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Act. 38

LETTERS

OF

Mary Boardman Crowninshield

1815-1816

Edited by FRANCIS BOARDMAN CROWNINSHIELD



CAMBRIDGE

Printed at the Riverside Press

1905

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300 Copies Printed. No. 20

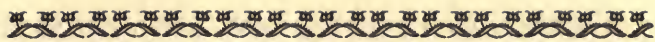
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INTRODUCTION

IN going over a file of family correspondence I was much interested in some letters from Washington, written by my great-grandmother, Mary Boardman Crowninshield, in the years 1815 and 1816. Thinking that they would prove of interest to her descendants, to friends of the family, and possibly to some others, I am publishing them with a few notes, telling who some of the persons mentioned in the letters are. If I have made any errors in these notes (and I am afraid I have), I should be much pleased to have them brought to my attention.

As the Crowninshield family of Salem, Mass., had been identified for a number of years with the shipping industry of the country, and all the members of it were strong supporters of the government, it was not unnatural that, in the year 1805, President Jefferson should have appointed the Honorable Jacob Crowninshield, then a member of Congress from Massachusetts, to the office of Secretary of the Navy. Mr. Crowninshield never entered upon his duties, on account of a sudden illness which finally terminated in his death, at Washington, April 14, 1808.

On December 15, 1814, while the War of 1812 was still in progress, President Madison appointed Benjamin W. Crowninshield, a brother of Jacob, to the Secretaryship of the Navy from which Mr. William Jones had just resigned. Mr. Crowninshield accepted the appointment and immediately started for Washington. He served through President Madison's administration, and held the same position in President Monroe's Cabinet until he resigned, in November, 1818.

Mr. Crowninshield married on January 1, 1804, Miss Mary Boardman of Salem, and at the time he removed to Washington (1815), they had six children. As Mrs. Crowninshield disliked the long separations from her husband which his duties in Washington were making necessary, she determined to accompany him thither when he returned in October, 1815.

Accordingly, toward the end of that month, they set out from Salem in a private carriage, and drove to New Haven, Connecticut, accompanied by their two eldest daughters, Mrs. Crowninshield's maid, and a manservant. At New Haven they took the steamboat for New York, en route for Washington.

The following letters tell of her journey to Washington, of her life there, and of her arrival home, in Salem, June 2, 1816.

In order properly to understand Washington life of that time, we must bear in mind that, only the year before, the White House and most of the public buildings had been burned by the British. This made it necessary for many prominent people to live a "boarding house" existence, and accounts for much of the simplicity of the life set forth in these letters.

The letters are published exactly as they were written, with the exception of a few paragraphs of a too personal nature which have been stricken out, and the addition of an occasional word to make the meaning clearer.

The letters from President Madison and Mrs. Willson serve as an interesting introduction to Mrs. Crowninshield's account.

FRANCIS B. CROWNINSHIELD.

Boston, March 1, 1905.



NOTE TO THE PORTRAITS

The frontispiece is the picture of Mrs. Crowninshield painted by Vanderlyn in Washington in 1816. It is mentioned in the letter on page 65.

The portrait of Mr. Crowninshield facing page 44 was also painted by Vanderlyn at the same time. Mention is made of it on pages 46 and 47.

Both of these paintings are now in the possession of Mrs. John Quincy Adams, a granddaughter of Mrs. Crowninshield.

Washington, December 15, 1814.

BENJAMIN W. CROWNINSHIELD,
Salem, Mass.

SIR : —

Mr. Jones¹ having retired from the Secretaryship of the Navy, my thoughts have been turned to you as a desirable successor, and I have this day sent in your name to the Senate for the appointment. I hope you will excuse my doing it without your consent, which would have been asked if the business of that Department had less urged an avoidance of delay. The same consideration will apologize for my hoping that it will not be inconsistent with your views to aid your country in that station, nor with your convenience to repair to it as soon as you may receive notice that the Senate have given effect to the nomination.

Accept, Sir, assurances of my esteem and of my friendly respects —

JAMES MADISON.

¹ William Jones of Pennsylvania.

Washington, December 17, 1814.

BENJAMIN W. CROWNINSHIELD,
Salem, Mass.

SIR : —

You were yesterday nominated to the Senate for Secretary of the Navy. As there is no doubt but the nomination will be confirmed, I have taken the liberty to write you a few lines to offer you a room in my house. I can now if agreeable to you give you an excellent South room. It is large and pleasant. Perhaps it will be more agreeable to you as it is very near and convenient to the house now occupied as the Navy Office, and I believe every Secretary almost has lived in my house. Mr. Dallas and family are now with me, and a most agreeable family they are. If you should want two rooms, you can have them, and after the fourth of March as many as you may want. I refer you to Mr. Pitman and to Mr. Jones, late Secretary of the Navy, for any information you may want regarding my house, etc. etc. Your brother, Mr. Jacob Crowninshield, boarded in

my house until the last winter he was here. He only left me then because I was removed too far from the Capitol, which he after regretted. We regretted it very much also as he was a most amiable character and esteemed by us all.

Should you be inclined to be one of my family, I shall be much gratified. I pray you to pardon me for the great liberty I have taken, and believe me, Sir, to be with much respect your

Obedient servant —

SARAH WILLSON.

N. B. Should you see Mr. Pitman I will thank you, Sir, to present my kind regards to him and tell him we all hope to see him here in February next.

S. W.

Washington, January 3, 1815.

HON. BENJAMIN W. CROWNINSHIELD,
Salem, Mass.

DEAR SIR : —

I have just received yours of the 28th of December communicating the agreeable result of your reconsideration of your first determination on the subject of the Secretaryship of the Navy. It only remains to say that no obstacle has been erected by another nomination to the Senate, and to repeat my hopes that you will be with us as soon as possible.

Accept my friendly respects.

JAMES MADISON.

LETTERS

I

Steamboat, 11 o'clock, Thursday.

[November, 1815.]

DEAR MOTHER¹ AND SISTERS²: —

Here we are on board the boat since five this morning. The wind is not fair, consequently there is more motion than is usual. I feel a little dizzy. Mary³ is having a grand frolic — says she has heard so much of the steamboats she is determined to enjoy it. Is really amusing all the passengers with her fun. There are eight on board. The cabins are very fine. I was astonished when we were called to breakfast, to be carried to a very long room, two very long tables spread with everything good, for I thought I had seen every part of the boat before. It is a charming way of travelling. There is an elderly lady on board, about your age, who lives in Washington. Has been from there about a month. She tells me all about it — says they expect to have a

¹ Mrs. Crowninshield's mother was Miss Mary Hodges. She married Francis Boardman of Salem.

² Her sisters were Sarah, who married Zachariah Silsbee, and Elizabeth, who married Nathaniel Bowditch.

³ Their second daughter, who married Charles Miffin.

gay winter there. She was acquainted with Mr. C. last winter. I expect to go on in company with her. There is a family of children here whose parents are moving to Baltimore — a little girl who is playing with Mary, and boys about as big as ours, and make *about full* as much noise. And we have the British Admiral Coffin,¹ and many others not worth mentioning, — a very pleasant lady and her daughter, belonging to New York. Not a word about Elizabeth.² When we stopped to dine the first day, she was sick a little and could not eat her dinner, but slept grandly all night with me, and Mary with her Pa. The second day she was sick several times, once in the carriage all over her Pa's cloak and mine. The third day she was not sick [at all], only dizzy, and I think if we had ridden to-day she would have felt nicely. Mary feels sick now in the boat, but she is playing about and eating boiled chestnuts.

We have really had a very pleasant journey, — everything good to eat for breakfast, dinner and supper, — chickens, oysters, pies, waffles

¹ Sir Isaac Coffin, an illustrious admiral of the British Navy. Born in Boston, 1759. "He never forgot that he was an American."

² Their eldest daughter; married the Rev. William Mountford, author of *Euthanasy*.

and preserves. I have not taken any cold. The first night was very tired, — since then have not felt the least fatigue. Uncle George¹ has been grand company and we are very glad he came with us. Shall be sorry to part with him. He and Mary would try who could eat most; he always finished the pie he began.

Well, now for yourself and the dear children. How do you all do? How often we talk of you! Uncle G. would say, “Now, Mary, Francis’s² fingers are in the sugar bowl, and now grandma’s catching him.” The dear babe,³ what can I say of her? Tell the boys to kiss her a dozen times a day for me. I really feel too dizzy to write. I could not write at New Haven. We got there late in the afternoon; — so much company, and so many continually arriving, and so much noise and confusion, I thought it best to wait till to-day.

I wish you could see what a pretty place we are in. The girls are now in one of the berths.

¹ George Crowninshield, Mr. Crowninshield’s brother, a Salem merchant and owner of the celebrated yacht *Cleopatra’s Barge*. Mr. Crowninshield was then starting on a journey to New Orleans.

² Their second son, Francis Boardman Crowninshield; married Sarah Gool Putnam. He was the first president of the Somerset Club of Boston.

³ Their youngest daughter; married Jonathan Mason Warren.

There are a dozen around the cabin, covered with nice white counterpanes — look very neat. Tell Mrs. Dodge Sophia¹ is nicely. Has fared as well as any of us, ate and drank at the same table with us so far, and is very attentive. Think we shall like her very much. We shall arrive at New York about dark, so shall not see Sally² to-night. The steamboat leaves New York to-morrow morning, and we ought to go on, but we must see Sally and shall have to stay till Monday ; but the man who attends here says we cannot go sooner, so many are wanting to see Mr. C. ; for the last dozen trips as soon as the boat arrives there are a dozen down to inquire for him. You can let both Aunt Sally see this, and Aunt Silsbee.³ I will write to her after seeing Sally. Tell the children all about it. I hope they got the sugar plums from Boston.

