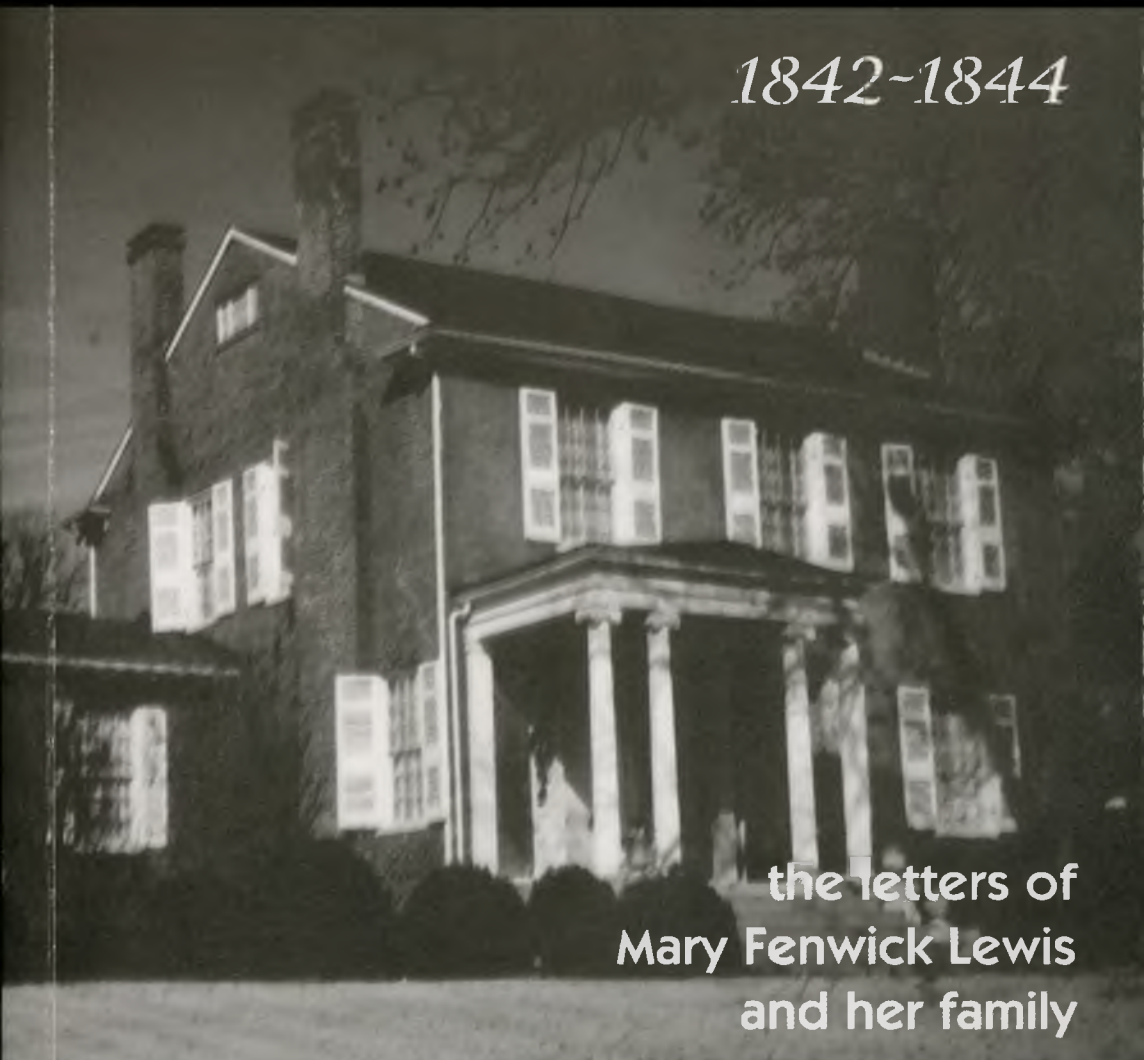


An Alabama School Girl in Paris

1842-1844



the letters of
Mary Fenwick Lewis
and her family

Nancy M. Rohr

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**The Letters of Mary Fenwick Lewis
and Her Family**

Edited by Nancy M. Rohr

An
Alabama
School Girl
In Paris

NANCY M. ROHR



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Preface

This project began as many do, innocently. What could be very complicated about volunteering to transcribe and type some old letters for the community library? The letters were written in the early 1840's between Mary Lewis, who went abroad to finish her education in Paris, and her family in Huntsville, Alabama. The letters were so beautifully written, so full of day-to-day events, and yet at the same time full of the wonder of new adventures. The letters were written to be shared with family, friends, and the community. Even so, 150 years later they are still meant to be shared.

Mary's sense of adventure was always near at hand in the letters. She wrote that one might fear for one's life on a canal boat because of the size of the bedbugs and that hot cinders from the train engine ignited her best gingham dress on the railway to Philadelphia. Once in France, Mary was not sure she would ever like Paris; there were so many naked statues. She wrote from the boarding school asking her mother to please send seeds; the French children had never seen popcorn or watermelons. Mary had accompanied the Calhoun family abroad. On one fine afternoon the French king stopped his carriage and doffed his hat to the Calhoun slave and personal maid, Margaret. But Mary also wrote about the commonplace. She rose early in the morning, ate a modest breakfast, attended her daily classes, and joined the other students for reading aloud or acting out little skits. She fretted that her clothes were too tight and that she had bumps on her face.

Mary Lewis continued to write about her new friends in the refined boarding school and her excursions about the city and into the

French countryside. Ma and Pa Lewis, in return, described the trivia of daily life in Huntsville. The news from home included the latest marriages and engagements of her young friends. Parson Allan died, and the entire community shared the loss. Mary's sisters described the wedding of a black servant that was the talk of the town. Ma struggled with sis Ellen's teenage growing pains, and while Pa was away, she struggled with authority over the slaves. Further adventures also occurred in Huntsville—Mesmerism came to town, phrenology followed and of course there was the earthquake.

The letters were so colorful it seemed only natural to learn more about the people involved and what became of them. There was more discovery in the research. Mary's grandfather Betts turned out to be a land baron from Florida. Lewis men were all Revolutionary War heroes of King's Mountain. As they matured, most of her sisters remained within the state and returned to visit their old home place. Mary married the second son of Governor Clay, John Withers Clay, who became owner and publisher of the Huntsville *Democrat*. They and their children remained in Huntsville for many years. The Calhoun family, generally unknown in local history, had a background of enormous political power in South Carolina and enormous plantations in Louisiana and Alabama. During the reign of Princess Eugenie the Calhouns played a brilliant role in Parisian society. In America the Lewises and Clays stoically endured the War and in France the Calhouns eagerly anticipated the future.

This undertaking became a discovery of fortunes found and lost, of the famous and the near famous, and of lives replete with sweetness and tragedy almost too dreadful to bear. No longer strangers, these people now had identities beyond those dreamed. Indeed this became a collection of tidbits and fragments assembled as their story. The letters, together with research, presented the lives of these people who left their legacy for us to rediscover in delight and held their place in time.

Throughout all the letters, Ma and Pa Lewis stressed education for Mary, her siblings, and for themselves. The goal of the entire trip was to "finish" her schooling even though she would return to her backwoods

home. Her parents insisted on vivid descriptions of everything that Mary saw and did. Ma Lewis particularly demanded more. She said memory was too treacherous to depend on. Every letter urged Mary to observe and to record for her own later study. Mary continued to learn and to write all her lifetime, even the lessons she might not have wanted to know - the babies who died, the War, Reconstruction, and poverty. Mrs. Lewis was right. In the long run it was education and writing that gave Mary, Ma, her sisters, and her daughters the means to hold the Lewis and Clay families together after the devastation of the Civil War.

The letters themselves are a source of wonderment because they survived without being destroyed or lost. The fact that Mary was allowed to go abroad was remarkable in itself. But the reader will soon see that this was an unusual family. Most southern girls were educated at home, and only a very few went away to school in northern cities. The story of the families and the letters offer no earth-shattering revelations. However, every sheet of script contains the sound of actual events as Mary and her family recorded them. They are credible stories plainly described. This was their life for two and a half years; consequently, the letters offer us much information. As a travel narrative they read beautifully. Mary's comments about her own health and that of the Calhouns offer insights into health problems of the time. The reader will be appalled at some of the remedies in use. Obviously only the strong survived. Mary and Ma mentioned in every letter what they were currently reading and what music they were playing. Both the Lewis and Calhoun families were aware of the necessary social graces and the accepted social behavior. Mary had little experience with men, according to the standards of the time, and so her observations were about her female companions. The active roles played by the slaves in the letters were a tangible feature. Taken all together these letters and events became a rare social commentary about these unusual families. One quality remains to be noted. Within the written words the most important attribute displayed by these letters becomes apparent: the Lewis family enjoyed a remarkably caring and loving family rapport.

Genuine fondness and concern for friends and family filled every letter across the miles.

Editing Techniques

The most difficult task was the actual reading of the letters. Although the script was beautifully executed, most of the letters were crosshatched. Occasionally even a third layer of diagonal writing had been added to finish a letter, to squeeze in one more event, reminder, or thought of affection. There was little need for corrections of grammar or spelling. Miss Mary Lewis wrote and spelled beautifully. Her mother used more traditional British spellings; her writing was full of dashes and underlines but had few periods at the end of sentences. Period marks have been added where it seemed appropriate to catch a breath. Ma supervised the writing and copying of the notes by the younger children and of course corrected or censored her teen-age daughters' notes. Mrs. Lewis frequently added footnotes to the letters of Pa and the children.

Mary was urged by Ma to write everything in her journal and use that as a basis for all her letter writing. After all, she would have the journal after the letters were gone, and the memories would be there in black and white for her to recall in her later years. Unfortunately the letters are all that remain today.

At times Mary appeared to be practicing different writing styles. So if her language seems flowery, remember she was not quite 17 years old when she began these letters. For brevity's sake redundant phrases and paragraphs have been edited—Mary's and Ma's. Because the perspective of this work has been from Huntsville, more time and energy have been spent in researching the local names and events. A faithful reader can, like Ma, follow Mary's travels in a guide book and read more about the famous people mentioned, monuments visited, art works noted, and music played.

There is always a temptation to correct and standardize the grammar according to today's usage. Honoring the letters as they were written, the only changes were those absolutely necessary for clarity. In the 1800s abbreviations were often used in order to save space when writing about someone the reader of the letter would surely know. Mrs. C., for instance, is always Mrs. Calhoun unless it is, of course, Mrs. Childs. The inconsistency of spelling Colhoun or Calhoun was resolved by leaving it just exactly as it was written or referred to by a given person, although it is known the family changed the spelling at the death of Judge Smith.

The reader must deal with the use of several nicknames for one person. For example, Florida Lewis might also be called Florry or Polly. In the traditional southern manner, Sister or Brother was used for any sibling. Much taken with the sound of words, many of the Lewis family members appeared to enjoy making up their own combinations of words to fit a situation. Interestingly, in the letters kept by the family all those years, only one sentence was ever deleted. It was probably a reference to the Clay family into which Mary married.

Here are the letters of Mary Lewis and her family, as fresh and alive today as they were 150 years ago.

