the treaty, while under the American construction it would run as far north as the sources of the Restigouche river, which empties into the Bay des Chaleurs. The St. John River was midway between the two lines, or in about the central part of the disputed territory.

Had the British claim prevailed, all of what is now Aroostook County, north of Mars Hill, and the most of what is now Piscataquis County, northerly of the Penobscot waters, would be a part of Canada; and if the Americans had finally been sustained in all for which they contended, the rich St. John river valley and a large stretch of territory northerly, easterly and northwesterly would now be a part of the State of Maine.

Finally, on the 10th day of January, 1831, the decision of the King of the Netherlands was made public, and it was a surprise to both governments and to all parties of interest. When his award was analyzed, it was found that he had sustained in words the American contention that the term "Highlands" was applicable to ground which, without being mountainous or hilly,

divided rivers flowing in the opposite directions; but that it was not shown that the boundaries described in the treaty of 1783 coincided with the ancient limits of British provinces; and that neither the line or "Highlands" claimed by Great Britain so nearly answered the requirements of the treaty of 1783 in respect to division of rivers as to give preference one over the other.

Abandoning therefore the attempt to determine this part of the boundary according to the treaty of 1783, he recommended what was termed a line of "convenience" or, in other words, he made an arbitrary line, not found in Mitchell's map, or in any of the maps used by the negotiators of the treaty of 1783, of the treaty of Ghent, or by either party before him. It was evidently intended by him as a compromise, pure and simple.

This award was such a strange proceeding that the reason for it immediately interested American statesmen and Maine public men. They had a feeling that the arbiter was determined not to decide against the contention of Maine. The more it was discussed and analyzed the stronger this sentiment became.

The conclusion at which they finally arrived is interesting. An expression of this sentiment is found in resolutions reported by a joint committee of the Legislature of Maine of 1831, of which John G. Dean was its chairman. They stated that the King of the Netherlands, when selected by the United States and Great Britain to arbitrate their dispute, was then an independent sovereign, exercising dominion over more than 6,000,000 subjects, but that political events since that time had overthrown his power to a great extent and made him a dependent upon Great Britain.

These resolutions close as follows:

And Whereas, the King of the Netherlands had not declared before his Kingdom was dismembered and he consented to the division, and his public character had changed, so that he had ceased to be that public character, and occupying that independent station among the sovereigns of Europe contemplated by the convention of September, 1827, and which led to his selection.

Therefore, Resolved, In the opinion of this Legislature, That the decision of the King of the Netherlands, cannot and ought not to be considered obligatory upon the government of the United States, either on the principles of right and justice, or of honor.

Resolved, Further, for the reasons before stated, That no decision made by any umpire under any circumstances, if the decision dismembers a state, has or can have, any constitutional force or obligation upon the State thus dismembered unless the State adopts and sanctions the decision.

The final result of this award by the King of the Netherlands, was its rejection by the United States Senate.

### Conditions as Fairfield Found Them

From this time on, until 1839, conditions became more and more inflamed on both sides of the border. Inhabitants of New Brunswick and subjects of Great Britain who were residents of New Brunswick, commenced trespassing upon timberlands within the disputed domain; altho the contentions between the people on both sides had been constantly increasing in bitterness and turbulence ever since the first decade of Maine's statehood.

At this time a portion of the public lands of Maine were owned jointly by the State of Maine and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. When John Quincy Adams was President (1825-29) Governor Enoch Lincoln made strenuous efforts to interest the government at Washington and awaken it to the dangers which the people of Maine believed threatened the future welfare of their State. His attempt at this was not successful and the tactics of the American government then and until the difficulties finally culminated in preparation for war, were dilatory under all of the federal administrations.

President Jackson (1829-37) did not, during his administration, act with his usual vigor and aggressiveness in any attempts to settle this question with England and preserve our rights and honor of a sovereign State against the overt acts of a foreign power. He disappointed his political friends and lent encouragement to his enemies in both Maine and Massachusetts.

President Van Buren took his seat in 1837, and, altho the situation was more serious than at any time during Jackson's administration, he was as inclined to procrastinate if not to vacillate about this subject of such vast importance, as was his predecessor.

There was never any disagreement between the political parties in Maine as to the rights of Maine to this disputed ter-

ritory or to the justice of her cause. And yet, like public agitations of our own day—prohibition, waterpower, taxation, woman suffrage, etc.,—this subject at times became a sort of football between the Democrats and the Whigs; whichever chanced to be the minority party, devoted a part of the time in charging the party in power with indifference or mismanagement and that thereby the cause of Maine in this diplomatic battle of magnitude between England and the United States was suffering.

The legislatures, governors and public officials of Maine were continually urging the Washington government to take decisive action in opposition to the multiplying endeavors of the Canadians to extend their jurisdiction over the disputed region, without avail. These efforts on the part of British subjects were of grave and serious import, all of them oppressive, aggravating and harrassing to the inhabitants along the Maine border, and yet, some so absurd as to be humorous.

One George Morehouse resided in Tobique, in a newly organized parish known as Kent. He had a magistrate's commission from the Province of New Brunswick, and the first of the Madawaska troubles originated from a process which he had issued as magistrate against an inhabitant of the Madawaska settlement which was a part of the controverted section.

Criminal processes were also frequently issued against these inhabitants by Morehouse.

New Brunswick oppressed the settlers by levying and assessing upon them an alien tax. They were treated as outlaws, intruders and trespassers; their property seized and confiscated by the government.

### **John Baker Arrested**

The hero among the American settlers was John Baker, whose home was on a farm which had been conveyed to him by a joint deed from the Land Agents of Maine and Massachusetts. He was arrested, tried and imprisoned for about a year for sedition and conspiracy, based upon facts which today would appear grotesque as grounds for treason.

When these settlers had endured the methods and practices of Morehouse and others as long as they felt it was possible, instead of organizing an armed revolt, which might have been natural under the circumstances, they conceived the idea of a general agreement to avoid all resort to courts or legal proceedings whatsoever.



The plan was simple and yet unique and perhaps in a degree communistic.