Good bye — good bye.

Your affectionate daughter,

M. B. C.

¹ Maidservant.

² Mr. Crowninshield's niece, daughter of Jacob Crowninshield ; married Richard S. Rogers.

³ Mr. Crowninshield's sister ; married the Honorable Nathaniel Silsbee, United States Senator from Massachusetts.



II

*New York, 4th November, 1815,
Saturday Afternoon.*

DEAR MOTHER AND CHILDREN:—

Benjamin,¹ Francis and George,² don't you long to see us? and dear little babe too; she could give us a pretty little smile. Have you been good? It is Saturday, and I think you are playing in the yard. Now mind, don't run away nor plague Grandma. We are still in New York and shall remain here till Monday morn, seven o'clock. The steamboat does not go till then and it is so much easier to go in that way. Our girls enjoyed the day. They were on the water more than any other day. We arrived here late on Thursday evening. Mr. Bailly came on board and had his carriage waiting, put us in and carried us to his house, where we were very kindly received by his wife. She had her tea all in waiting, and fixed a trundle bed in my chamber, thinking I should bring children with me. I now

¹ Their eldest son, Benjamin Varnum Crowninshield. He died on his twenty-first birthday.

² Their third son, George Caspar Crowninshield; married Harriet Sears.

feel quite at home. The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, to Mrs. Brenton's¹ we went. Mrs. B. went in the carriage with us. We did not know as we should see Sally, but without any hesitation we were admitted. Uncle George and Mr. Dodge went with us. We were shown into a parlour, and soon after Sally appeared. She saw the carriage and knew us, but was not certain she should see us. She has grown very fat. Her cheeks are as plump and she looks more like Aunt Silsbee than ever. Mrs. Brenton was very sick the day before ; it was not thought she would live ; but is better ; I did not see her, but she desired Mrs. Bailly to show us the house, which is opened to company only on Wednesdays. This was a great favor and gratified Sally very much. I was a little disappointed in seeing the garden, for it was not larger than ours, but the house very large and spacious. We went in the school room, saw the young ladies, some very little girls, many not bigger than Mary Silsbee, but some eighteen. We stayed more than an hour, but how to part from her,—it was very painful. If I had been at a public house I should have requested Mrs. Brenton to let her go in to town with

¹ The head of a boarding-school for young ladies.

us, but as Mrs. Bailly did not mention it I could not invite her, but we left her in tears on the steps, promising to see her again if possible.

To gratify our girls we went last eve to the theatre. We were late and the play begun, but Mary was so frightened, — “O! do let me go, I shall die if you don’t,” — we could not coax her to stay; she declared, if we did not let her go home, she would scream as loud as she could, so Mr. Dodge had to carry her home, and she passed her evening with Mr. Bailly reading religious tracts and saying hymns. You can’t think how frightened she was — everybody in the next boxes was so amused with her. You boys would have been delighted. There were four live horses came on the stage. They looked like the Troop. Elizabeth was very much pleased. I have been walking all the morning. While I was out a number of ladies called on me. I was invited to dine today at the Navy Yard. Mrs. Evans¹ called herself for me, but I was not at home. Her husband urged me very much (when he came for Mr. C.), but I did not want to go as I should have to cross in a boat. I had rather be here. Mrs. Bailly says she shall carry us

¹ Mrs. Evans was probably the wife of the Commander of the Navy Yard.

all to meeting to-morrow. Tells Uncle George he must and shall go, and I hope he will, but I am afraid he will set out this afternoon. He dined here yesterday, went to the theatre with us, and you can't think how agreeable and polite he has been.

Mary is now out walking with Sophia. Hanson ¹ has gone to show them the way ; they were out all yesterday afternoon and bought sugar plums. I wish you boys had some too. Everything pretty to sell here, but I have made no purchases — I forgot to take my money ; I am sorry ; — I shall make my purchases in Philadelphia.

Good night, dear children,

M. B. C.

¹ Manservant.



III

Philadelphia, November 7, 1815.

DEAR MOTHER :—

We arrived here this morning at twelve, after a most delightful sail down the Delaware. We started in the steamboat at seven o'clock. We saw most elegant country seats along the banks of the river on both sides. At several little towns stopped to take passengers on board, which made it very pleasant. I ought to have begun with our leaving New York on Monday at seven o'clock, in the boat. It was very foggy so that we could see very little till noon. Had not very smart passengers. The old English Admiral came part of the way with us. We have seen him so that much it seemed like meeting an old acquaintance, and he is pleased with our girls. Calls Elizabeth his sweetheart, but she runs from him. We stopped at Brunswick and there met Uncle George. He got there a day before us. We left there about four o'clock in the stage, to go nearly thirty miles. I was dreadfully frightened, as our horses were gay to go so great a distance by night. We had four stages in company, but go we must

or lose our passage. This morning we arrived at Trenton at ten, safe and sound; Elizabeth was not sick; had a good supper and went to bed. Up this morning before six to be in time for the boat again. We had many passengers. A lady with her two daughters about the age of ours and the same names. They had a good frolic together, but the mother was unsociable so that I did not get acquainted with her on the passage, but the same lady has called on me this evening with Mr. Meany, as his wife was sick and this lady was their sister. They wish us to stay in this city several days, but we are determined on leaving to-morrow at three o'clock in the steamboat, and shall have to ride again to-morrow evening, but we shall have a moon. It will be only sixteen miles, and the next morning early we shall take the boat for Baltimore.

I have been about the city with the girls and Hanson for my guide, but dare not venture far. We found much difficulty in getting lodging. We are at a Quaker lady's — nothing smart. Her daughter is now amusing our girls — about their age — telling them about her school. Here is Mary and she says I must tell you she doesn't like Philadelphia half, nor a quarter, so well as she does Salem, and Elizabeth says she wishes she was at home. We have found a

new carriage and horses here, tell the boys, but I have not seen it. Pa says it is a handsome one. I can't tell them what color the horses are, but I don't believe they will be so good as the old gray. It is to be sent to Washington, and we are going in the stage and the boat, as it would take us too long to go in a private carriage. Uncle George is going to Baltimore with us. You can't think how agreeable we find him. He is much pleased with this city, says the turkeys are up to your knees — such good eating.

Well, how do you make out? How I long to hear from home. Are the children well — are they good? Have you begun to repent yet that you engaged to have the care of them? I am so impatient to hear. Does George go to school? yes, indeed, and learns beautifully, and I hope Francis gets his Sunday lessons, and Ben, I am sure, is a good boy because he is the eldest. Does the babe grow?

M. B. C.


IV

Saturday,

Washington, November 11, 1815.

DEAR MOTHER :—

We arrived here yesterday afternoon early enough to see the city. It looked dreary to be sure on our first getting here, we were so cold and fatigued. We left Philadelphia on Wednesday at three o'clock in the steamboat. Had a very pleasant sail to New Castle, where we arrived about ten. Had very bad lodging that night. Were up at four o'clock, to take the stage about sixteen miles. We had six stages in company, all filled with passengers. We arrived at French Town about nine o'clock. We found a fine breakfast ready for us on board the boat; were all proper hungry. We have excellent fare on board the boat. It was a rainy day and considerable wind, so that we had not so pleasant a passage. Many were very sick indeed. We all were a little so; Mary could not sit up, but Elizabeth did not feel sick.

We arrived at Baltimore about nine in the eve—found excellent lodgings, but left the city at eight o'clock the next morning. This

we regretted, as we wanted to see more of Baltimore; and here we left Uncle George to go on his journey Westward. He had made himself so agreeable I was unwilling to part with him. We always had a grand time when we sat down to table, all had such excellent appetites. We had an addition to our party. We took a young lady with us from Philadelphia who wanted to visit her friends here. Quite a pleasant girl, and looked so much like Priscey¹ that I could not but like her.

Well, here we are. All the folks ran to the door to welcome us — so glad to see my husband. We soon had tea by ourselves. All looked so strange. We went to bed early. Com'r Porter's² family is at this house. She [his wife] came in to see me soon after I arrived. She is a very pretty little woman — looks like Abigail Knapp. I was introduced to many gentlemen, but should not know them again, although I met them again this morning at breakfast.

About twelve o'clock Mr. C. came in and said I must go immediately to see Mrs. Madison. Our girls went with me. She lives in the

¹ Priscilla Webb, an intimate friend of the family.

² David Porter, an illustrious American naval officer; born in Boston, 1780. Married Elvira Anderson of Chester, Pennsylvania.

same block¹ with us. I did not alter my dress. Well, we rung at the door, the servant showed us to the room — no one there. It was a large room, had three windows in front, blue window curtains which appeared to be of embossed cambric, damask pattern, red silk fringe. The floor was covered with dark gray cloth, two little couches covered with blue patch, a small sideboard with I don't recollect what on it. In about two minutes the lady appeared, received us very agreeably, noticed the children much, inquired their names, because she told them she meant to be much acquainted with them. You could not but feel at your ease in her company. She was dressed in a white cambric gown, buttoned all the way up in front, a little strip of work along the button-holes, but ruffled around the bottom. A peach-bloom-colored silk scarf with a rich border over her shoulders by her sleeves. She had on a spencer of satin the same color, and likewise a turban of velour gauze, all of peach bloom. She looked very well indeed.

Since returning home, Mrs. Porter has called in my room with her sister and cousin, two

¹ For a year after the burning of Washington, President Madison occupied the Octagon, a spacious mansion on the corner of New York Avenue and 18th Street. This house was built in 1798 by Colonel John Tayloe of Virginia.

very young ladies, and Mrs. Lear who came from Portsmouth. Mrs. Porter brought in her babe about twelve weeks old. I was delighted with seeing it, but it did not look much like my dear babe.