The Lewis Family

Mary Marguerite Betts (1806-1897)
married John Haywood Lewis (1794-1858)

- Children:*
1. Mary Fenwick Lewis *m. J. Withers Clay*
 2. Ellen Lewis *m. Gabriel Jordan Jr.*
 3. Eliza Lewis *m. William W. Lea, Jr.*
 4. Sarah Hickman Lewis
 5. John Lewis (*died in infancy*)
 6. Myra Louise Lewis (*died age 23*)
 7. William Lindsay Lewis (*died age 23*)
 8. Heber (*died in infancy*)
 9. Florida Lewis
 10. Elodie Lewis *m. Samuel Tanner, Jr.*
 11. Lucy Bride Lewis

The Clay Family

Mary F. Lewis (1825-1898)
married John Withers Clay (1820-1896)

Children:

1. Caralisa Clay (*died age 5*)
2. Clement Comer Clay II (*died age 20*)
3. John Withers Clay (*died age 2*)
4. William Lewis Clay *m.* (1) *Louisa Johnson*
(2) *Susie Clay Battle*
5. Mary Lewis Clay
6. Clarence Herbert Clay (*died age 2*)
7. Susanna Withers Clay
8. John Withers Clay II *m.* *Caroline Saunders*
9. Virginia Clementine Clay
10. Ellen Lewis Clay (*died age 6 days*)
11. Elodie Clay

The Calhoun Family

Mary Taylor Smith (c.1805-1871)
married Meredith Calhoun (c.1801-1869)

Children:

1. William Smith Calhoun (1835-1891)
m. Cora Purvis (1840-1924)
Children: William Calhoun, Jr.
Robert Purvis Calhoun
Mary Earle Taylor Calhoun
m. Cloumbus Carnahan
2. John Taylor Calhoun (*died age 4*)
3. Meredith Calhoun, Jr. (*died age 5*)
4. Ada Marguerite Calhoun (1844-1910)
m. George Washington Lane (1836-1893)
Child: Marie Calhoun Lane (1877-1899)
m. Micheal J. O'Shaughnessy, Jr.
(1873-1946)
5. Emma Blance Calhoun (*died age 20 days*)

Illustrations

1. Huntsville, Alabama, 1871
2. *Great Western*
3. The Old Home Place, 1993
4. The Old Home Place, 1939
5. Mary Betts Lewis, 1864
6. Mary F. Lewis Clay, c.1880
7. At the Old Home Place, c.1905
8. Family and Friends
9. Maysville Pike, Huntsville
10. Calhoun House, 1888
11. Meredith Calhoun, c. 1855
12. Judge William Smith
13. Margaret Duff Smith
14. Ada Calhoun by Winterhalter, 1867
15. Kildare, 1890
16. Saturday on the Square, c. 1905
17. A Calhoun Servant, Uncle Vann

1

The Lewis Family Before the Letters

YOU ARE RELATED TO THE BRAVE AND GOOD,
THE GREAT AND NOBLE

In the relative quiet of the mid-July summer heat in 1842, sixteen-year-old Mary Lewis from Huntsville, Alabama, began a journey abroad to “finish” her education in Paris. During her two-year stay, she and her family wrote back and forth across the ocean. Mary, her siblings and her parents wrote with a passion about their interests, concerns, and the events of their daily lives. Over the years these letters were saved and kept as family mementos, handed down from generation to generation.

Huntsville was at that time a growing town of almost twenty-eight hundred people, a pioneering blend of marginal farmers, wealthy planters, slaves, and tradesmen. Except for her trip abroad, Mary Lewis lived all of her life within Madison County and the Tennessee Valley. For her, life centered on the Town Square at the edge of Big Spring and the family home on Eustis Street, both still landmarks today. Other aspects of the area also still resemble the early setting. To the west the seemingly endless red-clay cotton fields support flourishing estates. The town appears to be nestled snugly at the edge of Monte Sano and the larger mountains of the Cumberland Plateau behind. Yeoman pioneers chose the farther mountainsides for their farms. Some twelve miles to the south the Tennessee River forms noticeable bends as it continues on to the west, effectively separating the Valley from the remainder of the state.

Similar to, and yet not really like the rest of the state, northern Alabama always presented rare qualities of its own. Far off the beaten

track of the southern Federal Road, early river transportation was always dangerous with the swirls and narrows just below Chattanooga and the shoals and sand bars at Muscle Shoals farther downstream from Huntsville. Yet early visitors, who found their way to Huntsville, wrote enthusiastically of its charms. In 1823 Lucius Bierce described the rich fertile country and the first brick dwelling he had seen since leaving Virginia. That famous scold and worthy traveler, Anne Royall thought Huntsville would always be a place of wealth because it combined more blessings than any other town in the world, more talent, more taste, hospitality, mirth and gaiety. Later Charles Lanman wrote of the rolling fields, fine homes, neat churches, and the mammoth spring at the center of town. The district combined a healthy location, refinement, wealth, art, and gardens. The village's best feature, he said, was its people, "the way they treat pilgrims in Alabama."¹ Huntsville always welcomed its guests, absorbed them into the community and as a result, although remote in location, has always been a truly global village.

Northern Alabama, like most areas in the Old Southwest, flourished. In Madison County the native Americans, mostly Chickasaws and Cherokees had been forcibly removed only a few years before, and the countryside and the times were generally safe. Although John Tyler became President at the unexpected death of Benjamin Harrison, the real favorite of the people was Andrew Jackson, hero of the new frontiers. Society was in a state of change, and still more land was needed to replace worn-out farms. Acreage was still available, offering fresh soil and a fresh start for those who were willing to attempt the struggle. Immigrants arrived daily at port cities; people were on the move everywhere. The turmoil in Texas and the exploits along the Oregon Trail were discussed excitedly. Moreover, gold was soon to be discovered in California. The entire country was filled with a sense of amazement at adventures and opportunities close at hand. At the time of Mary's trip the western world's affairs were somewhat peaceful. France was between wars and relatively stable. Everything French was admired and emulated all over the world. What a grand time to take advantage of these conditions and travel abroad.

Mary Lewis accompanied members of the Calhoun family, also from Huntsville at the time, on her journey. Like other distinguished Huntsville families, neither the Lewis nor the Calhoun families were typical backwoods pioneers. Although families of the yeoman type settled much of the northern and mountainous part of the state, many wealthy and educated families, originally from Georgia and Virginia, established Huntsville. The background of the two families is important because it explains who these people already were at the time of the letters.

Mary Fenwick Lewis was the daughter of energetic people. Her parents, John H. and Mary Betts Lewis, were part of the vanguard movement of early settlers into the area. Influence for Lewis was represented particularly by his vast family connections. The ties of the Huntsville family with the Nashville area were always strong. The father of Mary Lewis, John Lewis, came from a distinguished family of educated and politically active settlers. The family sustained a spirit of individualism that allowed them to take advantage of their own strengths and free spirit. This family, like many others, had already moved from Virginia and North Carolina seeking a better life.

Col. Joel Lewis emigrated with his father and brothers from Albemarle County, Virginia, first to Surry County, North Carolina, and then on to Davidson County, Tennessee. Joel, born in 1760, commanded a company at King's Mountain during the Revolutionary War. In the House of Commons, he represented Surry County, but left in 1789 for Nashville. He and Andrew Jackson were members of the Constitutional Convention for Tennessee and elected State Senators later.²

Col. Joel Lewis married Miriam Eastham, and they had 18 children and at least 84 grandchildren. This accounts for the numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins that Mary acknowledges in the letters. The Lewis' extended family life was in the traditional Southern manner with frequent visits back and forth to Colonel Joel's Nashville home, Mansfield, on the old Murfreesboro Pike.

Their third child, John Haywood Lewis, born about 1794, was a graduate of the University of Tennessee with two degrees. He saw the possibilities for himself in the newly opened frontier of Alabama.

Lewis decided to venture into the very recently formed state and bought property at the early land sales in September of 1819. Settling down, he moved to Huntsville and opened a law practice. Lewis practiced law until 1841, at times in partnership with his brother, Hickman and also at one time with his brother-in-law, Edwin Wallace.³ With his connections to Nashville, the townspeople selected Lewis to write an invitation to Andrew Jackson to visit Huntsville in 1826. For a brief period of six months, in 1829, John Lewis was mayor of Huntsville, elected by the members of the council.⁴

Mary Lewis' mother, Mary Betts Lewis, arrived in Huntsville by a considerably more adventurous route. Although there was a scarcity of family members in the background of the Betts's family, there certainly was not an apparent scarcity of money. Influence for the Betts's family came in the form of business and land speculation. The anticipated estate of Mary Betts Lewis allowed the family to send Mary abroad and to plan for the education of the other children.

The Betts settled early in Connecticut arriving in 1639. From this line, Samuel Betts IV married Abigail Hubbell in 1777 in the Wilton Congregation Church. Their children were Samuel (born about 1784), Sally, and Burr Hubbell Betts.⁵ For many years the Betts family enterprises involved both sailing and the trade. With this background young Samuel Betts left home and began the adventures that started in Florida, took him to Cuba and eventually allowed his money to travel to Huntsville and ultimately to Paris. His business enterprises were impressive.

In 1803 Samuel Betts acquired a grant of from 1000 to 2000 acres west of New Smyrna from the Spanish government for land that was being used for the production of sugar cane.⁶ While in New Smyrna Betts was called on to witness a deed for a gentleman, Joseph Fenwick, from the new territory later to be called Alabama.⁷ Fenwick later fulfilled a very heart-warming responsibility for Betts. Afterward Betts went into debt with this property. A trust was formed in 1815 to meet his liabilities, naming as one of his trustees Fernando de la Maza Arrendondo, a man quite prominent in the Floridas and one who would feature prominently in affairs of the Lewis family later.⁸

Sometime earlier, around the turn of the century, Samuel Betts married Mary McBride in Florida. In all the “proudful” words of family heritage throughout the later years, very little has been written about her. Her parents were from London, and on the voyage to the United States Mary McBride’s father drowned at sea. Apparently Mary McBride was unusually artistic and musical.⁹ The daughter of Mary McBride and Samuel Betts, Mary Marguerite Betts, was born May 22, 1806, on Amelia Island the home base for many Caribbean adventurers. Sometime that year her Irish nurse arranged to have the baby christened at the old cathedral in St. Augustine apparently without her mother’s knowledge.¹⁰ The Lewis and Clay families in later accounts treated this story as a grand lark. Many years afterward her granddaughters visited St. Augustine and added a sketch of the Cathedral to the family scrapbook.

The scene for Mary Betts’ childhood was about to change to another pioneer setting. Mary McBride Betts died about 1811 or 1812, and the motherless girl, Mary Betts, was sent with another youngster, Bartley M. Lowe, to live with “aunt” and “uncle” Fenwick now in the Mississippi Territory. Joseph Fenwick purchased land as early as 1811 in what would become Madison County, Alabama.¹¹ He purchased more acreage in 1816 and 1819.¹² A much later newspaper account about the founding of near-by communities mentioned that Fenwick “first laid out town lots for sale in the early 1800’s” and he “owned a large part of the [Meridianville] community.”¹³ At home with the Fenwicks, the two youngsters rode horseback three miles to school together. Years later, when a great-grandma, Mary Betts Lewis recalled fondly that at 14, she always loved him — her defender and the nicest boy she had ever known. Ma’s youthful playmate, Bartley M. Lowe, became Brigadier General of the Alabama State Militia.¹⁴

The history of Florida during these years was of confused national identity. Native Indians, the French, Spanish, English, and later the Americans all played important roles. The rewards were great for those who remained most loyal to the Spanish king during Spain’s dominant years. In 1817, for loaning the royal treasury \$14,000, equipping the troops and sending provisions to the garrison, in effect saving St. Augustine for

the Spanish, Fernando Arrendondo received a grant of “four leagues to each wind with absolute authority.” The winds being powerful in Florida, this grant amounted to 289,645 $\frac{5}{7}$ acres of land. William Bartram, a noted naturalist wrote glowing accounts of this unusual savanna, and early pioneers recognized the region that was to become Alachua County as highly desirable.¹⁵ Arrendondo selected this magnificent and lush land for his grant. Samuel Betts was a one third equal partner with Arrendondo, and one third of this land patent was his, too.

Although young Mary Betts was still making her home in Madison County with the Fenwicks, for a short period she attended school at Sand Hills near Augusta, Georgia.¹⁶ The situation, however, was about to change. Mr. Fenwick, apparently a widower, married a second time. Sarah, the new Mrs. Fenwick, was the widow of Uriah Bass, and there were six minor Bass children to be cared for.¹⁷ Perhaps it was time for other arrangements to be made for Mary Betts. About 1819 or 1820 she traveled to Havana to visit her father.¹⁸ From there she was on her way to school in Connecticut, perhaps Litchfield Academy. This trip was an exciting combination of adventure and endurance for the young southern girl. She traveled by boat from Huntsville to New Orleans to Cuba and then on to the wintry climate of Connecticut to relatives she likely had never met before.