A paper was accordingly drawn up and signed by the American inhabitants generally, constituting a sort of compact, by which they mutually agreed to adjust all disputes of whatever nature which might arise among themselves, by virtue of referees, without admission of British authority, and that they would support each other in abiding by this determination.

This was to be a provisional agreement, to continue in force for only one year; and, in the meantime, application was to be made to the government, in order to obtain, if possible, the benefit of some regular authority.

Thus these isolated and primitive people in that desolate and remote region, buffeted by the persecutions of one government, and forsaken and abandoned to their own resources by another government, more than half a century after the treaty of 1783, proposed to free themselves from the tyranny of all magistrates, courts, lawyers and officers.

The redoubtable Morehouse appeared upon the scene as soon as he learned of the existence of this written agreement and demanded it of them, but it was in their estimation too sacred a document to part with, and they refused to deliver it up as did the people of Connecticut refuse to surrender their ancient charter to James II in 1637.

At the Hilary term of the Supreme Court in 1828, the grand jury for the County of York in the Province of New Brunswick found a true bill of indictment against John Baker, James Bacon and Charles Studson for sedition and conspiracy.

The defendants, Bacon and Studson, were never taken into custody, but John Baker was arrested and arraigned Thursday, May 8, 1828, before the Honorable Chief Justice Saunders, Mr. Justice Bliss and Mr. Justice Chipman.

The indictment alleged that the defendants "being persons greatly disaffected to our said lord the now King, and his Government, within this his Majesty's Province of New Brunswick, and being factiously and seditiously disposed, on the fourth day of July in the eighth year of the reign of our sovereign Lord George the Fourth, with force and arms, at the Parish aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, did amongst themselves, conspire, combine, confederate and agree together, falsely, maliciously, factiously and seditiously, and to bring hatred and contempt on our said lord the King," etc., etc.

The first overt act complained of in this indictment was that on the said fourth day of July at the place above named, the defendants "in pursuance of, and according to said conspiracy," \* \* \* did "cause to be raised and erected, a certain flag-staff, and did place thereon a certain flag, as the Standard of the United States of America."

The second overt act relates to the provisional paper which the inhabitants had signed as above referred to and alleged that the defendants had "applied to divers liege subjects of our said lord the King, and then and there presented to the same subjects a paper writing, which the said John Baker, James Bacon and Charles Studson, then and there requested the said subjects to sign, then and there declaring that, by the said paper, they the said subjects would bind themselves to oppose the execution of the laws of Great Britain, to wit, in the Madawaska settlement, so called."

The third overt act states that the defendants "did oppose and obstruct the post man" in carrying the mail through Madawaska settlement, etc.

#### Arrest of Ebenezer Greeley

In June, 1837, Ebenezer Greeley of Dover, Maine, was employed by the State of Maine as an agent to take the census of the people of Madawaska, and at the same time, to distribute their share of the surplus money which had accumulated in the United States Treasury as had been ordered by President Jackson.

A provincial constable arrested Mr. Greeley and carried him as a prisoner to Fredericton, N. B.

But while the Fredericton officials had for some time unhesitatingly imprisoned humble and uninfluential citizens of Maine when brought to them in custody, they were alarmed at this bold procedure. The sheriff there feared to detain in gaol an agent or officer of the State of Maine while in the discharge of his duties, and refused to receive the prisoner. After being liberated, Mr. Greeley returned to the Aroostook and resumed his labors as census-taker and distributor of the federal surplus funds.

A short time after this, however, Governor Harvey of New Brunswick, hearing that Mr. Greeley was distributing money to the people, assumed, without making any attempt to obtain evidence of the facts, that it was done as a bribe to induce the inhabitants to continue their allegiance to the United States.

He, therefore, ordered Mr. Greeley to be re-arrested, and he was lodged in Fredericton jail and afterwards released without trial.

Upon this disputed territory or "no man's land," were tracts richly covered with pine timber. Ever since Maine had become a state the Canadians had engaged more or less in cutting and removing this timber. As the years passed these operations increased until the people of Maine saw the possibility of an almost complete devastation of this immense forestry.

It was this more than the minor depredations and oppressions, some of which we have hastily considered, that finally produced the climax in 1839.

### When Fairfield Became Governor

This was the condition which confronted John Fairfield when he was inaugurated Governor of Maine in that year.

During this period Maine had been ably represented in both houses of Congress. In the Senate had been such men as Ether Shepley, Peleg Sprague, John Holmes and Reuel Williams. In the lower house had been George Evans, F. O. J. Smith, Edward Kavanagh, Gorham Parks, Leonard Jarvis and Virgil D. Parris. The Maine delegation, heartily supported by the Massachusetts delegation, had been incessant in their effort to force the administration to action. Of their vigilance and faithfulness in this respect, their endeavors to constantly keep this issue a prominent one before the country, there can be no doubt.

And yet eloquent speeches in Congress, convincing passages in Governor's messages and exciting reports and resolves of legislative committees, however much they might have aroused public sentiment in Maine, failed of having any salutary effect upon their neighbors across the border, sustained as they were by the powerful arm of Great Britain, so long as the policy of the national government was a passive one. Rather did their magistrates become more defiant in claiming jurisdictional rights over the disputed territory, by issuing civil and criminal processes against the settlers along the Aroostook, Madawaska and Upper St. John rivers, and their officers more arrogant, bold and domineering, and trespassing on these lands was increasing.

Conditions were equally as grave when Edward Kent was the Whig Governor. He was one of Maine's

ablest men of that day, later serving as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, but the procrastinating tactics and slow devices of the government at Washington prevented him or the Legislature from making any aggressive move.

In 1838 reports of rapidly increasing encroachments of New Brunswick inhabitants upon the timberlands of Maine, were so frequent and alarming that on December 14 of that year the land agents of Maine and Massachusetts appointed George W. Buckmore, their agent, to visit and explore these lands and make report to the next Legislature. Based upon this report and other information received, Governor Fairfield, Jan. 23, 1839, submitted to the Legislature a message in which he asserted that:

“By this report it appears that a large number of men, many of them, I am informed, from the British provinces, are trespassing very extensively upon the lands belonging to this State; that they not only refuse to desist, but defy the power of this government to prevent their cutting timber to any extent they please.