I received Betsey's¹ letter written last Sunday. I was gratified to hear from home and that all was well. Well, what good boys!— I wish I could say our girls were as good—they have the worst time going to bed every night. “Oh, if I only had my own bed,” Elizabeth says; she is not willing to sleep with Mary. We have a bed for them in our chamber, and we have a very pleasant parlour which opens immediately into our bedchamber—this we have to ourselves; dine with the boarders and sit in the family parlour below when we choose. Dined with a table full of gentlemen—just left them at table. The dining-room is next to ours. I can now hear the gentlemen talking and telling stories.

Our carriage has not come yet. May be here to-morrow. I rode a little in it at Philadelphia. It was a very easy one, rather too gay—the horses are a chestnut color, rather light, but very large and appeared very gentle. The coachman is a white man and recom-

¹ Elizabeth Mead, a distant relation; married Francis Boardman, Mrs. Crowninshield's brother.

mended as a very good one. We shall keep him if he will stay. We shall keep Hanson too. At Philadelphia, at our boarding-house, I became acquainted with a Miss Custis, a grand-daughter of General Washington's Lady. She carried me to the most fashionable milliner;—elegant goods we saw, but I did not make many purchases. Saw most elegant white velvet for gown, and everything that was pretty.

I really think Washington much pleasanter than I expected. From my window now it looks like a common; houses about as far distant as from your window. As we went up to Baltimore I could not but think of poor Aunt Wellman¹; how many times have I heard her tell of her journey there!

Tell the boys there is a little boy here who has a little brass cannon that he can fire. His name is William Porter. He is six years old, but not so big as Francis, and I don't believe that he can read so well or studies Latin, but I will ask him next time I see him. I wish we had brought George. This letter is as much to Sally, and she must write me; and Frank,²— why does he not write? M. B. C.

¹ Mrs. Wellman was a sister of Zachariah Silsbee. She was called Aunt by many persons who were not really related to her.

² Francis Boardman, Mrs. Crowninshield's brother.

Friday, December 1, 1815.

DEAR MOTHER:—

We are just up, and Mary says, “you must write, Ma, that I may send my letter.” Elizabeth is not out of bed yet. She is always the last one;—we are earlier than common, for the first bell has not rung yet for breakfast and it is half-past eight. Indeed, every day when I get ready to take my work, I am astonished to hear it is twelve o’clock. We never dine till after three. Soon after rising from table it is candle-light and then we go in to tea—have it sent round. We have excellent tea, but nothing very good to eat with it. After that, if we choose, we can play whist, chess or [back]gammon, for there are always enough to make up a party. I generally return to my own room till the girls tease me so to go visiting in some of the other parlours.

I think I told you we were to dine at Mrs. Monroe’s¹ the day before yesterday. We had

¹ James Monroe was then Secretary of State.

there the most stylish dinner I have been at. The table wider than we have, and in the middle a large, perhaps silver, waiter, with images like some Aunt Silsbee has, only more of them, and vases filled with flowers, which made a very showy appearance as the candles were lighted when we went to table. The dishes were silver and set round this waiter. The plates were handsome china, the forks silver, and so heavy I could hardly lift them to my mouth, dessert knives silver, and spoons very heavy—you would call them clumsy things. Mrs. Monroe is a very elegant woman. She was dressed in a very fine muslin worked in front and lined with pink, and a black velvet turban close and spangled. Her daughter, Mrs. Hay, a red silk sprigged in colors, white lace sleeves and a dozen strings of coral round her neck. Her little girl, six years old, dressed in plaid. The drawing-room was handsomely lighted—transparent lamps I call them;—three windows, crimson damask curtains, tables, chairs and all the furniture French; [and] and-irons, something entirely new. This would suit Aunt Silsbee.

After breakfast, Pa and the girls have been sitting here and we have had a good talk about home—wondering if Grandma would come on next winter with us and you boys. I think

she would like to be here very well and live just as we do now at a monstrous expense. I do not know what we are giving, but gentlemen give fifteen dollars per week. We shall give more as we have a drawing-room. It costs us seven hundred dollars a year to feed our horses, — the coachman's wages and board over twenty dollars a month. Pa says Grandma must not let you eat too much sugar. How does the cow do? Does she give milk?

Tell Aunt Priscey nothing I have worn has been more complimented than the ruff she netted for me. Mrs. Madison was in one morning, took hold of it and said she had been admiring it; so if she will net me one I will present it. She could send it in a letter. I wish I had some of the old net Van Dykes. Betsey, is yours done, or can you get Priscey to lend me hers. She shall have it again next summer. It can be sent in a letter, — it would not be larger than a newspaper.

Why does n't Aunt Silsbee write me, or Sally? Almost five weeks from home, and no letter from them. Don't tell all my nonsense to everybody, only our own folks — for I write anything. — Elizabeth reading French, but don't try, — her master has no idea how much she knows; — and as to music, she will not take a lesson; so you may expect to see

Mary very accomplished, for she does her best. The English Admiral has arrived here. It seemed like seeing an old acquaintance, for he called on us as soon as he arrived.

Good morning, I hope to have a letter to-day.

M. B. C.


VI

Thursday Morning, December 7th, 1815.

DEAR MOTHER : —

Just up — the girls still in bed. I arose on purpose to write, as it is some days since I wrote you. I received Betsey's letter yesterday, written on Thanksgiving. She says you had unpleasant weather on that day. Here it was almost a summer's day. It gives me the greatest pleasure to hear you are all so well and the children so good. How I long to see them and the dear babe. I feel more contented than I expected, but I shall never wish to live here. [Shall be] glad to get home again ; however, as I am here, will stay to see the winter out.

Ball to-night. Last eve I went to the drawing-room. We were not crowded, but one room well filled ; — all much dressed, but their new dresses saved for this eve. Mrs. Madison's is a sky-blue striped velvet, — a frock, — fine elegant lace round the neck and lace handkerchief inside and a lace ruff, white lace turban starred in gold, and white feather. Clothes so long that stockings or shoes are not seen, but white shoes are generally worn. Mrs. Dal-

las' a dark green velvet trimmed with a lace footing half a quarter wide. It was beautiful lace, but did not look well on so dark a color — a green and white turban helmet front and green feathers waving over. Several black velvets, crepes, brocades, satins; — any one who has tolerable hair does not care to cover it up, — the object is to look as young as you can. The folks here in the house say I must dress my hair, not cover it up, so last eve it was combed up as high on the top as I could get it, braided, and a bunch of flowers pinned in with one of my best ornaments — the green and gold one. In the evening Mrs. Madison said, “ Oh, Mrs. C., your butterfly is too much hidden.” I asked what she meant. She replied, “ that elegant ornament in your hair — it is superb indeed.” I imagine she took a liking to it, for she had little neat ornaments — emeralds set in gold. I had on my plain muslin trimmed with lace over white satin. The newest fashion to make a gown is like my English ones that go down in a peak before and behind. I have just brought in a pretty white silk one that is made in that way, but I have no pretty trimming for it, so think of

¹ Wife of Alexander James Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury.

preparing my gold muslin for this eve ; as I got in Philadelphia a beautiful gold trimming for that and we do not have many balls here — perhaps not one again till Washington's birth-night. I am so sorry I did not take on my feathers, for I have to give nine dollars for two to wear this eve. You cannot get the most ordinary headdress for less than eight, up to fifteen dollars, and you must have a new one almost every time you go into company, so I save much expense by not wearing turbans.

The gentlemen last eve did not sit to take their tea ; those in uniform had their chapeaux under their arms, but others had on hats. Richard Derby¹ was there. His wife was not well enough [to be there]. He did not choose to recollect me till [we were' at] table, then said, "I forget Mrs. C. — are you married or not?" — "NOT." So I heard no more of him. He sang and ladies played on the piano. There were three rooms open, so we walked through and through as the company chose. We had tea and coffee on a small waiter, with four plates and a little confectionery ; cake, one little frosted cake, fluted. After[wards] we had punch, wine, etc., sent round a number of times. Ice-cream, put in a silver dish,

¹ Richard Derby was Mr. Crowninshield's cousin.

and a large cake — not good — on the same waiter ; and saucers instead of plates, — very common ones, like your old china cup, — all put on the same one waiter. Then came in another with grapes and little cakes. We returned about nine.

The girls are very unwilling I should go to-night, as all in the house [are going], Mrs. Willson and her daughters, and they think it will be so lonesome with only Sophia. I tell them I will buy them some molasses and they can make candy. That suits Mary but don't satisfy Elizabeth. Mary is not well, — a sore throat and cold, but is up and playing about. Their French master is here. Miss Sarah, Mrs. Willson's daughter, is a very fine woman. She is going to dress my head — has taste and is very kind — far superior to any of the family. Mrs. Jackson¹ wears a white lace dress. Mrs. Porter a black crepe bugled a quarter of a yard high. I have not seen it — she has been fixing it. She always dresses in black, and her little sister about fifteen and her cousin, Miss Beal. The young girls would look much prettier in colors. I can't find that they wear it for any friend.

It is raining fast — the roads will be bad to-

¹ Wife of General Andrew Jackson.

night and the moon will be down. Tell Mrs. Dodge Sophia is well — she cannot write to-day but will soon. She must write to her and enclose it in one of yours. I wish you would ask Aunt Sally about the blue velvet. I have left the red in my trunk. I don't think it will be too much for a dress; — but I forget how many yards I left, — and you send it by Judge Story.¹ First ask him if he can put it in his trunk, for it will not do to send it in a bundle; but he will not come till the last of January — perhaps you may hear of some opportunity sooner.