Betts, now a widower, his child cared for by friends and family, was not a well man. A letter of March 1821 from Samuel to his brother mentioned his bad back and hips. One other notation suggested that he “had long been confined with illness before his death.”¹⁹ Samuel Betts, a professed Catholic with a will written in Spanish, died in Havana on March 2, 1822.²⁰

The will was clearly stated. Betts bequeathed his gold watch to his partner, Fernando Arrendondo. The Connecticut relations received handsome bequests and the request to educate young Mary with the sum for that responsibility already in the hands of his brother and father, Burr and Samuel Betts, Senior. To his sister, Sally, and his father he gave \$2500 each, to his brother \$5000.²¹

Previously Mary Betts and John Lewis met and began a courtship

in Huntsville. He had started his law practice, and she was with her Alabama family, the Fenwicks. After she went to Connecticut, Lewis traveled north to see her. He carried a letter of introduction, written by an old family friend, on his overland trip north. In the letter Lewis was spoken of as “a gentleman of good standing and respectability.”²² Any letter by Andrew Jackson could be counted on to ease the way into most social settings. From the home of Burr Betts in Bridgeport, John Lewis and Mary Betts were married in November of 1824. She was a little more than 18; he was about 30. Possibly in his pursuit of her, Lewis offered the young Mary Betts permanence and stability in a life that had been seemingly without real family and at the least, unsettled.

On the way to, or after the wedding, Lewis visited in New York to meet with Jose Arrendondo.²³ The couple stopped in Washington City in January of 1825, and at their hotel they visited with General Jackson and his wife. At the capitol they met and listened to leaders of the young country—Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, John Adams, and General Lafayette.²⁴ From there the newlyweds went on to Havana. It may have been a lovely honeymoon trip, but this time also allowed the couple to obtain and begin to manage her inheritance for themselves. Samuel Betts’ one third of the Arrendondo property also included one third of the very successful mercantile business in Florida and Cuba.

John and Mary Betts Lewis returned to Huntsville and established their first home. Mary Fenwick Lewis, their first child, was born August 21, 1825, at the rented house of Dr. John B. Read on Eustis Street. Her mother, undoubtedly with great affection, chose the middle name Fenwick. The Lewis family moved several times as most young couples do. From the Read house, they went to the brick cottage of Dr. Manning. The Lewises next occupied the White-Turner-Sanford house on Madison Street.²⁵

In 1839 when Mary was 14 years old, the Lewis family moved for the last time into the house built as the steward’s home for the Huntsville Female Seminary. Although the school itself fronted Randolph Street, this house faced Maiden Lane, today Eustis Avenue. The Lewis family later added a second building to the property and continued to raise their still

growing family. Except for a short period of time Mary and her husband reared their family in the same house, which for many years was a focal point in the community, known as “The Old Home Place.”²⁶

The children of Mary Betts and John H. Lewis were numerous, born about every two years. From the 1850 Census unknown birth dates can be approximated. After Mary the next child, Ellen, always considered the most talented in this musical family, was born in 1827. She began playing the church organ at the age of 14. The next daughter Eliza Lea was born about 1829, and Sarah Hickman Lewis in 1831. The first son, named John Herman, was born “at last” in January of 1833 according to a letter from Susanna Clay.²⁷ (Mrs. Clay herself had already produced three fine sons.) This baby lived only five months. Another daughter, Myra Louise, was born about 1834. A son William Lindsay was born next, in 1836, and was named for his father’s dear friend, Col. William Lindsay, a prominent landowner of Madison and Limestone counties. A son, John Heber, born in 1839 lived 14 months. The baby of the family at the time of the letters, Florida Betts Lewis, called Florrie or Polly, was born in April of 1841.²⁸

Education was highly valued in the Lewis home. According to the custom of the times, the children were taught first at home, usually by their mother. The children were encouraged to shape and learn their letters at an early age and to read and write for learning and for enjoyment all their lives. As they matured, the children attended the local day schools for grammar, history, French, and drawing. Yet in their household Pa taught lessons to the children that included geography and Latin. The family justifiably was proud to say that John Lewis owned “one of the most valuable libraries in the state, including ancient and modern classics, engravings, and a rare collection of foreign and American magazines, and the best fiction available.”²⁹

In addition to books, music was always a meaningful part of in the lives of the family. All the children seemed to be talented and several played more than one instrument. In Paris, Mary was encouraged to continue to study the piano, begin harp lessons, take voice training, and not to neglect her guitar—it was so heartwarming to the family gatherings. This

was a loving family that also valued laughter and practical jokes, even at the expense of the parents. Not all families of that era, or any era, would have considered it a hilarious joke when their young daughter tumbled Pa out of the hammock during his Sunday afternoon nap as described in an early letter.

Above all there was a zest for learning and living and sharing. Mrs. Lewis insisted in her letters that Mary write and describe more. This was a family guideline already established. In a letter written when Mary was only ten years old, Ma urged her, "Write exactly as if you were talking."³⁰ Their letters always seem to have the feeling of intimacy, of people close, almost sitting and chatting in the same room together.

2

The Calhoun Family Before the Letters

THESE SUMS WILL FURNISH AMPLE MEANS OF
BUILDING A LARGE FORTUNE

Set in the context of the Lewis letters, the Calhoun family history becomes important as it presents a perceptive scene of early Huntsville and another view of an unusual settler family. Although this family left little impact in recorded events, it had an early influence in Huntsville that has not been widely recognized. Certainly it was to have a stimulating effect on the future growth of the city by the turn of the century.

Young Mary Lewis was probably allowed to “finish” her education abroad only because her neighbors in Huntsville, Meredith and Mary Calhoun were also going to Paris. The Calhoun family lived in the great house within the brick wall at the corner of Eustis and Greene Streets in 1842. (The Calhoun surname had not always been spelled with an “a.” The reason for the spelling change will soon become apparent.) According to the local historian Judge Taylor, the house had been the home of Judge William Smith, the most noteworthy gentleman ever to settle in Huntsville.³¹ In early 1840, Judge Smith and his wife, Margaret, were living in the house with their granddaughter, Mary, her husband, Meredith and their young children

The Lewis and Calhoun families had much in common as well as being neighbors. Both families were worldly, wealthy, well educated, politically attuned and extensively traveled. There always seemed to be a warm relationship between the Lewis and Calhoun families. In the exchange of letters between Huntsville and Paris, Mary always reported

on the Calhouns to her parents. They, in turn, always asked about their former neighbors with both concern and affection.³²

The route to Huntsville for the Smiths and Calhouns was a road already paved with vast wealth, made rocky by the disappointments in their home state, yet bordered with restlessness and always the prospect for further financial gain. William Smith was born in 1762 in the territory of the Carolinas claimed by both states, known as "The Waxhaws." As a youngster Smith attended school with William Harris Crawford and Andrew Jackson and remained friends with Jackson throughout his lifetime. Smith received no advantages of formal education or personal wealth from any family legacy. Actually, the only inheritance that Judge Smith received was a personal slave, Priam, who outlived Smith and was mentioned in the Lewis letters. In 1781 William Smith married Margaret Duff, aged fourteen. He confessed to a wild and reckless youth saved only by the perseverance of Mrs. Smith. Later in life he boasted that from the day he gave up drink, everything in his life turned to gold.³³ By careful attention to his law practice and business affairs, Smith accumulated enough wealth to purchase land in his home state amounting to over 4700 acres and according to the 1810 Census he owned 75 slaves.³⁴ Yet as the soil on his plantation, Stony Point, became worn-out, he like other landowners saw the future in new territory. He bought acreage in Dallas and Autauga Counties in the black belt and acreage and city lots in Madison County, Alabama. In Louisiana along the Red River, he purchased 7000 acres.

However Smith's real energies were directed to politics; first in York, his home district, next in his home state of South Carolina, and then nationally. Politics in the young nation were often bitter, but Judge Smith was perhaps at his very best with bitterness. William W. Freehling described him as having "the angelic face and wide-eyed stare of an innocent child." But most of his contemporaries would have agreed that "Smith stood second to no one in the malignity with which he carried on a personal attack. Rude and sarcastic in public debate, ill-natured and insolent in lifelong feuds . . ." At the same time, Smith was "perhaps the most committed ideologue in American politics . . . No Calvinist ever

placed more faith in the text of the Bible than Smith bestowed on the words of the Constitution.”³⁵ His reputation was nationally recognized and it was said of him, “If Calhoun was the father...” of states’ rights, “it was Judge William Smith who was the grandfather of States’ Rights doctrine.”³⁶

Smith served in the United States Senate and was the President Pro Tempore of the Senate twice.³⁷ He was an early and powerful defender of slavery in Congress. If he was not concerned with the righteousness of slavery, he did consider what mattered to many planters—their financial investment. His protest before Congress in 1820 was an articulate and powerful one. “It is very easy for those who have their fortunes secured in bank stock, or stock of the United States, or money at interest, or money in their coffers, deliberately to proclaim a jubilee to our slaves, in which they have neither interest to lose nor danger to fear.”³⁸ Given a choice between morality or money, Judge Smith clearly chose money.

Although he was a States’ Rights supporter, he went against the opinion of most voters in his home state and stood strongly against nullification. His worst political enemy, and there were many, was the statesman John C. Calhoun. The political losses to Calhoun left Smith disgruntled and even more bitter. If Smith’s grandson-in-law, Colhoun, had ever thought of spelling his surname differently, in the more traditional manner, Smith’s animosity toward John C. Calhoun would have discouraged the young man. Perhaps this is why he chose not to alter the spelling of his surname until after the death of the Judge.

Meanwhile Judge Smith continued to acquire more property. He first bought land in Madison County in 1812 and 1813, and more in the 1830s.³⁹ In 1819 and 1824 he purchased an estimated 4265 acres of productive land, known as Durand’s Bend and Hightower, located in Dallas and Autauga Counties. This was a considerable investment, and Smith may have intended to settle in this fertile region of the black belt of Alabama. His son-in-law, John Taylor of Pendleton, also was struck with “Alabama Fever” and bought land there in 1817 and 1818.⁴⁰ Other members of the Taylor family were already settled in the area. Eventually, Smith’s land holdings in Alabama totaled over 6025 acres and ten city

lots in Huntsville.⁴¹

Judge Smith and his wife had only one child, Mary Margaret Smith, who as an adult married John Taylor, a lawyer and from 1815-1817, a Representative from South Carolina for the Pendleton District.⁴² The Judge's only grandchild to survive past infancy, Mary Smith Taylor, was born about 1810. Unfortunately her mother, Judge Smith's daughter, Mary, died after the birth of the child. It was said that Smith carried the bones of his beloved daughter with him, and she had no final resting-place until his death in Huntsville when she was buried near him.⁴³ The Smiths raised their young granddaughter, Mary Smith Taylor, after her father, John Taylor, died in 1821.⁴⁴ She probably was not educated formally but traveled with the Smiths. Smith, by necessity, often traveled from his home in South Carolina, to Washington, and to Alabama and Louisiana to oversee the various plantations. With stopovers in the culturally rich cities of the South, such as Natchez and New Orleans, Mary Smith Taylor had opportunity to meet her future husband.

Meredith Colhoun was originally from Philadelphia. (Mary Lewis and the travelers stopped there to visit with his mother on the way to New York City.) In May of 1820, Colhoun was listed as an accountant when called to witness a document.⁴⁵ All additional early knowledge about him has remained quite elusive. The other witness on that single paper was John Henry Roberjot, a very active business associate of the financier Stephen Girard. Moreover the merchants Gustavus and Hugh Colhoun maintained a business on North Water Street not far from Girard's office.⁴⁶ It is not unlikely that Meredith Colhoun was connected with this firm. Descendants of the family always had this impression.

The Judge's granddaughter, Mary Taylor, met suitors other than Meredith Colhoun. In April of 1827, while courting her, Thomas Jefferson Withers spoke of her as "not beautiful" and perhaps "taciturn," but a "modest, unassuming, intelligent, and agreeable" girl. He regretted she was away visiting in Alabama. Drawn to Miss Mary and the Smith family as well, was Col. Henry G. Nixon. One hopes Mary had not personally preferred Nixon; he was killed in a duel in Georgia within a couple of

years.⁴⁷ Politics may have changed the mind of Tom Withers at the time of Mary's return to South Carolina in September of 1827. At that time he described the Judge's granddaughter as, "an ugly, cold blooded, good girl who would be infernally hard to court successfully."⁴⁸

Mary Smith Taylor and Meredith Colhoun were married in Natchez, May 26, 1834, at Trinity Church. William Smith Colhoun, their first child, was born April 19, 1835, and a second boy, John Taylor Colhoun, was born in 1838.⁴⁹ Meanwhile John C. Calhoun was dominating the politics in South Carolina. It was at least tactful for Meredith Colhoun to continue spelling his last name as in the past and not the same as the famous politician, Smith's archenemy. Ready to work new land and resentful for several reasons, Judge William Smith, although 70 years old, sold all his South Carolina properties by 1832.