“Upon the Grand River, it is estimated that there are from forty to fifty men at work. On the Green River from twenty to thirty.

“On the Fish River, from fifty to seventy-five men with sixteen yoke of oxen and ten pairs of horses, and more daily expected to go in. On township H ten men, six oxen and one pair of horses. On the Little Madawaska seventy-five men, with twenty yoke of oxen and ten horses. At the Aroostook Falls fifteen men, with six yoke of oxen.

“The quantity of timber which these trespassers will cut the present winter is estimated in value by the land agent, at one hundred thousand dollars.”

And the government very pertinently remarked that it was not merely the property that was at stake, but “the character of the State is clearly involved.” He recommended to the Legislature that the land agent be instructed forthwith to proceed to the place of operation on the Aroostook and Fish Rivers with a sufficient number of men suitably equipped, to “seize the teams and provisions, break up the camps, and disperse those who are engaged in this work of devastation and pillage.”

### McIntire Taken Prisoner

January 24, 1839, the Legislature passed a resolve instructing and empowering the land agent to carry out the recommendations of the Governor, and appropriated ten thousand dollars for the purpose. Pursuant to this resolve, Governor Fairfield ordered the land agent to go to the Aroostook and Madawaska country for the purpose of carrying out its provisions. Rufus McIntire was land agent and he employed Major Hastings Strickland of Bangor, sheriff of Penobscot County, to accompany and assist him in the work. They took with them a large civil posse. They proceeded to the mouth of the Little Madawaska River, where they encamped. During the night of February 12, the house or camp, where they slept, was surrounded by armed men from New Brunswick, who captured Land Agent McIntire, Gustavus G. Cushman, and Thomas B. Bartlett of Bangor, who were forthwith marched to Fredericton and lodged in jail. On February 13, 1839, Sir John Harvey, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, issued a proclamation which the people of Maine regarded as a declaration of war.

On March 1, news was received in Bangor that a regiment of eight hundred Fusilliers had arrived in the city of St. John from Cork, Ireland, and would march at once to the disputed territory.

Five hundred British regulars had already arrived at Madawaska from the city of Quebec and eight pieces of cannon had been transported up the St. John river from Fredericton. Immediately after the land agent was taken prisoner, Mr. Strickland went from Madawaska to Augusta as rapidly as relays of swift horses would carry him for the purpose of prevailing upon the State Government at Augusta to mobilize troops upon the border without further delay. The National Government was also at last awake to the seriousness of the situation.

Congress passed a bill authorizing the President of the United States to raise fifty thousand troops for the support of Maine and appropriated ten million dollars to meet the expenses if war became unavoidable.

At about the same time the Legislature of Maine made an appropriation of eight hundred thousand dollars to be used by the State for the protection of the public lands. A draft was ordered for ten thousand three hundred and forty-three men from the militia to be ready for immediate action. Besides

these, many volunteers from the eastern part of the state, Penobscot, Piscataquis and Somerset Counties, were also arriving at Augusta for service.

### Winfield Scott Ordered to Maine

The President ordered General Winfield Scott to proceed to Maine to take charge of the situation. In taking leave of the President, General Scott said: "Mr. President, if you want war, I need only look on in silence. The Maine people will make it for you fast and hot enough. I know them; but if peace be your wish, I can give no assurance of success. The difficulties in the way will be formidable."

"Peace with honor," was the President's reply, that being also General Scott's own wish, as he has recorded.

He started on his mission with the President's "heartly good will." He was accompanied by Captain Robert Anderson, 22 years later to be the hero of Fort Sumter, and Lieutenant E. D. Keyes, later Major General Keyes, a distinguished officer in the Civil war.

General Scott arrived at Augusta, March 5, 1839, and immediately opened headquarters. He first conferred with Governor Fairfield, his council and leaders and prominent members of the Legislature. At these conferences Gov. Fairfield, upon one occasion, said: "The people of this State surely are not desirous of hurrying the two nations into a war. Such an event is anxiously to be avoided if it can be, without dishonor; we owe too much to the Union, to ourselves and above all to the spirit and principles of Christianity to bring about a conflict of arms with a nation having with us a common origin, speaking a common language and bound to us by so many ties of common interest, without the most inexorable necessity.

"Under these circumstances I would recommend that when we are fully satisfied either by the declarations of the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick or otherwise, that he has abandoned all idea of occupying the disputed territory with a military force, and of attempting an expulsion of our party, then, the Governor be authorized to withdraw our military force, leaving the land agent with a sufficient posse, armed or unarmed, as the case may require, sufficient to carry into effect your original design, that of driving out or arresting the trespassers, and preserving and protecting the timber from depredations. From such an act of jurisdiction—an attempt so right and proper in itself, and so imperatively called for by the

circumstances of the case, we should not be driven by any power on earth. We ought not, however, wantonly to do more than is necessary. We want no military force against us."

#### Fairfield Wanted "Peace Without Dishonor"

This was the spirit—peace without dishonor—the shibboleth of Maine ever after until the Webster-Ashburton treaty was made and finally ratified by the two governments. It was undoubtedly providential that during this period the two great leaders of the two political parties controlled the destinies of Maine.

John Fairfield, the leader of the Democratic party, was Governor in 1840, and Edward Kent, the great leader of the Whigs, was Governor in 1841.

Maine was never entirely satisfied with this treaty; neither was England or the Canadians. It is however evident that the latter criticised and blamed Lord Ashburton to a far greater degree than did the Americans and the people of Maine blame Mr. Webster.

My investigation of this matter for several years past has convinced me that no one can carefully and impartially consider the facts regarding Governor Fairfield's management of State affairs at this time, without being convinced that we owe much to his thoughtfulness, wise forethought, broad vision and real statesmanship. It was at a moment when a single misstep might have produced disastrous results.





## APPENDIX II.

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For purposes of general reference we include the list of Members of Congress, in the years when Mr. Fairfield was a member, excluding extra sessions and those in which there was a continuing membership without intervening elections.

Commencement of Twenty-Fourth Congress—1835.