Well I am in a dreadful hurry — have my muslin to make over and hair to curl. Tell Mrs. Rogers² that I will write her very soon. Tell Priscey no letter yet. Say everything to the children — that I love them dearly.

Adieu — your affectionate daughter

M. B. C.

I hope you won't give out — don't run home till I return.

¹ Joseph Story, at that time an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

² Mrs. Rogers was the mother of Richard S. Rogers, who afterwards married Sally Crowninshield, Mr. Crowninshield's niece.

VII

Washington, December 24, 1815.

DEAR MOTHER: —

It has been a most delightful day — almost summer — you don't have such weather with you. The Jacksons are gone — set out about eleven. The house was crowded with folks to bid them good-bye. The General sent twice this morning to G. Town to get our girls some little ornament from the jewelers; but no shops open, so could not get anything. It was so rainy yesterday he could not go out. He gave Elizabeth his inkstand and I write this letter with his pen and ink. Mrs. J., little Andrew and black Hannah in the carriage, and four horses. The General mounted on sweet Sally, and his servant on horseback by the side of his carriage; — then followed Betty, Mr. Donaldson and his servant; Mayor Reid¹ and his servant; the hostler, — all on horseback, — and two spare horses; — they made quite a dash. I feel it a great loss to have them gone. We set off soon

¹ This probably refers to Jacob Read of South Carolina. He served in the Revolution as Major of South Carolina Volunteers.

after for church in Congress Hall. It was much crowded. The Chaplain of the Senate preached, a Mr. Glandi. He was very liberal, but his manner very different from what we are accustomed to. He had a glass of water handed him and kept it on his desk, — drank very often. Our girls wanted some, it was so warm, and yet they wore white gowns and the new cape I made them yesterday. After meeting we called at Mr. Dallas's — not at home; at Mr. Dexter's¹ — he was not at home, but his wife and daughter received us very agreeably. They live at a very small house — take the whole and say they find it very lonesome; — no such sociable evening visits as we have in New England. They were so glad to see us and I should have stayed longer, but other company called in. Called — when we got almost home — at Mrs. Pleasenton's, — at home, and a pretty room furnished with scarlet woolen furniture. Then at Col. Lear's, but did not get out, as Mrs. Lear was not at home. Mr. C. went in and we promised to pass a sociable evening there soon. At our own door was Mr. Crawford's² carriage — the driver's seat just even with the top of the carriage, but the horses very ordinary. They

¹ Samuel Dexter, ex-Senator from Massachusetts and Secretary of War under President Adams.

² William Harris Crawford, then President of the Senate.

came in with us. He is a very agreeable man. His wife says but little—dressed in a light green pelisse with bonnet.

Christmas morn. It seems more like our Independence — guns firing all night. I am going to the Catholic church—it is their great day. Last eve we passed at the President's, — took the girls with us. Found several gentlemen there and a young lady from Kentucky who is come to make a visit there. She had the parrot brought in for the girls, and he ran after Mary to catch her feet. She screamed and jumped into a chair and pulled hold of Mrs. Madison. We had quite a frolic there, returning soon after eight. Tea was brought in after we went. Mary has gone there again this morning to know what time she wishes to go to church, as she invited us to go with her. [We are] to set out at the same time, for we must ride.

It was rather lonesome at home. Mrs. Porter and family dined at her Uncle's and many of our gentlemen dined out. At dark Mrs. Madison called in and passed part of the eve. She is very sociable and agreeable when alone with her. Our tea was sent in but she never takes tea. Mrs. Chapel and Mr. Porter came in soon after and we had quite a pleasant party. This was in my own parlour. Soon after Gen.

Ripley¹ called in — he has just arrived and tells us the weather is very mild with you for winter. He puts up here and is a very agreeable man.

I have had the mantua-maker here, for she did not make my gown to suit me, but she will fix it right now. I would have you take off as much of the red velvet as there is over of the blue, for it will always be useful for trimming, and you must first send to Judge Story and know if he will bring it to me, for if he cannot you need not exchange it at present. I hope you have bought some logs, for you must want some. I know the wood was split up too much, but Mr. C. thinks not.

The Assemblies begin this week in the city; suppose I shall go if everybody goes, but it is too hard work to fix dresses so often, — for tomorrow eve is the drawing-room again, and I shall sometimes have to go to George Town as we have been invited; so we go on. I shall begin to be tired soon and want to go home. I have quite a cold in my head to-day — shall not go out. The girls are going to take a walk with Sophia. It is a fine day, but rather cold. The children I hope are well. Tell Francis I cannot believe he gets fifteen verses; does he

¹ General Eleazar Ripley, a very gallant soldier of the War of 1812.

remember how he used to plague me last summer and would not get his Sunday lesson? I am delighted to hear such good things of him; and George got a new book and read in a testament, and Benjamin is good; — well, I wish you had the girls if you could make them better, for they are not half so good as they ought to be. I wish I could send the boys something for New Year's gifts, but you must get something for them — such good boys must have pretty things. And how is little Kiddy, doesn't she want something? Tell them I wish them a happy New Year. Sally has not written lately, nor yet Mrs. S., nor Mrs. Rogers, and as to Priscey, she does n't intend writing. Well, goodbye; I must go to work. I believe I am the only one who works here excepting Mrs. Porter. The girls are plaguing me to death. I wish I had sent them to school.

M. B. C.

Com. Tingey¹ has just been to invite us to dine on Thursday with him. They always have high times there. Mrs. Dallas has been here almost an hour with Miss Patterson, — a very sensible young lady, — and we had a good talk. She asked my opinion about her opening

¹ Thomas Tingey, British naval officer; entered the American Navy during the Revolution, and remained in that service until his death, in 1829.

a drawing-room. It would be so much easier for her to have some particular evening in the week to receive company than to send out for a party, as it would take her servants two or three days to give out invitations; and she would prefer much to have a fixed evening, and then she would be always ready and her friends would be sure to find her at home. Two drawing-rooms in a week would keep the ladies always at it; and a ball every week. Oh, dear, a new investment this morning, — elegant ball dresses, millinery, etc. etc. — this will set the carriages flying.



VIII

Washington, January 2, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER:—

I believe it is some days since I wrote you, but I don't know what has prevented me. I grow lazy, I believe. Yesterday was New Year's day and we thought of you all. Tell the boys we were packing up some little presents for them, to send by Mr. Storrow, who has set out for Boston, but will be a long time going on, perhaps three weeks; but he has promised to send the package safe to Salem. I wrote by him to little Sally. He has two nieces at Mrs. Brenton's;— he has been here longer than we have and I felt sorry to part with him; he is a very agreeable young man. I sent in the bundle a ruff that is much worn here— it is only made for a pattern, but perhaps nothing new. They sell them here worked at the edge with a scollop, or peaked, with a pink ribbon through the collar, for 30 dollars. Sometimes the ruffles are plaited. I made this by Mrs. Porter's, made of plain muslin with edging. I have not made the ruffles at top full or wide enough, for it was made in a great hurry. Betsey must show it to Aunt Silsbee.

Yesterday I was at the President's levee. Mary went with us, but Elizabeth would not go. Such a crowd I never was in. It took us ten minutes to push and shove ourselves through the dining-room; at the upper part of it stood the President and his lady, all standing—and a continual moving in and out. Two other small parlours open and all full—likewise the entry. In every room was a table with wine, punch, and cakes, and the servants squeezing through with waiters for those who could not get to the table. Some of the ladies were dressed very elegantly, beautiful bonnets and pelisses, shawls, etc. Mrs. Madison was dressed in a yellow satin embroidered all over with sprigs of butterflies, not two alike in the dress; a narrow border in all colors; made high in the neck; a little cape, long sleeves, and a white bonnet with feathers. Mrs. Baldwin, a sister of Mrs. Barlow,¹ was dressed first in a pretty white gown, high and much ruffled, the ruffles worked, which is thought handsomer than lace, and over it a scarlet merino dress made short above the ruffles of her gown, crossed before and behind about the waist, and short sleeves; it looked very tasty, trimmed with merino trimming with fringe; a black velvet hat turned up in front,

¹ Widow of Joel Barlow of Kalorama.

with a large bunch of black feathers. Mrs. Clay,¹ a white merino dress with a deep border and a shawl to match. Mrs. Brown,² an orange dress of the same kind. Mrs. Decatur,³ a blue lustre trimmed with satin ribbon high like a pelisse, a white hat turned up in front. Mrs. Dallas, a light pelisse trimmed round with velvet the same color. Her daughter, who had just arrived from Philadelphia, a brown merino pelisse trimmed with a rich trimming all colors. Matilda, a very young girl, a scarlet merino, a blue hat with a large blue and white feather. In short, the greatest variety of dresses, for all the ladies in the city were there; — began to go at one o'clock. At three it was all over and done. I was disappointed in my pelisse. First it was made too short — it was then pieced down and the border quilted; it really looked handsomer, but she charged me ten dollars more than she engaged to make it for, so I sent it back. I ought to go out to-day and get another, or I shall not have one till spring.

Com. Decatur and his family arrived on Saturday eve. I have heard much of this lady. She looks much as Mrs. Colton used to, and is cer-

¹ Wife of Henry Clay.

² Wife of General Jacob Brown. General Brown was then Commander-in-chief of the United States Army.

³ Wife of Commodore Stephen Decatur.

tainly very agreeable. She passed all yesterday afternoon with me — I like her much, — a very sensible woman.