The Smith and Colhoun families had several options for relocation. New Orleans offered a worldlier cultural and social scene, perhaps too much for the old gentleman's tastes. The plantations along the Red River would have appeared almost too quiet in contrast. The lower-Alabama property was uncomfortably hot and humid much of the year. Huntsville, on the other hand, may have offered a climate, landscape, and cultural life more congenial to the Colhouns and Smiths. Certainly in Huntsville there were already families of refinement and elegance. The Smiths would be among people like themselves and at the same time be trendsetters in this small pioneer community. Certainly their prestigious status and vast wealth were welcome in Madison County in 1833.

The Smith and Colhoun families moved to northern Alabama and Smith immediately entered politics. He was the president of the state Democratic convention in 1835 and was elected to represent Madison County in the legislature from 1836 until his death.⁵⁰ Judge Smith declined a second appointment made by Andrew Jackson in 1836 as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. When asked why he would not accept this prestigious position, Smith admitted he wanted to be able to continue to take part actively in support of Jackson's policies and speak aloud for himself.⁵¹

Much of the property that Smith owned already had been purchased

in Madison County. When visiting north Alabama Smith stayed at his home site, called Spring Grove. The entire plantation was outside the Huntsville City limits in what later became East Huntsville Addition. In 1827 Judge Smith added to his estate and bought an entire town block for his future home at a public auction at the Eagle Tavern in Richmond. This property originally was part of the acres owned by Leroy Pope, founder of Huntsville. The Bank of Virginia put it up for sale against debts of Robert Gordon.⁵² In 1833 Smith began building his palatial home in Huntsville. Since he was not easily pleased, the construction progressed slowly. The building was not completed at his death in Huntsville on June 26, 1840.

Upon the death of Judge Smith, John Calhoun was appointed Administrator of Smith's estate after giving \$150,000 bond. (John Calhoun, a brother of Meredith's purchased land in Madison County in 1834 and 1838.)⁵³ Other administrators were Meredith, now Calhoun, and John H. Lewis. Meredith's bond was \$300,000. Coincidentally the mansion begun by Judge William Smith, and completed by his grandson-in-law, would be known thereafter in the community as the Calhoun Place — the name of the Judge's most bitter foe.

Among the bequests of the will that had been written in 1839, the Judge left the greater part of his estate to his wife, Margaret. Reflecting the enormous sums of money available, Smith bequeathed to his granddaughter, Mary Colhoun, \$100,000, and to her two infant children, William Smith and John Taylor, \$50,000 each. About the endowment for the great-grandsons due on their 21st birthdays, Smith said in his will, "If they are prudent and attentive to business these sums will furnish them with ample means of building up as large a fortune as they could desire, and should they become imprudent and dissipated, more would not be useful to them."⁵⁴ As events turned out, it would not be enough.

On October 5, 1840, Meredith and Mary Calhoun had a third son, Meredith, Jr., often affectionately called "Merry." The younger family began to make plans for themselves and the Widow Smith. An advertisement in the Huntsville *Democrat* of January 1, 1842, offered land from the estate of Judge William Smith in Autauga and Dallas Counties for

sale. One could apply at the properties or inquire of Meredith Calhoun at his residence in Huntsville in the summer or in New Orleans in the winter.⁵⁵ So far a trip abroad was obviously not planned.

However several factors now changed the Calhoun plans and the life of Mary Lewis. On January 24, 1842, the Judge's widow, Margaret Duff Smith, perhaps not too unexpectedly, passed away at the age of 75.⁵⁶ Often the letters written by Mary and Ma Lewis tenderly asked about "our dear little Willie." There had been an additional trauma during these years; the oldest Calhoun boy, William, experienced a crippling spinal injury. An ex-slave, Frederick Calhoun, when making a claim before the Commission for reimbursement after the War, testified that he stayed with young Willie most of the time. His master was "afflicted" and had broken his back when he was boy.⁵⁷ Possibly more important to all the later events was a quiet notice in the *Democrat*, "Died suddenly, John Taylor, aged 4, son of Meredith and Mary Smith Taylor Calhoun."⁵⁸ Within the short period of two years Mary Taylor Calhoun lost both her grandparents, perhaps the only family she had really known, her first-born was crippled, and a young son died.

The Calhouns decided immediately, actually within two weeks of John's death, not to stay in Huntsville or New Orleans for the season but to go abroad. The implied purpose was to seek medical help for Willie at the famed orthopedic hospital in Passy, France. But Mary Lewis hinted in an early letter that Mrs. Calhoun herself was ill and distraught.

Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver

Mary Lewis' father escorted his daughter to Nashville to join the Calhouns who were already there. (Her letter describing the very first day of the trip is one of the few missing from the collection.) Mary had probably made the coach ride from Huntsville through Pulaski to Nashville to visit the many Lewis relatives before. This trip, however, was different. This was the beginning of an adventure that would remain with her for a lifetime and be a source of pride to her family for years to come.

After visiting numerous Lewis relatives, she joined the Calhouns, in

effect, for the next two years. The Calhoun family of Mary, Meredith, “dear little crippled” Willie, and toddler Merry, Mrs. Calhoun’s personal maid, Margaret, and Mary Lewis began their trip to Paris.

By now the family in Huntsville had already written her; actually they all wrote the day she left. Among all the letters, that first letter from Ma is the only truly melancholy letter. In the midst of her personal anguish at losing her daughter, in the fashion of mothers everywhere, Ma reminded Mary that she should have new flannel under-garments made for the unaccustomed cold winters ahead.

Mary wrote to them relating her wondrous experiences, good and bad. A consummate tourist, she was amazed and enthralled by everything and everybody she saw. At rest stops she walked; in towns she visited the local markets and attractions; everywhere she chatted with her travelling companions. And during it all she did what she had been urged by her mother and father to do—“to see everything there is to see and write it down.” Ma often referred to the letters as “apples of gold in pictures of silver,” a reference from Proverbs about the value of “a word fitly spoken.”

The words flowed into her letters. She wrote about the routes and conveyances of travel, scenery, people, school life, buildings, farms, crops, foods, and flowers. Nothing was too mundane or trivial to share. The family in Huntsville, not wanting to lose sight of their loved one, wrote in the same manner. At home the letters were read and reread, shared with relatives, friends, and servants. Through her, they vicariously all went abroad. These were exciting times. Through over one hundred thousand words they wrote to one another with the intensity of people who cared about one another and about sharing this experience. Her family urged her again and again to tell them everything, and this is what she did—apples of gold in pictures of silver.

III

The Letters—1842

I am inconsolable...

(Mary Betts Lewis to John Lewis in New York, July 17th)

Dear Husband,

I am inconsolable for the loss of Mary and feel that it will take a very long time to reconcile me to the idea of parting with her for even one year! She was cheerful, so useful, so agreeable and affectionate, so much my sole companion, possessing such excellent judgment for her age, as to enable her to sympathise with and even console me and with all, giving information while receiving instructions for me, trying every means to amuse and divert me, so that it appears to me her whole time must have been taken up for my single benefit and I can scarcely exist without her.

I have truly made to myself an Idol and I am being punished for it; and yet every child appears to miss her in the same way and a vacuum seems to be left in the hearts of all of them, since her departure, so that there is no movement in which we can cease thinking or speaking of her, no place to which we can turn and not recollect that it is endeared by some walk or conversation which attaches new interest to it; I walked down into my Parlours to pass off time, and again felt that the ornament most highly prized, had vanished and I had no pleasure in them, every thing around me in the house and out of doors, even the faces of her sisters, who all wept bitterly after her departure, serve to unhinge my mind and unfit me for every thing, but regret, and weeping; oh how selfish is a Mother's grief; does a child chide, I weep, for 'tis so unlike my Mary; does she try to excel in kind attentions to her Mother, she weeps because

it brings to mind some kindness of her absent child;

I have a request to make of you, which if not granted, I can neither forget or forgive, no argument of "hard times," future family expenses, "bad artists in U.S." or hurry of departure can reconcile to me to a refusal. I wish you to have Mary's miniature taken, just as she is and 'tis the likeness, not the fine painting, I want and 'twould be as well in her travelling dress, with short linen collar, buttoned half down. Let her hair be dressed as it is every day, placing the knot a little higher than usual, no head band or breast pin, her expression while conversing cheerfully, is a most loveable and most natural to me and she will never appear more or as beautiful to me. So if you choose, should she ever reach the Continent, you can readily have a Portrait, when you think her more improved or more cultivated.

I wish to retain the memory of her as she left my own hands, with simplicity of manners and personal appearance, purity of mind, which is so expressive in her countenance.

Altho' I highly appreciate the advantages she will reap from this trip and the kindness with which Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun have undertaken so important a responsibility and were she other than she is, having it in her power to render herself useful and agreeable to the family, I should never have been willing to incur so great an obligation.

I hope they will be willing to add to the list of good offices, that of prompting Mary if they discover she strays from the right path in the most trifling degree. She has good sense enough to look upon it in this light and is as docile as a little child. I hope she may be able to have her teeth made more healthful. Our Southern climate and medicines deprive a lady of at least 10 years of beauty and youth.

I hope Mary looks upon the advantages she is about to reap as a great and glorious harvest for the future. What resources will she not have in the information and accomplishments there is still in store for her. She has no idea how much her mind will expand and tell her I wish her heart to be equally elastic. There is a beautiful and cultivated world before her, all open.

Tell Mary to let "Time be power" as it will gain her that intelligence

which is truly so. She must recollect we have it in our power to do much good, equal harm. However insignificant we may imagine ourselves, we are certainly to be held accountable for all we do.

But no more preaching. The children are writing and all by themselves too. Poor Ellen is lost, she is like a little lamb, who has lost its tender Mother. She tells Miss Howard [the piano teacher] she misses Sis Mary so much she can't play. I think Mary had better have some gauze flannel under garments made, she will need it; 'tis a fall day to day. Did she not take cold last night? How is she? Every particular of your journey will be acceptable to me. My warmest love to you both and kind regards to Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun.

yrs. M.M.E Lewis

My letter is a melancholy one, but I cannot help it. Like David I have bathed in that excessive grief, which seemed a reproach to my remaining family, but I feel a desolation of heart not to be overcome soon. The children have made me laugh heartily, too, in reading parts of their letters to their sister to me. Tell Mary to notice every thing she sees, to be happy, and cheerful and not to mind our being so lonesome without her.

Don't neglect to shew her everything that is worth seeing and don't leave her entirely with strangers. Buy "Miss Sedgwick letters" for her.⁵⁹ Probably Mrs. C. plays chess, buy a box and book for M. 'tis a game improving to the mind. Tell her never to learn draughts or backgammon. They do no good to any one.

Ma has hung up your sprigged muslin and your pink lawn up in her wardrobe where she can see them and does not intend anyone to wear them . . .

(Ellen Lewis, age 15, to Mary Lewis in New York, July)

Dear Sister:

How much we have missed you since you have been away, Puss [Mary] McClung and Moll [Mary] Coleman and "Coz" Betts were to see us the next morning after you went away. Charles McClung and

Miss Swift paid you a great many compliments, Charles said you were the prettiest and the sweetest [sic] girl there that night and a great many compliments were paid yr sprigged muslin.⁶⁰

Ma says she finds it very hard to give you up 18 months, she has hung up your sprigged muslin and your pink lawn up in her wardrobe where she can see them and does not intend anyone to wear them; don't you hope they will be fashionable when you come back from Paris?

I have looked up all of your pretty presents, and have taken possession of your pink bonnet without the veil, your parasol and your blue box you used for cuffs, and I use them for your sake.