The following was the list of members:

### SENATORS

MAINE—Ether Shepley, John Ruggles.  
NEW HAMPSHIRE—Isaac Hill, Henry Hubbard.  
MASSACHUSETTS—Daniel Webster, John Davis.  
RHODE ISLAND—Nehemiah R. Knight, Asher Robbins.  
CONNECTICUT—Gideon Tomlinson, Nathan Smith.  
VERMONT—Samuel Prentiss, Benjamin Swift.  
NEW YORK—Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, Silas Wright, Jr.  
NEW JERSEY—Samuel L. Southard, Garret D. Wall.  
PENNSYLVANIA—James Buchanan, Samuel McKean.  
DELAWARE—John M. Clayton, Arnold Naudain.  
MARYLAND—Robert H. Goldsborough, Jos. Kent.  
VIRGINIA—Benjamin Watkins Leigh, John Tyler.  
NORTH CAROLINA—Bedford Brown, Willie P. Mangum.  
SOUTH CAROLINA—John C. Calhoun, William C. Preston.  
GEORGIA—Alfred Cuthbert, John P. King.  
KENTUCKY—Henry Clay, John J. Crittenden.  
TENNESSEE—Felix Grundy, Hugh L. White.  
OHIO—Thomas Ewing, Thomas Morris.  
LOUISIANA—Alexander Porter, Robert C. Nicholas.  
INDIANA—Wm. Hendricks, John Tipton.  
MISSISSIPPI—John Black, Robert J. Walker.  
ILLINOIS—Elias K. Lane, John M. Robinson.  
ALABAMA—Wm. R. King, Gabriel P. Moore.  
MISSOURI—Lewis F. Linn, Thomas H. Benton.

### REPRESENTATIVES

MAINE—Jeremiah Bailey, George Evans, John Fairfield, Joseph Hall, Leonard Jarvis, Moses Mason, Gorham Parks, Francis O. J. Smith—8.  
NEW HAMPSHIRE—Benning M. Bean, Robert Burns, Samuel Cushman, Franklin Pierce, Jos. Weeks—5.  
MASSACHUSETTS—John Quincy Adams, Nathaniel B. Borden, George N. Briggs, William B. Calhoun, Caleb Cushing, George Grennell, Jr., Samuel Hoar, William Jackson, Abbot Lawrence, Levi Lincoln, Stephen C. Phillips, John Reed—12.  
RHODE ISLAND—Dutee J. Pearce, W. Sprague—2.  
CONNECTICUT—Elisha Haley, Samuel Ingham, Andrew T. Judson, Lancelot Phelps, Isaac Toucey, Zalmon Wildman—6.  
VERMONT—Heman Allen, Horace Everett, Hiland Hall, Henry F. Janes, William Slade—5.

- NEW YORK**—Samuel Barton, Saml. Beardsley, Abraham Bockee, Matthias J. Bovee, John W. Brown, C. C. Cambreleng, Graham H. Chapin, Timothy Childs, John Cramer, Ulysses F. Doubleday, Valentine Efnor, Dudley Farlin, Philo C. Fuller, William K. Fuller, Ransom H. Gillet, Francis Granger, Gideon Hard, Abner Hazeltine, Hiram P. Hunt, Abel Huntington, Gerrit Y. Lansing, George W. Lay, Gideon Lee, Joshua Lee, Stephen B. Leonard, Thomas C. Love, Abijah Mann, Jr., William Mason, John McKeen, Ely Moore, Sherman Page, Joseph Reynolds, Davis Russell, William Seymour, Nicholas Sickles, William Taylor, Joel Turrill, Aaron Vanderpool, Aaron Ward, Daniel Wardwell—40.
- NEW JERSEY**—Philimon Dickerson, Samuel Fowler, Thomas Lee, James Parker, Ferdinand S. Schenck, William N. Shinn—6.
- PENNSYLVANIA**—Joseph B. Anthony, Michael W. Ash, John Banks, Andrew Beaumont, Andrew Buchanan, George Chambers, William P. Clark, Edward Darlington, Harmar Denny, Jacob Fry, Jr., John Galbraith, James Harper, Samuel S. Harrison, Joseph Henderson, William Hiester, Edward B. Hubley, Joseph R. Ingersoll, John Kingensmith, Jr., John Laporte, Henry Logan, Job Mann, Thomas M. T. McKennan, Jesse Miller, Matthias Morris, Henry A. Muhlenberg, Davis Potts, Jr., Joel B. Sutherland, David D. Wagener—28.
- DELAWARE**—John J. Milligan—1.
- MARYLAND**—Benjamin C. Howard, Daniel Jenifer, Isaac McKim, James A. Pearce, John N. Steele, Francis Thomas, James Turner, George C. Washington—8.
- VIRGINIA**—James M. H. Beale, James W. Bouldin, Nathaniel H. Claiborne, Walter Coles, Robert Craig, George C. Dromgoole, James Garland, G. W. Hopkins, Joseph Johnson, John W. Jones, George Loyall, Edward Lucas, John Y. Mason, William McComas, Charles F. Mercer, William S. Morgan, John M. Patton, John Roane, John Robertson, John Taliaferro, Henry A. Wise—21.
- NORTH CAROLINA**—Jesse A. Bynum, Henry W. Connor, Edmund Deberry, James Graham, Micajah T. Hawkins, James J. McKay, William Montgomery, Ebenezer Pettigrew, Abraham Rencher, William B. Shepard, Augustine H. Shepperd, Jesse Speight, Lewis Williams—13.
- SOUTH CAROLINA**—Robert B. Campbell, William J. Grayson, John K. Griffin, James H. Hammond, Richard J. Manning, Francis W. Pickens, Henry L. Pinckney, James Rogers, Waddy Thompson, Jr.—9.
- GEORGIA**—Jesse F. Cleveland, John Coffee, Thomas Glasscock, Seaton Grantland, Charles E. Haynes, Hopkins Holsey, Jabez Jackson, George W. Owens, George W. B. Towns—9.
- ALABAMA**—Reuben Chapman, Joab Lawder, Dixon H. Lewis, Francis S. Lyon, Joshua L. Martin—5.
- MISSISSIPPI**—David Dickson, J. F. H. Claiborne—2.
- LOUISIANA**—Rice Garland, Henry Johnson, Eleazer W. Ripley—3.
- TENNESSEE**—John Bell, Samuel Bunch, William B. Carter, William C. Dunlap, John B. Forester, Adam Huntsman, Cave Johnson, Luke Lea, Abram P. Maury, Balie Peyton, James K. Polk, E. J. Shields, James Standefer—13.
- KENTUCKY**—Chilton Allan, Lynn Boyd, John Calhoun, John Chambers, Richard French, Wm. J. Graves, Benjamin Hardin, James Harlan,