You have dined, and [are] sitting comfortably round the fire, — boys fixing to go to school. Little Ann is up I know, for I hope by this time she has regular naps. It is past one, but it seems as though we had just done breakfast. Here sits Mary working a ruff, — finds it difficult and is out of patience. Elizabeth doing the same in the bedchamber with Sophia, who is making a lace and cord trimming for my gown. To-morrow evening is dance night. Thursday we are invited to dine at the President's. Friday eve we are engaged to Mr. Dallas, to a large party. My dresses have been almost worn through twice; I must get a new recruit soon.

I am worried about the children having the measles; Betsey says you think that the boys have had them, but they have not. Elizabeth and Mary had them, but the boys did not. Do take good care that they do not get cold if they take the disorder. Sally's children got through nicely, and I hope ours will, for I should prefer they should have them when young, but should wish to be with them.

Mrs. Decatur and others wonder I do not let the girls wear black silk aprons; they would look

so pretty with their scarlet gowns. They are worn much in New York, — I saw a great many in Philadelphia, and Mrs. Jackson said the grown ladies as well as children wore them in New Orleans; so I wish Betsey would cut each of them one out of their black gowns, put a waist to them like their old ones left at home trimmed with blue; and have you not some old black fringe or narrow lace [with which] to trim them? She need not make them, and if you could fold them small and send one at a time in a letter — if not, send them with the velvet. Send a little piece for shoulder straps, for you can't think how much I miss my old bundles. The girls dirty their white aprons very soon, and the woman takes our clothes on Monday morn and we do not get them again till Saturday or Sunday. Give seven dollars a month. Sophia sometimes washes little things, but not often, as it is almost impossible here with such a house full.

How I long to see you all. Two months gone — a third part of the time. What joy to meet again. I did wrong to take the girls — they would be better at home to go regularly to school; they have here so much idle time it makes them cross, and my time is all taken up visiting and preparing to visit. I am afraid they will forget all they have learned. I have some

thought of sending them to school here, but they don't want to go. They have been teasing me all the morning to ride, but it is not pleasant — looks like rain ; the ground is covered with snow and has been since Saturday. I think you must have had a good snowstorm with you. I hope to have a letter to-day. I wish you would look at my new knives in the sideboard. I am afraid they will rust. Aunt Silsbee says it is best to wrap them in flannel, and the others may want looking at. I should admire to just peep round a little, [but I] don't get homesick. How does Mrs. Brooks do? Has she got out yet? Tell Priscey I thank her for all her letters. Tell Aunt Sally to write often. Mr. C. thinks she writes better than any one.

M. B. C.

Washington, January 16, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER : —

The letter I sent yesterday had been written several days — it was too late for the mail on Saturday, and Sunday no letters go from Mr. C.'s office. I mention this that you may not think any letter is missing. I yesterday received Priscey's letter and was gratified that she condescended to let us know she thought there were such beings in existence. Tell her I will write her soon when I have something pretty to tell.

It was planned just now at breakfast for me to go with Mrs. Chappell to Capitol Hill, make calls, and then go to the House of Representatives. We wanted the girls to go, as it is expected several will speak ; but it is now raining and we are quite disappointed, but if it should be pleasant in an hour we shall go. It is fine sleighing — better than ever was known here for so long a time. There is a level snow, but not such good banks as you have. This rain will make horrid going.

How are the children ? It will soon be Ben-

jamin's birthday — on the 26th. Don't forget it; he will be eight years old and I hope a better boy than he was when he was seven.

All the ladies have new caps. They will not believe that I let my children go without caps this cold weather. I called on a lady late on Saturday. She told me she had two children with her, the youngest about ten months. She told me what a beautiful boy he was. On Monday morning I heard this babe was dead with the croup. This disorder prevails here in the winter with young children. I can't but think how glad I am mine are at home. I have frequently wished I had her with me; I can't bear to think she is growing so fast and I not witnessing her improvement — but she is better off at home.

Yesterday was a clear cold day. I was at home making the girls new bombasets; their red ones are worn out. They sometimes put on white, which is not a day's wear. I have not been able to get them stockings, — the other day I found some cotton ones at a store, but they want clean ones every day. I continue to like Mrs. Decatur. She says she must adopt Mary, for it is thought here that she resembles her very much, — just such a dimple. The Com'r says, "Mary, I must have you." Mary has been so gay lately, she astonishes every one. Sunday

eve she had one of her high times. No whoa to her. Mrs. Chappell says, “ Oh, Mrs. C., what a time you will have with her when she is eighteen ! ” She thinks Elizabeth one of the sweetest children she ever saw, — wants her little Eugenia to be just like her. I tell this to please Grandma.

I have no engagements at present. The ladies here who are inhabitants do not give any parties, — it is a continual succession of morning calls, — never are offered anything to eat or drink. Mrs. Todd¹ and Miss Inis² called yesterday morning, — I had not seen them for some time. Begged I would be at the drawing-room on Wednesday, not send an excuse again. [I said] I might be taken for a piece of furniture, I was there so often, although last week Mr. C. went without me. The first thing Mrs. Todd does on her coming in is to take from the shelf a tin box of snuff and pass it round. I keep this box handy as all the ladies take snuff, but I have not got in the fashion yet, nor I don't mean to learn any bad habits. The rain continues, so I shall not go to-day. I am glad you have bought pork and wish I had some of the scraps; are they good? We have no such things here.

¹ Wife of Thomas Todd of Virginia.

² Probably the daughter of Harry Inis, jurist; married John J. Crittenden.

I was asking Mrs. Chappell how many hams she thought I put up;—she said, if a large family, she supposed three hundred. She generally had that number. Laughed very much when I told her only four single legs, for here at the South they eat ham morning, noon and night.

Good day.

M. B. C.

Washington, January 19, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER : —

It is Saturday, and if I do not write a few lines to-day, it will seem a long time to you, as I cannot send conveniently a letter on Sunday. It is now two o'clock and I have just returned from George Town. Have been shopping all the morning with the girls. Bought them new rings with which they are much delighted. I am now waiting with my things on for Mrs. Decatur to get home, to go out with her to make several morning visits, although it is past two o'clock.

I feel anxious to hear how the children are, — if the boys have the measles. I really hope they will have it, and do not let them get cold. How will the babe have it? is she not too young? Sometimes I feel like flying, I want to see the children so bad, as they say here; but if all continues well, I shall not return till spring. The going now must be dreadful. Our sleighing here is all gone.

Com'r Chauncey¹ came here last eve. He

¹ Commodore Isaac Chauncey of the American Navy.



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says the travelling is very bad since the rain. We go out every pleasant day — to ride ; the two last days we have been to the Senate and House of Representatives, but it was so crowded and so very warm, the girls begged to come away ; not very good speaking. We made several morning visits. Mrs. Monroe and Miss King have just been to see us. Almost three, so I think it will be too late to go out with Mrs. Decatur, and she is not come yet.

I hope Mr. Story will bring the velvet. How I want a new dress. But there is no visiting. Mrs. Dallas's is the only party we have had. I don't mean to go to another assembly. I wish I could have a party, but it is impossible in this house, for I must invite all the boarders, and, what would be worse, Mrs. Willson and her daughters ; but this I would not do. However, it is not expected that I should. There are many strangers here, — foreigners from every nation.

Tell Aunt Silsbee I have met Dashkoff de Kantson,¹ Don de Onis, and many more hard names. I was introduced to many at the President's last levee, but don't tell everybody this silly stuff. There is a fine painter ² here, — the

¹ Russian Minister at Washington. Not long after this he was disgraced ; was dismissed by request of Secretary Monroe, and finally was exiled to Siberia.

² John Vanderlyn.

one who took W. Rogers's likeness in France. He is taking Mr. Monroe's family and the President's. We talk of having ours done. Mr. C. is now sitting, but he can't stay long enough to take mine. Those he is now doing are excellent likenesses. I cannot write another word. I have received the black silk and expect a letter to-day. Remember me to the children.

M. B. C.

Washington, January 28, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER :—

It is Sunday, but we are none of us at meeting. I did not want to go to the Capitol. I don't like the minister who preaches to-day. We have a Baptist [church] very near, and the minister is a very good man. I wanted to go, but it is not far enough to ride, and the walking is bad, so I have stayed at home.

Mr. C. has gone to the President's to see the painter who is taking his likeness. He sits for it at Mr. Monroe's, as we had no convenient room for him at this house, and he stays there, and has all his apparatus. Here are the girls with a plate of crackers, cheese and grape jelly for a luncheon, but are quarreling who shall have the most and are hardly willing I should take any. I wish they were at a good school. Do tell Mrs. Rogers she must take them when they return. They are improving in their French and music since we have had the piano. Their French master is an old man, and so good-natured and pleasant that the girls have become quite pleased with him. He says Mary reads French best when she is a

little cross, and is more agreeable to him, and he tries to coax her up:—“Why, Miss, you are one of my best scholars. You are so young, you do read French very well.” The music master tells the Misses C’s they will be great belles,—but Miss Elizabeth is told of it too much, that she is very handsome. This is only to please Grandma,—don’t tell of it, for I really don’t think either will be very handsome. If they are only good [that] is all I want.

Mr. C. has returned,—says Mrs. Monroe is quite sick to-day,—she is not up. She often has the rheumatism, but now has a cold. I have not been out to see any one since the levee, so have no news to tell. Great talks here of who is to be the next President, but I really hope it will be Mr. Monroe,—he is a very good man and deserves it. Some think Mr. Crawford stands some chance, but he has not been long enough in the Cabinet. I don’t know what his wife would do, for she dislikes so much to go into company and appears there to no advantage; is a good woman I have no doubt.