Dearest sister we cannot do a single thing without thinking of you, the most we do for you is to cry. All the servants send their love to you; Pa told us that Uncle Joel [Lewis] would be up to stay with us awhile, we are all rejoiced at the idea; all the girls send their love to you. also Miss Howard and Mrs. Donegan were to see us this morning.

I sleep with Ma every night in your place. All the children and Ma send their best love to you. Pa, Sarah [age about 11], says if you make haste and come back she will make you a good loaf of brown sugar sponge cake. Tell us of every thing you see and hear. Polly [Florida, age 4] looks around when we ask her where sis Ma is. Did your caps and bonnet hold out decently to New York. Your affectionate sister Ellen.

Write me first.

P.S. [written by Mary Betts Lewis]

Mary do not let your Father off from having taken your Miniature for me. I often think to myself, "when shall I look upon her again." You are regretted by a great many and I hear it said "she was so polite, so kind and considerate" by your aunt Sally F. and your Grand Ma Lewis. Your Friend [Mrs. Calhoun] has no daughters, but she has been one and a very much endeared Child to her Parents and from that cause will be able to extend sympathy and advice to you in any of your little troubles and you can return it easily, as I am sure you know how. God bless you my child and keep you in health is the prayer of your Mother. ML

[P.S.] buy pins

Tell pa don't come with whiskers a feet long . . .

(Myra, age 8, Lewis to Mary Lewis in New York, July 16th)

My Dear Sister Mary

I will now take the pleasure of writing my troublesome letter. I am sorry that you are gone and I hope you will make haste and get back. I missed you very much yesterday because you was not here to teach me my Sunday lesson. I am in Miss S. Allen's Class and I know it will pleasure you to know it.⁶¹

I hope your foot will get well soon and you will be free from corns. You must not let any person inspect this letter too closely for fear of learning something.

Tell Pa, do pray, don't come home with whiskers a feet long. I hope he will not be sickly but healthy and rosy. I hope he will be glad to see me when he comes home and I will be the first one to kiss him.

Florida [age 4] has just Lemonaded your floor and Sarah has just taken her up. We all are trying to keep your room gentile till you come back. but it don't look like it now. Cousin William [Wallace] staid here last night. We had light bread and butter for supper.

Our Crape [myrtle] is in bloom and looks beautiful. Eliza found one of your hair pins when she took out her drawer and she is going to keep it for the remembrance of you. Susan says your going away is much regretted by the coloured friends and Lizy Betts sends her love to you. You know H. [Henrietta] Eason is married to Judge Thompson.⁶² good bye my Dear Sister Mary. write to me soon. I hope you will bring a little Frenchman home with you. Remember your affectionate Sister Myra Louise Lewis of Huntsville Alabama Madison county.

Life on the ocean wave . . .

(Sarah (11) Lewis to Mary Lewis in New York, July 17th)

Dear Sister Mary,

I will now try to write to you for the first time, you must not expect a very good letter from me. I have put away the pincushion and the little box and inserting and the little strip of bobinet you gave me. Tell Pa that I want to see him mighty bad and you too. you must tell me every thing you see when you get to France. Charley McClung says, directly you get your education you must come home for he wants to see you. your friends say you must think of "Life on the ocean wave" when you get on the ocean when the winds blow, will you say "Let the storms come down?" you must tell me if the Life is as delightful as the sailors say it is. I would like to know if you felt like you were swimming when you were in the ship.

Tell Pa I have not forgot him. I suppose I must finish my education in Huntsville. Make haste and come back a little sooner. do come — Your affectionate Sister Sarah H. Lewis.

P.S. [written by Mary Betts Lewis] You see my dear daughter how much we all love you—every child seems to have lost all diffidence in writing, as though some charm were extending its influence around them in your absence. Your cousin W. is staying with us now and consoles us much in his way. went hunting today and shot 9 or 10 birds.

good bye, my dear child may God bless you and keep you in health.

Affectionately yrs

M.M. Lewis

I don't intend to tell you how much I cry . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother Mary Lewis from Philadelphia)

We passed several beautiful islands with which the Ohio is interspersed. One particularly that I noticed the first evening we entered this river, was ten miles long and one of the romantic spots I ever saw. It was covered with trees of the cotton wood and locust. The undergrowth was green and presented quite a contrast to the dreary banks of the Cumberland. We were all on the lookout here for General Harrison's tomb at the North Bend but we passed in the night.⁶³

On board we had 20 children who keep a constant regular squall. We have also a fellow passenger who is very much like Mrs. Marie Walker, one of the greatest talkers and one of the most agreeable women we had met-with. After we left the boat we heard that she was a doubtful character and that her husband was a gambler who had been confined in the penitentiary in Kentucky 3 yrs and made to work on the streets while he was chained to a barrel. How often we may be misled in this way.

We traveled here with a Mrs. Manning from Iowa, who gave us quite an interesting account of the native Indians. At night we arrived at Cincinnati and remained there until nine o'clock the next day. About seven Mr. Colhoun and myself visited the market to procure some little articles for the babe [Meredith Calhoun, Jr.], who is quite sick and much troubled with worms. Cincinnati is a very neat pretty place and the streets are not the McAdamised-like ones but roughly paved with stone. The streets all crossing each other at right-angles, at nearly every corner and along the streets are pretty neat little pine tables with pyramids of peaches, apples, pears, oranges and blue plums as large as a peach at 6 1/2 cts. a piece.

There are a great many Germans here, and I noticed that nearly all those who were selling were either Dutch or German. The market house is perfectly clean, not one thing on the floor. Every time we stopt at any stall on account of the crowd, the white salesman would say, "didh you shay dat you would take any of de apples or de peaches." In this way I suppose they frequently obtain customers.

As we were leaving the town we were much diverted at the appearance of some Germans who were coming for the first time in the city. There were old women with their short-stuff petticoats and white spenders

and bare legs, their hair combed strait off of their faces and tied up on the top of their heads with green merino caps on, made like the Clay's night caps.

We changed boats here and took the Eveline a much smaller and consequently more uncomfortable boat.⁶⁴ The old chamber maid a colored woman was insolent as possibly and endeavored to make Margaret dissatisfied. I had much amusement with Margaret at Cincinnati, I begged her to run off and told her that now she was perfectly at liberty to go where she pleased, but she did not seem at all inclined to leave us and just said that she had a very good master and home.⁶⁵

The stern wheel, a modern improvement on boats caused the boat to rock as much that it made us all sick. None of our old fellow passengers accompanied us except a single lady and a Miss Powers a dress maker, who reminds one very much of Miss Thompson. About twice as many children on board as we had on the first boat.

Willie [Calhoun, age 7] took a great fancy to me from the first day and now little Meredith will put his little arms round my neck to dance him up and down the gentlemen's cabin, which is his only mode of exercise. There are two parrots on board who are very loquacious and speak quite plainly. We passed Portsmouth, [Ohio], Newport and Maysville, [Kentucky]. The latter is one of the most lovely situations in the world, built on and surrounded by green hills very much like Pope's hill.⁶⁶

We passed on to Louisville and sailed through the locks. We arrived at Pittsburg at dusk and stopt at one of the most splendid hotels in the U.S. there were about 12 parlours. I saw only six, half of the house being shut. There were so few boarders. There were Brussels carpets, mahogany chairs, pier glasses, pianos, sofas and for the first time I saw gas lights, but I knew directly what it was by the brilliant flame which was emitted.

At about 8 o'clock we were on board the canal boat.⁶⁷ 'Twas very much crowded indeed and the first night I slept in an upper berth. I tumbled out but did not wake. Thirty persons slept in the little hole called the ladies cabin.

A very interesting young girl, Miss Alexander, from Carlisle was on board. The first young girl I have met with. A Mrs. Cooper of Baltimore

with a maiden sister who draws and paints beautifully. [Miss Steiger] Tell Sarah Allan that I have been begged half a dozen times for the bonnet she made for me. It is really very much admired.

After this canal boat we took the railroad from Johnstown. Cars were filled and I was kept constantly on the look out for fear that I would be burnt up. The mountain scenery very romantic, passed through a tunnel 400 ft. through the mountain. Mrs. Colhoun who has been sick several days came in nearly fainting from the heat. Mr. Colhoun threw down some mattresses on the floor in the dressing room for her to rest, the berths being filled with bugs. The boat was so warm and the air so impure in the cabin during the day that many preferred the running deck to it. At night we spent our time very pleasantly sitting on deck.

We crossed the Susquehanna in the canal boats and were prevented from going over the falls by a rope which was constructed in such a manner as to carry us over without the will of horse power. At Harrisburg took the canal car and had my dress nearly burnt-up. I had on a gingham dress. at one time my back was a bright blaze. Mrs. C. commenced crying and put it out with her bare hand. reached Philadelphia about 3 o'clock and was as much fatigued that I could eat no dinner.⁶⁸

Mrs. Colhoun lives here and this morning after we arrived two of her daughters came for me to walk. they carried me to see the Panorama of Rome the Bay at New Zealand. Mrs. C's family is a very pleasant one and they received me more like a relative than a stranger. I spent the first day with them. Miss Mary Colhoun a very lively girl about 18 or 20 is going to Europe with us.⁶⁹ Give my best love to Pa and Uncle and kiss all the children for sister Mary. I don't intend to tell you how much I miss or how much I cry about home. I'm afraid I'll flatter you too much. Tell Mrs. DeVendel that I delivered her letter to Mrs. P.A. at Louisville. At N.Y. I have the others. Give love to sisters, brother, companions and servants, reserving from yourself dear mother the sweetest for yourself. Mr. and Mrs. C. desire me to remember them to you. Mrs. C. has acted really the parents part. Aunt Margaret wants you to give her love to her husband and children.⁷⁰

Apples of gold in pictures of silver . . .

(Mary Betts Lewis to Mary Lewis in New York, July 25th)

My dear Mary,

Your welcome letters to your sisters and myself were received and read over and over again with unalloyed pleasure, but by some unaccountable freak of fortune, I have misplaced and I fear lost your last to my self. You are sufficiently brief on each subject to free you from the charge of "verboisity" as you seem to fear it, and your habit of concentrating your ideas combined with your adherence to truth, to facts and not fiction, ensures to us the information, pleasure and variety which we so confidently expected from you.

While speaking of those persons you meet and the party with whom you journey, I feel a wish to know those who have so kindly greeted you and would be indeed happy to extend most cordial kindness to them. We often refer to individuals who were state or steamboat acquaintances as having afforded us more pleasure than an acquaintance of years formed in the other way, the perils and pleasures of each day and night are so equally shared by all who are thus thrown into each others society.

Your Sisters and Brother are as much delighted at your descriptions of the place and person as we are and your first impressions, as is almost always the case with young enthusiastic persons, are so full of vivacity and nature as never to fail giving delight to all of us.

The reception of your relations in Nashville gave you, was indeed cordial and gratifying to me, what a pity your cousins are so frail in health, a circumstance which must embitter the happiness of their Parents as well as retard their advancement in education. I see as you say that Hal is the same affectionate kind hearted Cousin, but I am most grateful for the unexpected visit from your Uncle and your Aunt Knox. [William Knox and Anne Octavia Knox]

We received another letter from your Aunt E. [perhaps Eliza A. Lea of Knoxville] expressing much interest in you and dissuading your Father from sending you to Long Island where the run away match took place.

pray watch over your precious self and allow no "moustachio Frenchman" to fancy you.

What do you think of a freak of Florry's. she will not willingly allow any of us to play on the Piano. she looks delicate from teething, but is very smart and pretty and catches words rapidly. Lindsay is much pleased at your mention of him to little Willie and always speaks of him as "Young Calhoun." Your birth day was last Sabbath.

Pray, Mary still observe as closely all you see. 'Tis the spice of our life to receive your letters, they are to us "apples of gold in pictures of silver" in value not to be expressed.⁷¹ Remember me respectfully to your friends and accept the love and blessings of your Mother.

M.M. Lewis.

(P.S.) called on M. Withers. on her return from Green. have seen none of the family since, but Mrs. McDowell and herself in returning the call. Mrs. Jones W. is up and sick at Mr. C.'s. everybody nearly at the Springs.⁷² C. McClung and C.F. and Mrs. F. send much love to you as do Sarah Allan and the girls, they both laugh and cry over your anecdotes and adventures. Mrs. DeVendel teaches in Steele's new house. Mrs. Childs sends her love to you and Mrs. Fe-Ze. they look upon each other as rivals I'm sorry to say. Lell [Ellen] will take guitar lessons. all send Love to you.