- Albert G. Hawes, Richard M. Johnson, Joseph R. Underwood, John White, Sherrod Williams—13.  
 MISSOURI—Wm. H. Ashley, Albert G. Harrison—2.  
 ILLINOIS—Zadok Casey, William L. May, John Reynolds—3.  
 INDIANA—Ratiff Boon, John Carr, John W. Davis, Edward A. Hannegan, George L. Kinnard, Amos Lane, Jonathan McCarty—7.  
 OHIO—William K. Bond, John Chaney, Thomas Corwin, Joseph H. Crane, Thomas L. Hamer, Elias Howell, Benjamin Jones, William Kennon, Daniel Kilgore, Sampson Mason, Jeremiah McLene, William Patterson, Jonathan Sloane, David Spangler, Bellamy Storer, John Thompson, Samuel F. Vinton, Taylor Webster, Elisha Whittlesey—19.

## FIRST SESSION OF TWENTY-FIFTH CONGRESS

The first session of the twenty-fifth Congress, convened upon the proclamation of the President, to meet an extraordinary occasion, met on the first Monday in September, and consisted of the following members:

## SENATE

- NEW HAMPSHIRE—Henry Hubbard and Franklin Pierce.  
 MAINE—John Ruggles and Ruel Williams.  
 VERMONT—Samuel Prentiss and Benjamin Swift.  
 MASSACHUSETTS—Daniel Webster and John Davis.  
 RHODE ISLAND—Nehemiah R. Knight and Asher Robbins.  
 CONNECTICUT—John M. Niles and Perry Smith.  
 NEW YORK—Silas Wright and Nathaniel P. Tallmadge.  
 NEW JERSEY—Garret D. Wall and Samuel L. Southard.  
 DELAWARE—Richard H. Bayard and Thomas Clayton.  
 PENNSYLVANIA—James Buchanan and Samuel McKean.  
 MARYLAND—Joseph Kent and John S. Spence.  
 VIRGINIA—William C. Rives and William H. Roane.  
 NORTH CAROLINA—Bedford Brown and Robert Strange.  
 SOUTH CAROLINA—John C. Calhoun and Wm. Campbell Preston.  
 GEORGIA—John P. King and Alfred Cuthbert.  
 ALABAMA—Wm. Rufus King and Clement C. Clay.  
 MISSISSIPPI—John Black and Robert J. Walker.  
 LOUISIANA—Robert C. Nicholas and Alexander Mouton.  
 TENNESSEE—Hugh L. White and Felix Grundy.  
 KENTUCKY—Henry Clay and John Crittenden.  
 ARKANSAS—Ambrose H. Sevier and William S. Fulton.  
 MISSOURI—Thomas H. Benton and Lewis F. Linn.  
 ILLINOIS—Richard M. Young and John M. Robinson.  
 INDIANA—Oliver H. Smith and John Tipton.  
 OHIO—William Allen and Thomas Morris.  
 MICHIGAN—Lucius Lyon and John Norvell.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- MAINE—George Evans, John Fairfield, Timothy J. Carter, F. O. J. Smith, Thomas Davee, Jonathan Cilley, Joseph C. Noyes, Hugh J. Anderson.  
 NEW HAMPSHIRE—Samuel Cushman, James Farrington, Charles G. Atherton, Joseph Weeks, Jared W. Williams.  
 MASSACHUSETTS—Richard Fletcher, Stephen C. Phillips, Caleb Cushing, Wm. Parmenter, Levi Lincoln, George Grinnell, Jr., George N.