Just had a call from two young ladies—very pretty—introduced by their brother who is a clerk in Mr. C.’s office. They were dressed in white cambric high in the neck, ruffled round, merino shawl, both alike, and very pretty white satin bonnets. Stayed about three minutes. Here

are the girls laughing in quite a frolic. Pa says, "Done, done, Mary;" but she won't be still. It is almost two o'clock and I want my dinner, but it will not be ready this long while. We pretend to dine earlier on Sundays, but we do not. Mary had been writing to the boys, but Elizabeth is too lazy to write. I long to see Judge Story,— he will be here this week, I hope. I begin to think of home and I wish I could be there for a minute and see you all. So Benjamin is learning his piece, and will be willing to speak it often at home. He must send us word what it is. And how does Francis come on? I am glad to hear he gets his Sunday lesson so easily; and George, don't you want to begin your Latin grammar? I would get a little lesson every day if I were you; — come, I would try, for you are almost as old as Francis was when he began.

Give my love to Aunt Sally C. Tell her she might write me. Here is the man to take the letters, so good bye. Past three — no table set.

M. B. C.

Thursday Morning,
Washington, February 1, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER : —

Here is Mary taking her French lesson, and is so cross I wonder her master puts up with it ; but he says so frequently, “ Oh, I love to see her so, she speaks French so much better.” Elizabeth is reading and her Pa looking over letters. It is ten and we have just come from breakfast. I arose earlier this morning to mend the girls’ gowns. The bottoms of the sleeves were worn out. Mary put on her new one yesterday, but she dirtied it so much I won’t let her wear it any more, for she must keep a best one. How do you make out with the boys’ clothes? Do they want new ones? Does Francis wear his knees out as fast as he did? I think you must have got George new clothes, — I long to see him with his trousers. I suppose he despises frocks and trousers. Has he begun his Latin? I don’t want him plagued much about it, but should think he might get a few lines. It is three months since I left you all. In three more I expect to see you all again. How often we talk of going home.

[Do you] think you will know us? George, do you remember how we looked? I wish you could see Mary, she is crying and scolding the poor French master. I wonder he don't flog her. You are never so bad, I hope, boys. How I shall delight in seeing three good boys. I wish I could exchange you for the girls. Does little Ann grow prettier, for Grandma says she is not handsome. Does she love to look at the candle yet? Kiss her a hundred times for me.

We dine out to-day, at Mr. Jones's;¹ — I have never seen them and wish I was not going, as the ladies in the house are not going, — I expect to meet only strangers; — this is not pleasant. I have quite a headache to-day. Mrs. Madison has been sick since Sunday — bilious colic. I have seen her once since, and she left her chamber to meet a party in her drawing-room who dined there, but she could not go to table and has been more unwell since — had no levee last evening.

For several days I have been making morning visits with Mrs. Decatur. Tuesday morning called on fifteen — only two at home. Mrs. Crawford was at home making up her window curtains, — one green curtain drawn on one side, — yellow drapery trimmed with

¹ William Jones, ex-Secretary of the Navy.

handsome silk fringe ; only two windows in the room, — pretty French chairs, — mahogany backs and bottoms stuffed, covered with striped rich blue silk, some with arms ; carpet blue ground, crossed with rich yellow flowers ; an elegant pianoforte. I do not recollect anything else. Met there half dozen ladies. Stayed ten minutes. But Mrs. Crawford has never before been from the country, — seldom looks neat. I have never seen her children ; they say they are fine looking children, but dressed dreadfully. They are about the age of mine, and the same number. And yet it is thought here she will succeed Mrs. Madison — what a change this will be ! — but I still hope Mr. Monroe will be the next President.

Elizabeth wants my pen, so good morning.

M. B. C.


XIII

Friday,
Washington, 16th February, 1816.

We have received no letter from home since last Saturday. I hope you are not sick. Perhaps the babe has the measles and you will not let me know it till she is well again. I dreamed last night of seeing her — she was so fat but not very pretty. She let me take her but would go to no one else. Seemed not to think me a stranger, which will not happen if I ever do see her, for she won't let me touch her. Do take good care of her till I get home, which will be in May I think, for we begin to talk of it. We are very much urged to take a house but we should have to build one for there is not a vacant house in the city. Com'r Porter has been round this week to find one. His wife is going home soon to pack up her things to move on, and Com. Decatur is determined on taking a house here. Mrs. Decatur is going soon to Norfolk to see her father. She has not seen him for two years, and she is his only child; and she will pack up and send on her furniture and come herself about the time we shall be going home.

The girls are going to a dancing party this evening and we are going to Mrs. Cutts's.¹ She invited me to pass a sociable eve, but I hear everybody is also invited, but she don't wish to have it called a party. We have an invitation to dine on Tuesday at Gen. Van Ness's²; suppose I shall go, — they are some of the smartest folks here.

I was at the drawing room on Wednesday—expected to be the only one, as there were so many the last Levee, and there was another party on the same eve. Soon after I got in Mrs. Madison said how much we think alike—both with a little blue and flowers. I had on my blue velvet, and flowers on my head. Mrs. Madison a muslin dotted in silver over blue—a beautiful blue turban and feathers. I have never seen her look so well. There was a lady there I had never seen—monstrous large, dressed in a plain muslin, not even a piece of lace about the neck—just like a little girl's frock. Neck bare, a pink turban with a black feather. All the gentlemen thought her very handsome, but Miss Randolph is the most admired,—not pretty but very accomplished. Her grandfather, Mr. Jefferson, has taken much

¹ A sister of Mrs. Madison, wife of the Honorable Richards Cutts of Maine.

² John Van Ness, Mayor of Washington.

pains in educating her. I can never get a chance to speak to her, she is so surrounded by gentlemen — for here there are half a dozen gentlemen to one young lady.

Tell the boys we often talk of them and would give I don't know how much to see them. Mr. Porter who went from here some time since promised to call on you. He was on here and lived with us two months. He is a cousin of William Woodbridge, who plays with our boys. I forgot to mention it before and suppose you have seen him by this time. Just had a call from Mrs. Telfair¹ from Georgia, and a strange gentleman with her.

It is now three o'clock. Another call from Mrs. Monroe, our next door neighbor — a very large woman. She had on a white wrapper gown, a black lace cap, a pretty worked cap tied with yellow ribbon. Miss King, her niece, in white, a merino shawl, black straw with feathers. She is very pretty, — reminded me of our Hannah Hodges.² Tell Sally this letter is to her too, — I neglect her more than any one, but it is because she will forgive me, knowing I don't intend it, — for I have not much time to write, and yet I have if I would; — can you understand this? Tell the boys to tell Mrs.

¹ Wife of Thomas Telfair, Congressman from Georgia.

² A cousin of Mrs. Crowninshield.

Rogers I received her letter and will write her soon. She is very good to have the children so often. Good bye—

M. B. C.



XIV

Saturday,
Washington, February 24, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER : —

I have forgotten to number my last letter, but I am inclined to think you get all. We have had quite a dissipated week. You can have no idea of the great crowd at the ball. The hall was as full as it could possibly be. They danced cotillions, but you could only see the heads. We stood up on the benches. I was afraid to move about much lest I should lose the girls. Mrs. Chappell took care of Mary. Finally the heat was so great, I moved on for the bottom of the hall, but was half an hour getting there. After taking some refreshment, one of the managers said there was a parlor opened below for the ladies who wished to go, so I took the girls down. It was more pleasant there. From this room we went to the supper table. The managers appoint gentlemen to wait on the ladies, and take their seats according to their rank. Mrs. Madison headed the table, Mrs. Brown on her right, Mrs. Dallas on the left, then came my turn. Gen. Brown was my gallant. My dress got entangled in his spurs and

I fell over his sword going upstairs, but arrived safe at the table, which was very large, but not one quarter could come to table; indeed, half of the company did not get anything. The girls fared very well. Don't, dear, tell everybody what I write — it might be thought vanity for me to tell who waited on me or where my seat was at table, so don't say I wrote it. Mrs. Madison, dressed in black velvet trimmed with gold [and] a worked lace turban in gold, looked brilliant, — a lace and gold kind of a something over her shoulders. The greatest variety of dresses as to colors and materials, but nothing entirely new. We came home some of the first. I bought the girls new white kid shoes. Gave five dollars for both, and new gloves, but such sights when they got home, — so dirty, and yet they did not dance.

Yesterday was delightful weather. I rode out. Mrs. Decatur went with me to make calls, — first on General Brown's lady. They have just arrived in the city. Then we went to the hill to call on Mrs. Dexter. There we found the Brown party and went with them to the Navy Yard to see the monument and the ruins. Heard good music. Returned and walked the pavement till dinner time. It is paved in front of the seven buildings, so we go out of our houses, and sometimes we muster a large party

if it is pleasant. Mrs. Madison and Mrs. Todd on one side and Mrs. Monroe's family on the other, and the ladies of our family; and we can always find gentlemen. They sit in the doorway reading papers, and yesterday was so warm I sat here a long while with the window up, but it is colder to-day. Last eve I was at Mrs. Monroe's our neighbor — quite a large party, but I was only invited to pass a sociable eve. We played loo and I won — I am afraid to say how much, but shall give it to the orphan asylum. I am going this morning to carry my winnings to Mrs. Madison.

Well, how do you all do? I have written so far without mentioning home. Tell the children I long to see them. I am delighted to hear the boys are so good, and when you have company too; — quite a party I think — do have another. Here is Elizabeth playing away on the piano, but can you believe she does n't play so well as Mary? — but it is true. The ladies here think they improve very fast. I cannot write any more and I have told you all. Will write Sally soon. Let her see this letter.