[P.S. written by Eliza] Mon Chere Sieur, as ma is less "solemncholy" her letter is filled to overflowing and I can only write a few line to you, but at some "Peterfuriod" I will continue my P.S. I was overjoyed at receiving your "sweetly" written letter. C.B. says she never saw anything flourish more prettily than your Geranium. Ma says she hopes 'tis prophetic of your own flourishing condition. I never was so lonesome in my life as since you left us and your class seem to regret you as much. We sit in the double pew which Miss B. formerly occupied, not next to the old Bachelor's. 'tis nearly the death of me to sit so near them. Caroline S. sends her love with Miss W. and Delia Coleman and C. Foote. Matt Steele has arrived but I have not seen him yet.⁷³ We have been to Mr.

Colhoun's plantation several times in the Barouch and brought grapes and peaches.

Adieu monchere your graceful
 sieur, Elise Lewis

On the boat the bugs were ferocious that I began to fear for my safety . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother from Philadelphia, Aug. 2nd)

My dearest sweet Mother

At last I have arrived at Philadelphia the greatest city I have ever seen and how am I bewildered! everything is noise and bustle and with the ringing of bells and rattling of vehicles of every description. my poor brain is in a constant whirl.

When we arrived in Nashville I had hardly dressed myself when with cousin Elizabeth and cousin Thomas came for me to accompany them home. They had quite a debate about with which of my relatives I should take up my abode but I put an end to the matter by deciding in favor of Aunt. Here I saw cousin Hal, whose glands were very much swollen from exposure on the boat, you know he was a clerk on the Red Rover and received from \$12 to 1500 per annum. He is the same frank cheerful fellow that he was when you last saw him.⁷⁴ Cousin Charlotte is very tall and thin with complexion darker than Ellen's black eyes and black hair, she is not very pretty but is one of the sweetest most affectionate girls you ever saw. Cousin Anastasia [Fanny] was buried two days [months] before I arrived, she had been sick 12 or 13 months with consumption but died of nervous fever. The day before she died she walked all the rooms and the family thought that she was rapidly recovering but consumption so often deceives and before the next morning dawned she was a corpse.⁷⁵ Cousin Thomas of whom we had not received the most favorable accounts is entirely reformed and is industriously occupied in business for his father. He told me all and said that he had signed a pledge to forsake all dissipated habits.⁷⁶

Cousin Sally [perhaps Sarah] is Lel's age [15] but is nearly as tall as I am, but she is much more slender than Ellen is. Cousin Elizabeth is very much distressed about cousin Sally's health and that of her youngest child who has been sick 10 or 12 months. Cousin Sally is a very pretty sweet looking girl but is very pale and appears to be dying gradually of consumption, she complains of that lassitude which used to trouble sister Eliza so much. Cousin Elizabeth gave me an account of Fanny's death and says that she died while asleep. Before her death she was baptized and communed. I saw a likeness of her taken by Mr. Dodge the day before her death. 'Tis one of the most beautiful melancholy faces I ever saw.⁷⁷

I never received such a warm welcome in my life. I was asked to play on the piano and found that I could remember only four or five of my tunes. Miss Haigin (you remember Letitia Haigin of whom Cousin Myra used to speak, Cousin T.'s flame) played and sang for me. She plays beautifully and sings more sweetly than any person I ever heard.

The next day was Sunday and as my clothes were at the hotel I spent the day with Cousin Eliz. After tea Cousin Sally McNeil came to see us with cousin W. Harding and insisted upon Charlotte and myself spending the night with her. We accepted her cordial invitation and I with two gallants, cousins Hal and Thomas, and cousin W. with Charlotte we sallied forth. Cousin McNeil lives in a very commodious mansion and has a beautiful little flower garden attached back.

Cousin William is a very fine business man, but he can converse about nothing but money. But he said I was like all the Lewis very smart and lively when half educated, but when they received a polished finish they had not one idea left. This will give you some idea of the fellow's impudence. He begged me to select a rich french heiress for him and to marry a Frenchman myself before I returned.

Pa looked in one or two bookstores for Miss Sedgwick's works but did not succeed in procuring them. Cousin Hal hearing that I wished them looked all over town and bought me a very handsome copy and presented it to me.

Joined Mrs. Colhoun at the hotel and she appeared very much distressed when she first saw us but by degrees her feelings were calmed

and she began to converse.

Here I saw a steamboat for the first time in my life and thanks to you dear mother for the perfect idea I had previously formed of it. The Excel however is but a poor specimen. The ladies cabin had no state rooms at all and we were obliged to wash ourselves on that part of the boat similar to the deck in front. There were no guards and the gentlemen's salon being crowded we were obliged to remain all the time in the ladies cabin while the sun poured his rays most unmercifully on us during the whole day.

The scenery on the bank of the Cumberland we saw the first day was not very picturesque. So monotonously passed away the day, but this night Morpheus refused to lend his aid neither do I wonder at it for the bugs were ferocious that I began to fear for my safety in remaining in bed, and about 12 o'clock at night arose and dressed myself and sat down on a chair and slept soundly till morning.

We passed by several very pretty little villages but none appeared to be of much consequence except Clarksville [Tennessee], Eddyville [Kentucky], and Smithland [Illinois]. At the last place we were delayed about two hours waiting for a boat to carry us up. Oh! here comes the Amazon a large commodious boat with staterooms and delightful berths. 150 passengers are on board! chiefly from New Orleans and St. Louis. The floor of the gentlemen' cabin is literally covered with passengers at night, and that of the ladies also is filled with negroes. I am given a room with the old lady who travelled with us on the Excel.

[P.S.] Fashions—The hair is worn nearly strait. of the face head bands are not worn at all. tucks in dresses not to the waist. capes nearly circular or large as to reach all around to the waist. pale blue and pink the only colors worn. No corsets! very large bustles. Balzoiné out-selling here the finest at 12 1/2 pr yd. French cooking most horrible—meats not fit to eat.

[P.S.] We passed Blennerhasset's Island at night.⁷⁸

There's no place to cry in private on a canal boat . . .

(Mary Lewis to Ellen Lewis from New York City, Aug. 5th)

[Postmark, Carlton House, Broadway]

Sweet-dear Lel,

All of you begin "How much we have missed you." please don't be so sorrowful. To day was the first time that I have cried before any body since I left home; in the stage I was always laughing and joking with the passengers during the day but at night after I read my chapter I'd cry till they awoke and then I'd shut my eyes and pretend that I had been asleep all the time.

Tell Charlie McClung that I am very much obliged to him for his many compliments and that I've told 1/2 dozen persons that he was my only beau. And Ma has hung up my pink lawn dress and my sprigged muslin in her wardrobe, tell her to make a drawn face with a big nose and long chin and she'll have me exactly.

Take care of my things dear sister and keep them until I return and if I live I will bring you some pretty presents. I am very sorry that I did not bring my pink and sprigged muslin with me for on the railroad car I nearly got burnt up. You know that gingham dress that fastened behind me, I got 10 holes burnt in it two as large as the palm of my hand and I have no pieces to mend it with.

Tell sister Eliza I will send it to her by Mr. Colhoun and she must wear it to remember me. When the other passengers saw me so mutilated (or my dress rather) they all commenced to laugh at me. I believe that I succeeded in making myself agreeable to all for when I took leave of an old lady she said "Fare well my child. God bless you."

On the canal boat in the evening they all got very sleepy. I would pretend to have taken cold and commence sneezing so dreadfully that not a soul was able to sleep and all the time I felt so sorry I didn't know what to do, but I disliked to make myself disagreeable by weeping and there's no place to cry in private on a canal boat.

Tell sister Eliza to see that my books that stay in the parlour are not injured. Dust out the piano every morning and take good care of your music. I will purchase "La Brigantine" if I can. you must learn it. remember

your duetts, I'll send you some music by Mr. Colhoun and an accordion if he has room for it, if not I will bring it to you if I've space myself.

Give my best love to each servant separately, tell Aunt Rhoda that I wish I had her to wash for me now, nearly all my clothes were stolen when I sent them out last time. Tell Aunt Lue that I wish for her good cake and have not been able to get any like it since I left home.

We all eat breakfast at 9 1/2 o'clock and dinner at 4 1/2 o'clock. Don't let Polly or Mother forget me. tell brother that I am always talking about him to Willie who thinks that my brother is the most perfect being in the world. Teach Florry to say "sis Ma." You say I must not stay 18 months well I shan't. my heart begins to fail already I'll come home with Mr. Colhoun next fall a year from now, so you all need not cry your eyes out.

I received your letter about 1/2 hour ago. You see that I answer promptly. don't forget me. Lel I know that you will feel ashamed of the missive, but I cry so much all the time I am writing that I can hardly see.

[P.S.] My dear Mother

You see how many mistakes I have made but I will write you a nice letter by yourself my tears have blotted the paper so much that I am ashamed to send it. Ma don't write in such a strain, your melancholy letter has made me cry so much that my face is swollen so bad that I am ashamed to go down to dinner.

Mrs. Colhoun and her husband are as kind as they can be. The former sympathizes with me in every thing and I in my turn treat her as I would my mother. She has been sick nearly all the time and I have had a great many opportunities to extend much kindness to her. On board the canal boat she was obliged to lie on the floor and I fanned her the whole evening.

And you don't think that you will ever "look upon my likeness again." Oh! yes mother I hope my case will not be like Elisha. Mother you would be much amused at my conversation about home. When I

was at Cousin McNeils's I gave her an account of your management and mode of instructing your children, when Dr. McNeil heard that you made us say our prayers and read in the bible every day, he said that he knew you would rear your children right and Cousin McNeil says that she thought she loved Pa more than anybody she knew but she loves you twice as much.⁷⁹

I have not yet delivered Gertrude Thornton's or Mrs. Bode's [letters]. Mrs. Colhoun is confined to her bed and I do not expect to see anything of the city at all. Miss Mary [Calhoun] has been here before and has seen all that is worth seeing and does not care much to go out. Cousin Knox comes in a few days and he will tell me if Cousin John Claiborne is here.⁸⁰ Otherwise I do not expect to see anything but the street that I am in.

Cousin Hal and Cousin Thomas gave me an amusing account of the way that grandma did when Cousin Myra was there. They said that she would not allow cousin M. to speak to them at all because she was afraid that they would address her. Cousin Charlotte said that Cousin M. would not associate with her or cousin Anastasia either always making an excuse that she loved the company of old people better than that of the young. They all without exception appeared to love her very much and behaved in as affectionate manner as possible to each one. Aunt left New York two days before I arrived but I will see Uncle Knox in a few days and I am in hopes that I will see Cousin John Claiborne also. Miss Adelaide DeVendal⁸¹ was in Philadelphia when I was there but I did not know where she was and could get no person to ask Mr. Menedier.

Oh! You can't tell how I miss you all, even the sound of the old piano . . .

(Mary Lewis to Eliza Lewis from New York City, Aug. 5th)
[Postmark—Carlton House, Broadway]

My dear sister Eliza

Now is your turn. you know that I promised to write to you from

this place to give you my first impressions of a city. But as I know that you are in anxious expectation about Steiger on the canal boat, I will commence there. On this boat one company was very pleasant. Mrs. Cooper and lady kept us constantly cheered up by their lively manners. Every time we stopped at a lock I with the rest would leave the boat to walk. As we walked along I would compare the beauties of nature here with Alabama and regularly came to the conclusion that our own native state surpassed in every point of view. Here I saw a gentleman from New York, a Mr. Beebe who was so much like Dr. Motte that I could hardly credit my ears when told that it was not he.⁸²

On the next boat after this we saw some beautiful scenes. Miss Steiger's manner of painting was most singular. She had prepared a thick peice [sic] of pasteboard washed over with white lead and sprinkled with the sand of a fine marble which imparted to it a glossy appearance, she next took a peice of buck skin and made it something in the shape of a pencil, it least forming a point. She then took dry paint in the form of powder the state in which it is before mixing with it. She then dipped the buckskin in and in about 20 minutes presented to me a beautiful picture which I will send you by Mr. Colhoun when he returns as a specimen of Grecian painting.