- Briggs, Wm. B. Calhoun, Nathaniel B. Borden, John Q. Adams, John Reed, Abbott Lawrence, Wm. S. Hastings.
- RHODE ISLAND—Robert B. Cranston, Joseph L. Tillinghast.
- CONNECTICUT—Isaac Toucey, Samuel Ingham, Elisha Haley, Thomas T. Whittlesey, Launcelot Phelps, Orrin Holt.
- VERMONT—Hiland Hall, William Slade, Heman Allen, Isaac Fletcher, Horace Everett.
- NEW YORK—Thomas B. Jackson, Abraham Vanderveer, C. C. Cambreleng, Ely Moore, Edward Curtis, Ogden Hoffman, Gouverneur Kemble, Obadiah Titus, Nathaniel Jones, John C. Broadhead, Zadoc Pratt, Robert McClelland, Henry Vail, Albert Gallup, John I. DeGraff, David Russell, John Palmer, James B. Spencer, John Edwards, Arphaxad Loomis, Henry A. Foster, Abraham P. Grant, Isaac H. Bronson, John H. Prentiss, Amasa J. Parker, John C. Clark, Andrew D. W. Bruyn, Hiram Gray, William Taylor, Bennett Bicknell, William H. Noble, Samuel Birdsall, Mark H. Sibley, John T. Andrews, Timothy Childs, William Patterson, Luther C. Peck, Richard P. Marvin, Millard Fillmore, Charles F. Mitchell.
- NEW JERSEY—John B. Ayerigg, John P. B. Maxwell, William Halstead, Jos. F. Randolph, Charles G. Stratton, Thomas Jones Yorke.
- PENNSYLVANIA—Lemuel Paynter, John Sergeant, George W. Toland, Charles Naylor, Edward Davies, David Potts, Edward Darlington, Jacob Fry, Jr., Matthias Morris, David D. Wagener, Edward B. Hubley, Henry A. Muhlenberg, Luther Reilly, Henry Logan, Daniel Sheffer, Chas. McClure, Wm. W. Potter, David Petriken, Robert H. Hammond, Samuel W. Morris, Charles Ogle, John Klingensmith, Andrew Buchanan, T. M. T. McKennan, Richard Biddle, William Beatty, Thomas Henry, Arnold Pulmer.
- DELAWARE—John J. Milligan.
- MARYLAND—John Dennis, James A. Pearce, J. T. H. Worthington, Benjamin C. Howard, Isaac McKim, William Cost Johnson, Francis Thomas, Daniel Jenifer.
- VIRGINIA—Henry A. Wise, Francis Mallory, John Robertson, Charles F. Mercer, John Taliaferro, R. T. M. Hunter, James Garland, Francis E. Rives, Walter Coles, George C. Dromgoole, James W. Bouldin, John M. Patton, James M. Mason, Isaac S. Pennybacker, Andrew Beirne, Archibald Stuart, John W. Jones, Robert Craig, Geo. W. Hopkins, Joseph Johnson, Wm. S. Morgan.
- NORTH CAROLINA—Jesse A. Bynum, Edward D. Stanley, Charles Shepard, Micaiah T. Hawkins, James McKay, Edmund Deberry, Abraham Rencher, William Montgomery, Augustine H. Sheperd, James Graham, Henry Connor, Lewis Williams, Samuel T. Sawyer.
- SOUTH CAROLINA—H. S. Legare, Waddy Thompson, Francis W. Pickens, W. K. Clowney, F. H. Elmore, John K. Griffin, R. B. Smith, John Campbell, John P. Richardson.
- GEORGIA—Thomas Glascock, S. F. Cleveland, Seaton Grantland, Charles E. Haynes, Hopkins Holsey, Jabez Jackson, Geo. W. Owens, Geo. W. B. Townes, W. C. Dawson.
- TENNESSEE—Wm. B. Carter, A. C. McClelland, Joseph Williams (one vacancy), H. L. Turney, Wm. B. Campbell, John Bell, Abraham P. Maury, James K. Polk, Ebenezer J. Shields, Richard Cheatham, John W. Crockett, Christopher H. Williams.

- KENTUCKY—John L. Murray, Edward Rumsey, Sherrod Williams, Joseph R. Underwood, James Harlan, John Calhoun, John Pope, Wm. J. Graves, John White, Richard Hawes, Richard H. Menifee, John Chambers, Wm. W. Southgate.
- OHIO—Alexander Duncan, Taylor Webster, Patrick G. Goode, Thomas Corwin, Thomas L. Hamer, Calvary Morris, Wm. K. Bond, J. Ridgeway, John Chaney, Samson Mason, J. Alexander, Jr., Alexander Harper, D. P. Leadbetter, Wm. H. Hunter, John W. Allen, Elisha Whittlesey, A. W. Loomis, Matthias Shepler, Daniel Kilgore.
- ALABAMA—Francis S. Lyon, Dixon H. Lewis, Joab Lawler, Reuben Chapman, J. L. Martin.
- INDIANA—Ratiff Boon, John Ewing, William Graham, George H. Dunn, James Rariden, William Herrod, Albert S. White.
- ILLINOIS—A. W. Snyder, Zadoc Casey, Wm. L. May.
- LOUISIANA—Henry Johnson, Eleazer W. Ripley, Rice Garland.
- MISSISSIPPI—John F. H. Claiborne, S. H. Gholson.
- ARKANSAS—Archibald Tell.
- MISSOURI—Albert G. Harrison, John Miller.
- MICHIGAN—Isaac E. Crary.
- FLORIDA—Charles Downing.
- WISCONSIN—George W. Jones.