M. B. C.

Thursday,
Washington, March, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER: —

Well, I have returned from Baltimore, which is more than I expected after I set out, for such horrid roads I never saw. I suffered everything. Stayed one day longer for the roads to dry, and they were tolerable when we came back. The girls were so glad to see me, it seemed like getting home again. Mr. Allen, a young gentleman who has boarded with us all winter, went with us and showed us all about the city. By us I mean Col. Chappell and his wife. Mr. Smith,¹ a son of Gen. Smith, found us out and was very attentive. We told him we should certainly go on Tuesday, for we did not want him to invite us to his house, but the next day he heard we were still there and brought his wife and another lady to call on us and invited us to take tea and pass the eve; but we declined going. In the eve Mr. Patterson, a brother of Madam Bonaparte, called with Miss Carter, his wife's

¹ John Spear Smith, son of General Samuel Smith of Baltimore.

sister, one of the most dashing belles in the country. They were going the next day to Washington and called to invite us to go with them in the stage, but we had engaged passages in another and were obliged to take our seats. They said they were desirous to get here early as they wished to be at the drawing room to see Mr. and Mrs. Bagot.¹ I arrived at sunset, but tired as I was, I dressed for the drawing-room.

But I first must tell you that on Saturday the English minister's carriage drove up to the door to call on me. I had been expecting them as I saw them go to the President's. I did not know how I should make out. He came in first and introduced his lady; — she looked elegantly — her hair dressed high, braids, and curls, a muslin dress over satin trimmed with a thread lace a quarter wide, most elegant, and two rows let in in front; two narrow rows of lace round the neck, rather high; no handkerchief, a bead or pearl neck-lace, and a gold watch chain round her neck; long sleeves with several rows of gold chain, clasped with a large emerald bracelet. The

¹ Sir Charles Bagot, second son of William, first Lord Bagot, British Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington. Later he became Governor-General of British North America.

chain was large and perhaps looked clumsy, and just above, two rows of beads or pearls, — looked more like beads, — a scarlet shawl thrown over her shoulders, no bonnet or veil. Mr. dressed in uniform ; both very agreeable. Gave an account of their voyage — expected to be pleased with Washington. Talked all the time. I had sent Hanson for Mr. C., but he would not come home. Stood just below the door with some gentlemen, laughing to think how I should make out. Round the door a dozen children collected to see the carriage and servant so smart. At the drawing room they came in late. She was dressed in white, a figured lace over satin, very much trimmed at the bottom, long sleeves. The short ones very full and trimmed below, very close, and the same ornaments I had seen before, but round her neck diamond necklace, and earrings. Her hair dressed, a narrow gold band, and nine white ostrich feathers. Looked very beautiful indeed. Aunt Silsbee would have been pleased with this dress. The rooms very much crowded and very warm. Even Miss Pickering and her brother Henry appeared. They could not be there to see the President as this was their first appearance. I came away very early and this morning my husband went with me to call on these new folks. I put on

a new chip bonnet with flowers, that I bought in Baltimore, a plain cambric gown, but only left my cards, — not at home. When I returned, called in to the President's — found ladies with Mrs. Madison. They soon went away. I sat a long while with her. She is a very pleasant woman, — had really a good talk with her.

Mr. and Mrs. Patterson and Miss Carter have taken rooms here in this house. They were at breakfast, after which I called down to see them, but some gentlemen soon came in and I was off. They will only stay one week — are going this spring to England.

Com. and Mrs. Decatur are gone. How much I miss them. Mrs. Porter calls every day — has taken lodgings near us.

You must let all see this who feel interested in hearing about the English minister — Aunt Silsbee and Sally, etc., etc. Tell her that Mr. C. had his letter, which he wrote to Uncle George at New Orleans, sent back in one from a gentleman, saying that he had left there for New York on his way to Washington; so we are expecting him here, but perhaps he may be in Salem.

Well, how do you all do? We have not had any letter for some days. I could not bear to come back when I was at Baltimore. I

wanted to proceed towards home. Judge Story will be home before this reaches you, and I hope the boys will be pleased with their presents. I saw nothing pretty in Baltimore for them. Tell them we talk of them and we think of them so often and tell everybody what fine boys we have at home, and they must love little Ann and kiss her for us all. We shall now soon be at home.

Dinner time.

M. B. C.

Washington, April 6, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER:—

It is some days since I have written. I have been engaged with Vanderlyn. He has now almost finished my portrait,¹ but I cannot as yet say the likeness will be good. The girls say, “Oh, Ma, it is too handsome for you.” But he has not flattered Mr. C.² Mrs. Madison says it is not half handsome enough for him.

Well, how are you all?—I have not heard this long while. I hope the children were pleased with the bundle Judge Story brought them. You will think the box too big, but it was the prettiest we could get. I have sent a trunk with some clothes that we should not want, by Silver, and think I shall put up some more to send by him,—he has not sailed yet. Hanson bought at Alexandria a barrel of crackers and some marbles for the boys, to send in the vessel. Mary is now teaching Elizabeth a tune. We have just breakfasted—past nine.

¹ Mrs. Crowninshield's portrait, *frontispiece*.

² Mr. Crowninshield's portrait, page 44.

Mrs. Patterson and Miss Carter left here this morning. It is so disagreeable to part with those we like,—for certainly they were as fine, elegant women as I ever knew,—so amiable and agreeable. They dressed elegantly,—had the most superb ornaments I have seen here,—one comb cost two hundred dollars,—amethyst set and necklace, earrings and bracelets, etc., etc. to match. Mrs. P. told me she spent \$1200 in two days for jewelry. They are very rich—are going this spring to Europe.

I have not been out for several days. We dined at the President's on Tuesday. The dinner very handsome, more so than any I have seen,—the heads of departments and all the foreign ministers there. Mrs. Bagot dressed in a light green Italian crepe, striped with folds of white satin about a quarter apart, a roll of satin at the bottom with large braids of satin. It stuck out very much at the bottom. Three bracelets on one arm, two on the other—all different. A string of pearls round her neck,—dress very low behind. She has the whitest neck I ever saw, for she has black eyes and hair and her hair dressed very high; wreath of red roses and purple and white flowers round her head, and her hair was above it,—a great wave on the top. This for Betsey to improve on. And

she is a very agreeable lady—is determined to be pleased with everything. All the other ladies in old dresses. Mrs. King and Mrs. Gore¹ there,—two old ladies. I had not seen them before, for they do not visit any in cold weather. We dined part of the time by candle light, drank coffee in the drawing-room and came away immediately—almost nine.

At the drawing room the next eve Mrs. Bagot was dressed superbly—lace dress embroidered with gold and a turban of the same. I did not go, so cannot tell any more. And this is all the news, excepting the Bank Bill has passed both Houses, and no doubt the President will sign it.

We have had rain for several days—the roads must be very bad and I cannot say when I shall be at home, but certainly the last of May, I think. Mr. C. says Frank will be home first. We were very glad to hear he had arrived safe, but I am afraid he will not make much money. How glad the boys will be to see Uncle George. I long to hear about his getting home. Where does he live? I am sorry he did not come here. I think we must have letters to-day. How I do long to see the babe. Does she continue as good as ever? How we shall plague her when

¹ Wife of Christopher Gore, United States Senator from Massachusetts.

she sees us, dear creature! I suppose the boys' exhibition is over by this time. Nathaniel sent me their pieces and they must not forget them, for we will want to hear them when we get home. George learns Latin—I can hardly believe it. Why, what a great boy he will be. I shall not know him in his new clothes. He wore frocks when I was at home. Does he have a new suit like the boys? How much they will be grown,—for the girls are a great deal taller—I have to let out all their tucks.

I cannot say any more—here is my painter. Hope to have a letter. Tell the children I long to see them, and Betsy must write me oftener.

M. B. C.

TO FRANCIS B. CROWNINSHIELD,
SALEM, MASS.

Thursday,
Washington, April 18, 1816.

DEAR FRANCIS:—

I wrote yesterday to Grandma on purpose to tell her it will be your birthday next Tuesday, 23rd. I was afraid you would not remember it, — but I forgot it until after I sent the letter. So we will think and talk of you on that day. Seven years old — time for you to be a very good boy. Do you go to dancing school? I think you had better go, if any boys go [that] you and Ben know. Go next quarter. Don't you sometimes practice your steps with Betsey Mead? I am willing Ben should go if he wants to. George will go next year. Grandma must go with you and tell Turner not to scold you too much. And when will little Anstiss go?—but I suppose that she dances now better than she can walk. Oh, how I want to see her. Were you glad to see Uncle George? Does he come to see you often? Tell him he must take you to France with

him.¹ Should you like to go? Give my love to your brothers and sister and tell Grandma we shall be at home soon. The girls are playing with little George and Benjamin Campbell who live here — two very little boys.

Good bye, dear boy.

Your affectionate mother,

M. B. CROWNINSHIELD.

I would write more, but I am dressing to dine out and write this in a hurry.

¹ The following winter Mr. George Crowninshield set sail for Europe in his yacht, Cleopatra's Barge.



XVIII

TO BENJAMIN W. CROWNINSHIELD.
SALEM, MASS.

Steamboat, Chesapeake, Saturday.

MY DEAR HUSBAND:—

We have just passed Com. Porter's house. Saw the children run to see the boat pass. I held out my white handkerchief in vain for Mrs. Porter — could see nothing of her. We arrived this morning at French Town and took the stage about four o'clock and got to New Castle about seven; had a very cold morning ride. We had the stage with Mr. and Mrs. Dallas — they continue very polite to me. We had the cabin so crowded last night we did not get much sleep, although we had the best berths. How much we wish you were with us. The girls do finely. I filled Mary's bag with candy and she is buying nuts on board the boat. — "Why, Ma, you know this money will not pass after to-day." Elizabeth is not sick, — complained of the headache this morning. It was because she did not sleep any in the night.