One advantage in it is that you can wash all the paint off with soap suds if it does not please you.

And now my dearest sis you see how much interest I take in your drawing if I laugh at your juvenile attempts when at home, I will learn to draw in Paris to remember you and every time I take my pencil up I'll think of your beautiful face and Uncle Moses' likeness with the broad grin so well delineated on his sooty face.

I have just received your sweet, precious, welcome letters to day and for the first time was unable to restrain my tears before others and as I read Ma's solemn sorrowful letters I cry'd and when any thing was mentioned at all amusing I laughed. I really believe I had the hysterics. Willie who stays in my room nearly all the time says Miss "Marie," What does your mother say that makes you laugh and what does Ma say that makes you cry." I have been praising up brother to him and he has been

comparing notes I think.

And so the girls did come to see Ma, tell them to come often, God bless them. I fear that I shall find but few (if any) friends who will succeed in filling their places. Indeed I do not want any body to fill their places, let a vacancy be left and thus I will feel their loss as I should. And they are all wearing striped ribbons except Moll Coleman. Tell Charley McClung to find a pretty peice and give it to her for me. And I shall wear a peice in my bows that I may think of you all always. I'll write to them all and to Charley McClung if I live to see Paris.

Oh! You can't tell how I miss you all, even the sound of the old piano or your french with which you used to tease me would soon be more than welcome. You asked me where I stayed the first night. Let me see. Oh! I stopped at Pulaski about ten o'clock and I was such an ocean of dirt that although I was much fatigued, I remembered what Ma said about trying to keep a genteel appearance as long as I could and I called for some water to wash my neck and ears, combed my hair nicely, ironed my collar out smoothly, read a chapter in that sweet little testament ma gave and said my prayers just as the horn blew for us to start. By this time it was two o'clock at night and you know I was sleepy enough. I wrapped my shawl tightly around me, nestled myself comfortably to sleep. At first I couldn't keep from nodding and a gentleman in the stage told me when I awoke that at one time he was afraid that my head would be lost out of the window.

Sweet dear little Florry, let her look sorry. I play with little Meredith [Calhoun] to remember her. Give my best love to Miss Howard and Mrs. Donegan, to S. Allan, M. McClung, M.C.F. and M.J. Erskine and Mattie Pope and Withers [Clay]. Dear Sis if I find that I have filled up my sheet with mere trash, if it is trash however, it is from the heart. Remember me. give my love to Mrs. McDowell, the Clays, all of them. Best love to Charles McClung and C. Fackler. Oh I must not forget to tell you that I wear a tourneure larger than America Yeatman.⁸³ and I have had 2 new dresses made with pads in the bosom that make me look as large as N. Patterson.

For Ma—My dear Mother I here conclude the Post script and com-

menced in Lel's letter. you think I am very sorryful but I laughed and was quite gay after I left Pa. At first this was the only way that I could get Mrs. C. to converse with any body but myself. I would talk awhile to the passengers and then go and give her the subject of our conversation and the characters of the different individuals this amused her very much and she would often laugh heartily at my opinions. I always confide in Mrs. C. as nearly as much as I did in you.

I wrote this letter yesterday and I have just come up from Mrs. C.'s room. She is very feverish and I have been bathing her face and hands in ice water and cologne. at first I could hardly keep from crying when I did because it reminded me of you (I did not though.) But when she cooled I ordered an ice for her and then read. She appeared in better spirits.

I have noticed everything and though I did not send you a very minute account still very little escaped my attention and could send my journal though it is very roughly and briefly written, for sometimes I write in the stage and other times in a stream which rocked so much that I could hardly decipher the singular hieroglyphics myself. I do read my chapter in the sweet little testament and have never forgotten the parting admonition of my father "not to neglect my bible." Farewell my dear mother. don't cry any more I did not cry the while I was travelling. Don't think about me.

Farewell dearest sister, do not forget your sister "Marie" tell them not to forget me.

Where ever I stop you will have a letter . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother Mary Lewis from Liverpool, Aug. 24th)

My dear Mother

Can you realize that I have at long last reached the land of our forefathers for indeed I cannot imagine how I arrived with so little difficulty. But let us again imagine ourselves in New York and from thence we will proceed across the wide Atlantic.

August 11th arose early this morning to make arrangements for our

departure and intended wearing my riding dress, but discover that Willie has nearly covered it with grease and am obliged to use my gingham wrapper. The rain pours down in torrents and we leave at 2, there is some fear of a storm at sea. Mr. Andrews [Mr. Lewis' agent] with uncle Knox comes on board to bid farewell and we leave N. York at 1/2 past 2.⁸⁴

So sure was I of suffering much from sea sickness that I at first refused to take any dinner and had all my necessary preparations made in case I might suddenly be surprised. Mary [Calhoun] however said that she knew she could have a moment's uneasiness and was quite at her ease. To my utter surprise I found that my dinner was quite acceptable. Mr. Colhoun informs us that the English are very reserved and bids us to make no advances.

Retired very early and find the air very impure and uncomfortable from not having been able to persuade M. to remove her baggage from the room. (She had 2 trunks and a large carpet bag, I one carpet bag in the stateroom.)⁸⁵ In the morning the rain still is most unmerciful and when I attempt to rise my limbs refuse to act. In vain do I endeavor to roll myself from the lower berth. I almost feared that I would be compelled to remain there all day; But after rubbing my knees and feet I managed to reach my clothes and hastily adjusting my hair sallied forth into the cabin.

Mrs. Colhoun is confined to her bed and M. though quite indisposed accompanied us on deck after breakfast when the rain ceased. Saw two sea gulls and the most lovely little bird, resembling the gold finch. But how the inhabitant of the flowery woods could ever have followed us so far I can not tell.

The french family whom we saw on board the boat from Phila. to New York sails with us and though she is a native of Louisiana not one sentence of English can she understand. Mdme. Tirnant is the widow of a very wealthy planter and though her husband has been dead only 6 months, she is as lively indeed more so than any on board.

M. Bacou_t the French minister is on board and is returning to Europe to recruit his health. He is tall, slender and very pale apparently about 58 yrs old. He is now too sick to leave his berth. The Queen's mes-

senger, Capt. Wright is with us and is one of the most awkward foolish looking fellows you ever saw, walks as though his limbs were strung on wire and talks very much like Elisha Rice. Mr. Lockwood the writer of political economy is a tall man with a red beard nearly the whole front presenting a smooth surface. waist too slender and appears to wear a tournene and padding of various descriptions.

A french Marquis is on board with his father, wears a dark calico shirt, close old broadcloth cap and striped pantaloons. His father is pretty much of the same pattern with light pantaloons, old brown coat and white hat. A Catholic priest, Dr. Pease, a celebrated minister from N. York and once was stationed in South Carolina where as gossip reports it he received several offers of marriage if he would forsake the ministry. He says that he baptized a Miss Mary Ann Lewis a relative of Gen. Jackson's and he thinks that I am that one. He left us at Cork.

The rain after having drenched us all night now gives us an opportunity to visit the deck and to obtain pure air, but Mary is unable to move while I managed to throw on my wrapper and shawl and am the only lady who will venture on deck. I am much better, and though feeling much inclination to doze, occupy part of my time in reading a tale by Paul Pindar, "The Captain's Wife" which proves to be but a poor affair. After dinner Miss Heath an English lady gives us some music on the piano. At dinner Mr. Matthews, the capt's mate wishes to drink wine with me but is quite amused when I informed him that I had signed the pledge. We are all now pretty well acquainted with each other and sea sickness has disappeared we endeavor to render ourselves as pleasant as possible.

I retire in the ladies parlor below. Here Mrs. Barlow (the lady of a Col. in the British army) plays for me on the guitar very sweetly. Mr. Ricardo Jerr [?] scrapped a little on the violin, imitating the bag pipe very well. Mrs. C. is still sick. I suffered much from cold feet and Mr. Knox after taking us to walk on deck dances a gallopade with me on the lower deck till I am completely warmed through. Play a game of chess with Miss Heath who was so ungallant as to win the game.

Made an acquaintance with Mr. Urquhart from New Orleans who

now intends travelling through Europe for his health. He is a Creole and speaks the French and English with equal facility. At dinner Mr. Matthews tells us that he saw two whales this morning. What a pity we should have missed such a sight. We have seen porpoises once. After tea Mr. Knox proposed a game of cards about 12 of us play old maid and another most amusing game, where the person who loses is compelled to wear a stick resembling the children's pop gun across the nose to prevent their speaking (except with the nasal twang) through the next game. Became acquainted with a Mr. Fielding an Englishman who has travelled all through the United States and territory and gave us some most amusing accounts of the native Indians.

My dear Mother I intended finishing this, but leave at 10 and sat up last night till 3 writing and have overslept myself. Mr. C. now goes farewell where ever I stop you will have a letter. Mary Lewis

What think you of this amusement . . . ice skating in August?

(Mary Lewis to her mother Mary Lewis from London, Aug. 27th)

Dearest Mother

Now let me continue my journal commenced at Liverpool; but in the meantime I must inquire if my poorly expressed account is acceptable? not that I forget that all which concerns me is interesting to you but Mary and Mr. Smith (secretary for Mr. Lockwood) have been teasing me for sending any journals home. While on board ship I often neglected to note everything down and I only send my journal of 4 or 5 days to let the children learn how my time was occupied.

Nearly all the passengers spoke French and endeavored to assist me as much as possible in acquiring the language. A French Creole from New Orleans amused me very much by calling me "Ma chere petite enfante avec les beaux yeux." [My dear little child with the beautiful eyes.] My lively manners appeared to please him and he was constantly paying me compliments until I told that the American ladies were so unaccustomed to flattery that they considered it irony.

Our passage was rather a stormy one, but on the whole pleasant, indeed the trip is nothing in comparison to the journey from Huntsville to New York and not near so fatiguing. the fare was delightful. We breakfasted at 9, had a sandwich at 12, dinner at 4, and took tea at 1/2 past 6. Those who chose to take supper called for it at 1/2 past 10 pm. My birthday was on Sunday and about a dozen of the passengers drank my health and endeavored to persuade me to return it in wine, but water I thought quite as appropriate.

The night before we were in the sight of land we had a dance on deck at 12 o'clock but the gentlemen were so boisterous that I chose rather to be a spectator while M. and Mr. Heath participated in the amusement. The day before we landed we had a delightful dinner; the health of the Capt. was proposed, with three cheers, then the ladies, next Victoria and then to the amusement of all Mr. Wright (the bearer of the treaty) proposed the health of "The eldest daughter of Victoria, the president of the United States! and then Louis Phillippe roi de France her kinsman."⁸⁶ Some songs were sung, a speech delivered by Capt. Hosken and another by Mr. Lockwood.

We saw land (Cape Clear) on the 23rd and how beautiful the blue hills with a single tree resembled dark clouds and until we had advanced pretty near them, could hardly distinguish the growth. The ploughed ground, wheat fields, and grass plots, presented the appearance of a beautiful carpet. The little fishing boats were moving about in all directions and would have amused you to see the little fellows displaying their strings of fish for the Steam Boat to wait for them.

Liverpool now presents its self and though the rain descends rapidly the wharf is completely covered with people. About 3 o'clock we land, but the water is so low that we sail on a smaller boat to the shore. We take a carriage here and drive to the Adelphia one of the best hotels in Liverpool. Here we have our own parlour and eat at our own table (There is a public table) every thing is charged at the most exorbitant price. All the dishes and service of silver and the finest china.

Among the curiosities I have never seen such large horses—their feet are covered with long shaggy hair. I cannot imagine how Miss Sedgwick

could say that there were no dirty persons in England. why I looked from my window and in half an hour saw more untidy persons than I ever saw before.

We dined at 1/2 past seven and visited the theatre to see Mlle. Cerito dance "La Parsoninne." Her dress was entirely too short and except from her waist to half way above her knees she wore flesh colored stockingnet! Her movements are considered graceful but to me she appeared very immodest.