## FIRST SESSION OF TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

## SENATE

- MAINE—John Fairfield, George Evans.
- NEW HAMPSHIRE—Levi Woodbury, Charles G. Atherton.
- VERMONT—Samuel Phelps, William C. Upham.
- MASSACHUSETTS—Rufus Choate, Isaac C. Bates.
- RHODE ISLAND—William Sprague, James F. Simmons.
- CONNECTICUT—J. W. Huntington, John M. Niles.
- NEW YORK—N. P. Tallmadge, Silas Wright.
- NEW JERSEY—W. L. Dayton, Jacob W. Miller.
- PENNSYLVANIA—D. W. Sturgeon, James Buchanan.
- DELAWARE—R. H. Bayard, Thomas Clayton.
- MARYLAND—William D. Merrick, Reverdy Johnson.
- VIRGINIA—Wm. C. Rives, Wm. S. Archer.
- NORTH CAROLINA—Willie P. Mangum, Wm. H. Haywood, Jr.
- SOUTH CAROLINA—Daniel E. Huger, George McDuffie.
- GEORGIA—John M. Berrien, Walter T. Colquit.
- ALABAMA—William R. King, Arthur P. Bagby.
- MISSISSIPPI—John Henderson, Robert J. Walker.
- LOUISIANA—Alexander Barrow, Alexander Porter.
- TENNESSEE—E. H. Foster, Spencer Jarnagan.
- KENTUCKY—John T. Morehead, John J. Crittenden.
- OHIO—Benjamin Tappan, William Allen.
- INDIANA—Albert S. White, Ed. A. Hannegan.
- ILLINOIS—James Semple, Sidney Breese.
- MISSOURI—T. H. Benton, D. R. Atchison.
- ARKANSAS—Wm. S. Fulton, A. H. Sevier.
- MICHIGAN—A. S. Porter, W. Woodbridge.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- MAINE—Joshua Herrick, Robert P. Dunlap, Luther Severance, Hannibal Hamlin.
- MASSACHUSETTS—Robert C. Winthrop, Daniel P. King, William Parmenter, Charles Hudson (vacancy), John Quincy Adams, Henry Williams, Joseph Grinnel.
- NEW HAMPSHIRE—Edmund Burke, John R. Reding, John P. Hale, Moses Norris, Jr.
- RHODE ISLAND—Henry Y. Cranston, Elisha R. Potter.
- CONNECTICUT—Thomas H. Seymour, John Stewart, George S. Catlin, Samuel Simons.
- VERMONT—Solomon Foot, Jacob Collamer, George P. Marsh, Paul Dillingham, Jr.
- NEW YORK—Selah B. Strong, Henry C. Murphy, J. Phillips Phoenix, William B. Maclay, Moses G. Leonard, Hamilton Fish, Jos. H. Anderson, R. D. Davis, Jas. G. Clinton, Jeremiah Russell, Zadoc Pratt, David L. Seymour, Daniel D. Barnard, Wm. G. Hunter, Lemuel Stetson, Chesselden Ellis, Charles S. Benton, Preston King, Orville Hungerford, Samuel Beardsley, J. E. Cary, S. M. Purdy, Orville Robinson, Horace Wheaton, George Rathbun, Amasa Dana, Byram Green, Thos. J. Patterson, Charles H. Carroll, Wm. S. Hubbell, Asher Tyler, Wm. A. Moseley, Albert Smith, Washington Hunt.
- NEW JERSEY—Lucius Q. C. Elmer, George Sykes, Isaac G. Farlee, Littleton Kirkpatrick, Wm. Wright.
- PENNSYLVANIA—Edward J. Morris, Joseph R. Ingersoll, John T. Smith, Charles J. Ingersoll, Jacob S. Yost, Michael H. Jenks, Abraham R. McIlvaine, Henry Nes, James Black, James Irvin, Andrew Stewart, Henry D. Foster, Jeremiah Brown, John Ritter, Richard Brodhead, Jr., Benj. A. Bidlack, Almond H. Read, Henry Frick, Alexander Ramsey, John Dickey, William Wilkins, Samuel Hays, Charles M. Read, Joseph Buffington.
- DELAWARE—George B. Rodney.
- MARYLAND—J. M. S. Causin, F. Brengle, J. Withered, J. P. Kennedy, Dr. Preston, Thomas A. Spence.
- VIRGINIA—Archibald Atkinson, Geo. C. Dromgoole, Walter Coles, Edmund Hubard, Thomas W. Gilmer, John W. Jones, Henry A. Wise, Wiloughby Newton, Samuel Chilton, William F. Lucas, William Taylor, A. A. Chapman, Geo. W. Hopkins, Geo. W. Summers, Lewis Steenrod.
- NORTH CAROLINA—Thomas J. Clingman, D. M. Barringer, Davis D. Reid, Edmund Deberry, R. M. Saunders, James J. McKay, J. R. Daniel, A. H. Arrington, Kenneth Rayner.
- SOUTH CAROLINA—James A. Black, Richard F. Simpson, Joseph A. Woodward, John Campbell, Artemas Burt, Isaac E. Holmes, R. Barnwell Rhett.
- GEORGIA—E. J. Black, H. A. Haralson, J. H. Lumpkin, Howell Cobb, Wm. H. Stiles, Alexander H. Stephens, A. H. Chappell.
- KENTUCKY—Linn Boyd, Willis Green, Henry Grider, George A. Caldwell, James Stone, John White, William P. Thompson, Garrett Davis, Richard French, J. W. Tibbatts.
- TENNESSEE—Andrew Johnson, William T. Senter, Julius W. Blackwell, Alvan Cullom, George W. Jones, Aaron V. Brown, David W.

- Dickinson, James H. Peyton, Cave Johnson, John B. Ashe, Milton Brown.
- OHIO—Alexander Duncan, John B. Weller, Robt. C. Schenck, Joseph Vance, Emery D. Potter, Joseph J. McDowell, John I. Vanmeter, Elias Florence, Heman A. Moore, Jacob Brinkerhoff, Samuel F. Vinton, Perley B. Johnson, Alexander Harper, Joseph Morris, James Mathews, Wm. C. McCauslin, Ezra Dean, Daniel R. Tilden, Joshua R. Giddings, H. R. Brinkerhoff.
- LOUISIANA—John Slidell, Alcee Labranche, John B. Dawson, P. E. Bossier.
- INDIANA—Robert Dale Owen, Thomas J. Henley, Thomas Smith, Caleb B. Smith, Wm. J. Brown, John W. Davis, Joseph A. Wright, John Pettit, Samuel C. Sample, Andrew Kennedy.
- ILLINOIS—Robert Smith, John A. McClernand, Orlando B. Ficklin, John Wentworth, Stephen A. Douglas, Joseph P. Hoge, J. J. Hardin.
- ALABAMA—James Dellet, James E. Belser, Dixon H. Lewis, William W. Payne, George S. Houston, Reuben Chapman, Felix McConnell.
- MISSISSIPPI—Wm. H. Hammett, Robert W. Roberts, Jacob Thompson, Tilghman M. Tucker.
- MISSOURI—James M. Hughes, James H. Rolfe, Gustavus B. Bower, James B. Bowlin, John Jameson.
- ARKANSAS—Edward Cross.
- MICHIGAN—Robert McClelland, Lucius Lyon, James B. Hunt.

## FIRST SESSION OF 29TH CONGRESS

## SENATORS

- MAINE—George Evans, John Fairfield.
- NEW HAMPSHIRE—Benjamin W. Jenness, Charles G. Atherton.
- VERMONT—William Upham, Samuel S. Phelps.
- MASSACHUSETTS—Daniel Webster, John Davis.
- RHODE ISLAND—James F. Simmons, Albert C. Green.
- CONNECTICUT—John M. Niles, Jabez C. Huntington.
- NEW YORK—John A. Dix, Daniel S. Dickinson.
- NEW JERSEY—Jacob W. Miller, John L. Dayton.
- PENNSYLVANIA—Simon Cameron, Daniel Sturgeon.
- DELAWARE—Thomas Clayton, John M. Clayton.
- MARYLAND—James A. Pearce, Reverdy Johnson.
- VIRGINIA—William S. Archer, Isaac S. Pennybaker.
- NORTH CAROLINA—Willie P. Mangum, William H. Haywood, Jr.
- SOUTH CAROLINA—John C. Calhoun, George McDuffie.
- GEORGIA—John McP. Berrien, Walter T. Colquit.
- ALABAMA—Dixon H. Lewis, Arthur P. Bagby.
- MISSISSIPPI—Joseph W. Chalmers, Jesse Speight.
- LOUISIANA—Alexander Barrow, Henry Johnson.
- TENNESSEE—Spencer Jarnagin, Hopkins L. Turney.
- KENTUCKY—James T. Morehead, John J. Crittenden.
- OHIO—William Allen, Thomas Corwin.
- INDIANA—Ed. A. Hannegan, Jesse D. Bright.
- ILLINOIS—James Semple, Sidney Breese.
- MISSOURI—David R. Atchison, Thomas H. Benton.
- ARKANSAS—Chester Ashley, Ambrose H. Sevier.