Mrs. Payson called on me in Baltimore;

says Shillaber will sail perhaps in a week. He has the trunk and box at his house. You will see him at Annapolis, for I hope you will go. Mr. Dallas will go with him to Mrs. Campbell's, and he will send out for lodgings for us; — this I shall not like to do, and I cannot but hope that Mrs. Meany may be at the wharf to receive us. I shall not stop long in Philadelphia. To-morrow being Sunday I shall see but little, and so I may stay over Monday; but if there is any trouble about getting lodgings, I shall go on immediately. Saw nothing pretty to buy in Baltimore. Mr. King will arrive to-day about the time we shall be in Philadelphia. How astonished you will be to see him. But we do so well I do not feel at all anxious. We shall get home safe — you will be glad to hear when we get there.

Mary gave me a piece of her hard candy yesterday and said to tell you I broke a large piece of my front tooth. I was quite alarmed, but it does not show much. It split from the back part, but another hard bite and it is gone. I am almost afraid to eat.

Adieu — I hope we shall get a letter in Philadelphia.

Your affectionate wife,

M. B. C.

My best love to Mrs. Madison. Tell her

she must go to Annapolis ; everybody is going from Baltimore, expecting the President to be there. Sunday : We arrived in Philadelphia yesterday about four o'clock. Went with Mrs. Dallas to Mrs. Campbell's. How delighted they all were to see their parent again. They had dined but got us some dinner. George D. went out in pursuit of lodging for us. He got us one very near, but when there I was so discontented that I sent John to Mr. Meany to inquire about Hanson, and when he left [I was] in hopes we should be invited there, and I was not disappointed. Mrs. M. came immediately down and would have us go with her and we are there [now]. The girls are much delighted — the little girls they saw on board the steamboat when they came on, are here with their Aunt, so they have fine frolics. I have been to-day to the Catholic Church — far superior to what I saw in Washington. Matilda has just been to see me — said when I wrote I must send her love to you. I must stay one day more here as I can see but little on Sunday and the boat goes to-morrow and not again till Wednesday, but I feel very impatient to be home. They say I must stay a week, but I shall certainly go on Wednesday morning, seven o'clock. Good bye.

M. B. C.

Mr. M. said he had written you about the horse and given Hanson his own, which was far better than ours but a good match.

Philadelphia, May 19, 1816.

DEAR MOTHER:—

We arrived here yesterday in safety. We set out from Washington last Thursday morning. Mr. King was to accompany us to this place, but at Baltimore Mr. Pinkney¹ told him he would not have time, as they would sail in a few days, and he was going with him to Naples. I was quite distressed, for I had stayed there one day on his account. Mr. and Mrs. Dallas were at the same house with us and they concluded to take the steamboat with us and send on their carriage. We had a pleasant passage. Set out at five o'clock, sailed all night, got in the stage about four o'clock, then we took the steamboat at French Town and arrived here about four o'clock. Mrs. Dallas would make us go with them to their daughter's, and their son went out to get us lodgings. Regretted very much that they had not a house to take us to— all their family were at their daughter's. At our new lodgings I felt quite disconsolate, but Mrs.

¹ William Pinkney, Maryland statesman; then on the point of sailing for Europe as special envoy to Russia.

Meany soon called and would have us go home with her, so here we are. She is a charming woman. I regret that it is Sunday, as I cannot go on to-morrow, for I want to stay here one day to see all the pretty things. The girls are quite pleased here as there are two little girls that they saw before. This morning we went to church and walked round. This is a most delightful city. We shall not go from here till Wednesday morning. I was in hopes to meet Aunt Silsbee here, but cannot find her. There are a number of Navy officers going on to Boston. Com. Bainbridge¹ has written them to call on me, so I can have a choice. Indeed, I don't care about going alone. I do not feel so much in a hurry, as Hanson² only left here the day before we came and we wish to go on from New Haven in our carriage — and he had to stop here to get a new horse, for one of ours never seemed strong and Mr. C. wrote to Mr. Meany to try to get a match for the best one, and he says he has got a very fine one.

I am afraid you will expect us too soon — shall not get home till sometime next week.

¹ Commodore William Bainbridge.

² As it was necessary to drive from New Haven to Salem, they sent on their carriage in advance, so that it should be ready for them when they arrived there in the steamboat.

We shall get to New York on Thursday and must stay one day to see Sally. I shall feel much disappointed if Mrs. Silsbee is not there. We will probably leave there on Saturday, if the boat goes on that day, and it will take us five or six days to get from New Haven home. How I long to see you all. Will the boys be glad to see us? Little Ann will not, I am sure. Poor Pa—left behind. He did not like it very well, for he wants to be home as much as I do. Give my love to everybody. I expect to see a great many pretty things tomorrow and shall I buy some?— I am afraid my money will not hold out. Good bye.

M. B. C.

TO BENJAMIN W. CROWNINSHIELD.

Saturday,
Salem, June 2, 1816.

We have arrived safe home, my dear husband, found all well. Took the steamboat from New York on Monday. Had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Frazier on board. He and Capt. Read were very attentive. Arrived at New Haven before night, [and] took a walk out. We started the next morning at six. The horses in good order and the weather very fine. Got to East Hartford, forty one miles, that night. The gentlemen overtook us in the stage. Hanson went with them — I preferred John¹ to drive us on. Capt. Silsbee gave me a list of the towns and the distances to stop, on the Worcester road, which I found much better than the road we went. As soon as we got into Massachusetts, we found election at all the public houses, and slept at a tavern where they had a ball the next room to us; but we slept the better for it. The third night we arrived

¹ Their regular coachman.

within seven miles of Boston. Went in the next morning to breakfast. All the Republicans were at Merriams, but I waited for breakfast, and who should pop in but Uncle Zac and Aunt Sally — so unexpected that we were quite delighted. They expected to meet us in the course of the day. Told us Grandma and the boys were in Andover, but they had sent for them as we were expected, — so we dined in Boston as I did not wish to go home first. Oh, how pleasant to see again dear Salem! We passed through about five, at a time no one was in the streets, and stopped at our own door and saw Grandma and the children at tea. Such a start from the table — all out in the yard in a moment. George was the first, — so altered I should not have known him if I had met him. Francis next, and looked much the same as when we left him. Benjamin not at home, but the babe — I would not believe her ours — not the least look of the others. I told them I was sure they had changed her ; — not so pretty as I expected — very light blue eyes and almost white hair, — looked more like little Mary, but she was quite good to let us take her. Stared at us, — followed the girls about. They are delighted with her and she with them. I think her more gay and lively than any of the others.

Grandma was so delighted to see us again.

We were all very happy and enjoyed it much. Soon Uncle George came in with Ben. He has grown very much indeed. They got so burned being in Andover a few days that they looked rather badly and their clothes shabby. I gave out the presents, but a little brass cannon, very small, pleased the most, and I had only one. Ben has been firing it to-day, but he will not again often; — I am so afraid of powder, for before I got home he got his hair and eyebrows and lashes scorched with gunpowder and it has altered his looks very much.

They admired the horses and carriage. The old gray is sent to Grandma's barn. We cannot get oats and I don't know what we shall do. Uncle George has been in to-day; — had a letter from you, — the first time I had heard from you since I left Washington, — but I got one since from New York. I was disappointed in not getting one there. Saw by the papers you were having your frolic at Annapolis. I should have enjoyed being there, but enjoyed getting home much better. You tell Uncle George you shall be home soon, and soon let it be. It will be so good to have you here again.

Mr. Bentley¹ called to see me this morning. Inquired much about the President. "Well,

¹ The Rev. William Bentley.

ma'am, you have seen what I so much wish to see—the good President." Asked if I found his good lady a pleasant woman. You may be sure I said yes; and how does she do? I suppose by this time she is in Virginia and you left alone. I pity you for I am so happy and all the boys—Jacob¹ and William² and Nathan—soon came; and here sits Edward not improved any, —grown taller, —says they are all well and have a master to teach them at home. The factory going on very well, etc., etc.

Aunt Sally C. has not been down to see us yet. Our girls called, — she was very glad, they said, to see them. They have been all round to see their girls, as there is no school election week. Elizabeth says she never enjoyed anything so much as getting home, and Mary is so happy and the boys so pleased!—how grateful I ought to be to get home again without any accident and find all well, — nothing wanting but yourself.

Frank has not arrived yet, but will soon, I hope; — no news. Mrs. Cummings has a son — when you were home last year she was not married. Been at home one day — our house

¹ Jacob Crowninshield, Mr. C.'s nephew; married Mary Miller Schuyler.

² William Crowninshield, Mr. C.'s nephew, was lost at sea.

looks like a palace — my chamber so comfortable. George slept with me. I think I never shall want to go from home again. The girls are frolicking with the babe, — say I must tell you they think her very pretty, as much so as Thomas Porter whom they used to love so much. Mr. and Mrs. Silsbee did not leave New York the day I did, — the rain prevented, — but they had determined on going to Baltimore, but should not go to Washington. Mrs. Silsbee wished you would meet them in Baltimore, but I told her you had so lately been to Annapolis that I did not think you could, and you would so soon be home. Remember me to all the folk — the girls say you must give their love to Emily and Frances and Debby — and you must not forget it — they must write to them. And you must tell Mrs. Willson that they were so happy to get home, and the boys so glad to see them.

Good night — tea is ready.

Your affectionate

M. B. C.

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