MICHIGAN—William Woodbridge, Lewis Cass.

FLORIDA—David Levy, James D. Westcott.

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAINE—John F. Scammon, Robert P. Dunlap, Luther Severance, John D. McCrate, Cullen Sawtelle, Hannibal Hamlin, Hezekiah Williams.

NEW HAMPSHIRE—Moses Norris, Jr., Mace Moulton, James H. Johnson.

VERMONT—Solomon Foot, Jacob Collamer, George P. Marsh, Paul Dillingham, Jr.

MASSACHUSETTS—Robert C. Winthrop, Daniel P. King, Amos Abbot, Benjamin Thompson, Charles Hudson, George Ashmun, Julius Rockwell, John Quincy Adams, Joseph Grinnell.

RHODE ISLAND—Henry Y. Cranston, Lemuel H. Arnold.

CONNECTICUT—James Dixon, Samuel D. Hubbard, John A. Rockwell, Truman Smith.

NEW YORK—John W. Lawrence, Henry I. Scaman, William S. Miller, William R. Maclay, Thomas M. Woodruff, William W. Campbell, Joseph H. Anderson, William W. Woodworth, Archibald C. Niven, Samuel Gordon, John F. Collin, Richard P. Herrick, Bradford R. Wood, Erastus D. Culver, Joseph Russell, Hugh White, Charles S. Benton, Preston King, Orville Hungerford, Timothy Jenkins, Charles Goodyear, Stephen Strong, William J. Hough, Horace Wheaton, George Rathbun, Samuel S. Ellsworth, John De Mott, Elias B. Holmes, Charles H. Carroll, Martin Grover, Abner Lewis, William A. Mosely, Albert Smith, Washington Hunt.

NEW JERSEY—James G. Hampton, George Sykes, John Runk, John Edsall, William Wright.

PENNSYLVANIA—Lewis C. Levin, Joseph R. Ingersoll, John H. Campbell, Charles J. Ingersoll, Jacob S. Yost, Jacob Erdman, Abraham R. McIlvaine, John Strohm, John Ritter, Richard Brodhead, Jr., Owen D. Leith, David Wilmot, James Pollock, Alexander Ramsay, Moses McLean, James Black, James Blanchard, Andrew Stewart, Henry D. Foster, John H. Ewing, Cornelius Darragh, William S. Garvin, James Thompson, Joseph Buffington.

DELAWARE—John W. Houston.

MARYLAND—John G. Chapman, Thomas Perry, Thomas W. Ligon, William F. Giles, Albert Constable, Edward Long.

VIRGINIA—Archibald Atkinson, George C. Dromgoole, William M. Treadway, Edward W. Hubard, Shelton F. Leake, James A. Seddon, Thomas H. Bayly, Robert M. T. Hunter, John S. Pendleton, Henry Redinger, William Taylor, Augusta A. Chapman, George W. Hopkins, Joseph Johnson, William G. Brown.

NORTH CAROLINA—James Graham, Daniel M. Barringer, David S. Reid, Alfred Dockery, James C. Dobbin, James J. McKay, John R. J. Daniels, Henry S. Clarke, Asa Biggs.

SOUTH CAROLINA—James A. Black, Richard F. Simpson, Joseph A. Woodward, A. D. Sims, Armistead Burt, Isaac E. Holmes, R. Barnwell Rhett.

GEORGIA—Thomas Butler King, Seaborn Jones, Hugh A. Haralson, John H. Lumpkin, Howell Cobb, Alex. H. Stephens, Robt. Toombs.



- ALABAMA—Samuel D. Dargin, Henry W. Hilliard, William L. Yancey, Winter W. Payne, George S. Houston, Reuben Chapman, Felix G. McConnell.
- MISSISSIPPI—Jacob Thompson, Stephen Adams, Robert N. Roberts, Jefferson Davis.
- LOUISIANA—John Slidell, Bannan G. Thibodeaux, J. H. Harmonson, Isaac E. Morse.
- OHIO—James J. Faran, F. A. Cunningham, Robert C. Schenck, Joseph Vance, William Sawyer, Henry St. John, Joseph J. McDowell, Allen G. Thurman, Augustus L. Perrill, Columbus Delano, Jacob Brinkerhoff, Samuel F. Vinton, Isaac Parish, Alexander Harper, Joseph Morris, John D. Cummins, George Fries, D. A. Starkweather, Daniel R. Tilden, Joshua R. Giddings, Joseph M. Root.
- KENTUCKY—Linn Boyd, John H. McHenry, Henry Grider, Joshua F. Bell, Bryan R. Young, John P. Martin, William P. Thomasson, Garrett Davis, Andrew Trumbo, John W. Tibbatts.
- TENNESSEE—Andrew Johnson, William M. Cocke, John Crozier, Alvan Cullom, George Jones, Barclay Martin, Meridith P. Gentry, Lorenzo B. Chase, Frederick P. Stanton, Milton Brown.
- INDIANA—Robert Dale Owen, Thomas J. Henley, Thomas Smith, Caleb B. Smith, William W. Wick, John W. Davis, Edward W. McGaughey, John Petit, Charles W. Cathcart, Andrew Kennedy.
- ILLINOIS—Robert Smith, John A. McClernand, Orlando B. Ficklin, John Wentworth, Stephen A. Douglas, Joseph P. Hoge, Edward D. Baker.
- MISSOURI—James B. Bowlin, James H. Rolf, Sterling Price, John S. Phelps, Leonard H. Simms.
- ARKANSAS—Archibald Yell.
- MICHIGAN—Robert McClelland, John S. Chapman, James B. Hunt.





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