The next morning we sally forth to purchase a strawbonnet for self—get one for \$3.25 already trimmed. At 10 we left for London on the Manchester Railroad. Cars as comfortable as a carriage, no motion, and no sparks. We travelled at the rate of 30 miles per hour. The country most lovely, not a spot of uncultivated, fields and gardens enclosed by hedges of hawthorn and cottages so small that you would hardly suppose that any person could live in them. Roofs both of thatch and slate. Manure packed in the form of houses and covered with straw. Here the country is watered by numerous streams which intersect the country, similar to ditches. Nothing here is untasteful even the banks of the stiff looking canal is ornamented with beautiful flowers and hawthorn hedges. passed hundreds of villages among them Wolsirhampton containing 40,000 inhabitants—a village indeed!

About 10, arrived at London and engaged lodgings at Mivarts the most fashionable hotel, the proprietor has owned it 30 yrs. Here I have a separate room and I feel quite at home, am very much fatigued having travelled about 200 miles in one day. All are dressed and breakfast at 11. At 12 Mr. C. takes a carriage and we go to visit the curiosities of the city. Our guide (a servant) was so much like a gentleman that I asked Mr. C. if that gentleman was not very kind to explain every thing so well, when I was told that he was a common servant.

We passed Hanover Square in front of which is a monument and statue of William Pitt in black marble, 20 feet high. Next passing down Regent street saw a statue of the Duke of York on horseback in marble—Charles 1st. Saw Whitehall and our guide pointed out the door from which Charles 1st was guillotined. Saw Newgate with its wall 4 stones

high. The Earl of Northumberland palace reaching the Thames. Ride through a gate of Marble formerly the gate of the city through which the King and Queen could not pass without asking the permission of the Lord Mayor.

We visited the abbey, here really I feel as if in social converse with these great men whose writing have afforded me much pleasure. Here are Shakespeare, Dryden, Goldsmith, Ben Johnson—over whose monument is inscribed, “O rare Ben Johnson”—Thomson, Grey, and Gay. On the monument of the latter is written, “Life is a joke and all things show it, I thought so once but now I now I know it.” This is often censored for its levity.⁸⁷

At the Henry 7th chapel imagination could never picture any thing half so magnificent. The monument of Elizabeth, bloody Mary and Mary Queen of Scots is just behind Elizabeth in the same position with her little cap on. You know the “Mary Queen of Scot’s cap.”

Today 25th of August is Prince Albert’s birthday and the house in which he was born is illuminated and adorned with flags. great festival at the palace.⁸⁸ We next toured St. Paul’s which though entirely blackened and defaced with dust and smoke still the architecture is so unexceptionable that it may be overlooked. We were at the house of Lords’—not a very beautiful edifice.

Visited the tunnel of the Thames 1/4 mile long. We descended a flight of stairs into a place built in a vault, the walls completely soaked, floors very wet. The river, a little boy told us, formerly broke it very often, but now is prevented. An engine pumps up the water underneath into the Thames. As we passed out saw the Tower of London but at a distance from it. Returned home dined at 1/2 past 7 and retired at 10.⁸⁹

Coaches and outriders in livery of red, blue, black and yellow—white stockings—cords and tassels of different colors and cockades of white and black satin ribbon. The old ladies dress like young girls and today I saw a lady dressed in a red dress and blue scarf. Velvet dresses, blanket shawls and merino dresses, fur and velvet hats—the weather requires it.

Breakfast at 11, Mr. Smith called and proposed visiting the gardens in Regents Park.⁹⁰ Here everything is beautifully tidy, grounds tastefully

arranged. We first enter a wide gravel walk bounded on each side by grass plots about a foot wide cut so close and even that it resembles the Turkey carpets, little beds of American flowers in different shapes and all present a most rural scene. seats of wood covered with bark. cottages for the different animals with thatched roofs and all seen in a state of nature. 2 brown bears in a bower of stone and sunk in the earth in the centre, a pole with notches for them to climb. next a beautiful home surrounded by aquatic plants and swimming in it were six graceful black swans from North Holland.

Next the water rat to whom is paid the same attentions as the swans having a little pond to himself with a little residence of stone. Amphibious animals a large pond is the centre of which it is an island covered with aquatic flowers and beautiful trees surround it. Mountain goats, rabbits, squirrels, monkeys, bears, rhinoceros, and the largest elephant I ever saw.

We pass through a tunnel under an elevation in the grounds. all on the outside of the tunnel is covered—pink and dove colored parrots. green and blue, red and yellow, black parrots. Cranes with tufts like a rosette of black satin ribbon, vultures, eagles, common hen and chicken all arranged in such manner as to render the prisoners perfectly happy.

But my account is to meager. 'Tis now really 12 at night and we leave London tomorrow Sunday having about 2 days here. All is here that heart can wish but the money must be forthcoming. Have not seen Hyde Park or Buckingham palace. Mr. C. says he will take me to see all when we return. Make the children read English History. I forgot to mention that on the boat a man said to Mr. Colhoun, "I know you are an American." "How" said Mr. C. "Why simply because you said well."

Love to all who inquire for me, each is imprinted indelibly on my memory. remember me to each one separately. to S. Allan. Mc, C.B., M.C.F., L.W., Mattie P.L., A. and Dr.. Allan. Best love to Uncle Wallace and cousins. Miss M., Withers, Mrs. McDowell, Charlie McC. and C. Fackler, Mrs. Donegan, Miss Howard, and Mrs. R. Fearn, the Mrs. Fackler and Watkins and all who love me.⁹¹ Oh how I miss you.

Best love to my dear father. My sisters, kiss sweet Florry and brother

Lindsey for sis. Love to the servants separately and for yourself dear mother, you know how much I love you, how I love them all, you are dear to me. I endeavor to remember your secret instructions to profit by it. accept then my warmest gratitude and love, may you always be happy and be consoled for my loss in the idea that I will improve and thus be able to effect more [learning] to others.

Margaret here is a perfect show. I eat lobster for your sake, but the shrimps look like worms and the claws are too horrible to think of eating. Margaret bets that you will say she is well and give her love to her husband, children and all at home. she is treated very politely and not the least difference shown between Master and servant.⁹²

We passed today the colliseum (you know it is in Sister E.'s little book) where artificial ice is made so strong that it is used for skating. What think you of this amusement in August?

You have no idea how expensive everything is here. Mrs. C.'s health is improving from the sea voyage and I am so fat that I am ashamed of myself. My face is covered with bumps. I am very much tanned more than you ever saw. heart and manners the same. Farewell dear mother, your affectionate dau. Mary F. L.

[P.S.] The waiters here say instead of yes sir "yaser."

In my dreams you stand prominent in the picture of my imagination . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother Mary Lewis from Paris, Sept. 13th)

My dearest dearest Mother

I must render an account of myself since I last wrote to you. viz. my trip from London hither and my stay in Paris.

We left London the morning after I wrote but what think you was my bill for 2 days and 3 nights? why nothing less than \$28. to be sure we had all the luxuries of the season, but these were given at the highest price. Every dish on the table was charged as well to me as Mr. Colhoun,

whose bill amounted to \$150. At 1 o'clock we left the hotel for the railroad station in a carriage, passed Hyde Park and a statue of the Duke of Wellington. We saw also the penitentiary; a large dark looking place constructed of brick and stone.

We also had the honor to turn the corner near which an attempt on the queen's life was made; and really I wonder that she has not been killed ere now, there were many grievous complaints among the poorer classes respecting their wages and in Manchester and Birmingham the men had refused to work. Our servant told us that frequently they alluded to America and its happy government and it was feared by some that unless their conditions were ameliorated a revolution would ensue.⁹³

The cars of the train were very commodious (but what is not commodious in England?) We stopped every nine miles at a station and arrived at Woking to await the evening train there. The little inn is beautifully neat—a sweet little garden and a parlour as prettily furnished as some of our private houses. After dinner M. and myself walk out to see the country. Oh! how lovely! how tasteful is everything. no stiff fences are seen, but nicely trimmed hawthorn hedges here and there mingled with some kind of growth resembling holly. Meadows covered with purple and yellow flowers. The laundress you would have been most amused with, a little, fat, boisterous woman dressed in a short black silk gown and a large collar covered with cotton laces of various kinds. One thing I noticed in Europe that napkins are placed at every plate and would you believe it even silver forks?

We left the pleasant little hotel at six o'clock for Southampton and travelled 44 miles in 2 1/2 hours. The next morning, dressed at six, I cannot persuade Mary to get up. I put on my bonnet to see something of the town. The hotel (The royal George) is ornamented with bouquets of flowers, canary birds and beautiful gold fish in glass bowls. Miss Sedgwick speaks of this town as the residence of Miss Mitford and from this place she writes many of her interesting letters.

We leave at 2 in a Steamboat and we at first feared a boisterous voyage but most happily the sun came forth from his hiding place between the clouds and all was as pleasant as possible. In leaving England we pass

Nettey Abbey with its ancient arch and moss covered walls. Now the Isle of Wright. We next passed a pretty little village on the Isle of Wright, while on the other side we saw the chalk cliffs from which England first received the name Albion. Lord Ashburton's bathing establishment we also had the exquisite felicity and honor of seeing. Portsmouth is now visible and here the port is filled with ships of war. Among them the Victory in which Nelson was when the battle of Traffic was won and the same in which he fell.

We spent the night on board and as we expected to arrive at Harve at 3 o'clock in the morning we would not undress ourselves. The berths were exactly like those on board our canal boats, nought but little shelves.

Next morning when I awoke nearly every person had left the boat and we with drowsy eyelids proceeded to the custom house. Here we were examined very carefully even a little bundle containing my combs and a pair of hose was opened. But most fortunately Mr. Colhoun's bundle of cigars remained undiscovered. After M. and myself had made our toilettes at the hotel we sauntered out to see something of the country. The street in which we walked was the largest and most beautiful in the city, but I assure you I had never seen any place so absolutely filthy. street filled with mud and manure. and such a combination of odors! We passed through the gates of the city which was guarded by armed soldiers. All the peasants were bringing their fruit to market. Women dressed in short petticoats and boddices with a short skirt (like our riding dresses) caps with nicely plaited, crimped and fluted ruffles—driving carts filled with all species of vegetables and flowers. The market house was very dirty consisting merely of a poor shed no floor and the ground covered with leaves and fragments of vegetables and fruit.

As we walked slowly along we found a catholic church open and prompted by American curiosity we entered. The priest jabbered latin at the fastest possible rate. We returned just in time for breakfast.

At 2 o'clock we left in a steamboat for Rouen—The Normandy. The same in which the remains of Napoleon were conveyed from the Belle Poule at Harve to Rouen. The place on which the coffin was placed is marked by a brass plate in the shape of a coffin on which is engraved

the same epitaph that was placed on his monument at Paris. M. and self copied it.

On board were two nuns, the first I ever saw. They were dressed in black coarse merino apron of the same, sleeves loose at the waist, white bonnets covered with a piece of black merino in sunbonnet fashion over their bonnets—fillet of white line reaching to their eyebrows surrounded their heads! and no gloves, a broad band of black was suspended from their necks to which was attached a crucifix of silver.

The first town we passed was Villequier, a small village on the bank of the river. Next, the residence of the Duc d'Joinville (is that spelled correctly?) Here the trees were beautifully trimmed so as to resemble arches. And here too I noticed that trees answered the same purpose as the hawthorn hedges in England. The woods were cultivated. The trees instead of being cut down here and there, without regard to beauty as in America, were cut so as to leave a line of trees bordering the hills. A little house is now and then seen. One I noticed to which was attached a little park adorned with flowers and statue, candles too we passed. Here were 2 ancient looking churches whose spires appeared to be ornamented with openwork. A school for boys near the bank was just dismissed, and the sound of many merry voices brought to memory many swelt reminiscances of home. Mailleraye is next and here is the residence of Fitz James which very ancient and situated too near the bank of the river. Quille Boeuf was next.⁹⁴ Here the Telemaque sank 5 yrs. since containing 5 million francs. The English had just constructed a machine for raising it and expect to succeed, though the French have tried it repeatedly and have failed.

At 8 or 9 o'clock we landed at Rouen. There was the great confusion. M. and myself carried each a bundle. Here our things were carried to custom house again and Mr. C. again escaped in the cigars.

We left Rouen having no time to look about. Passed under a "bridge with 22 arches." The rest of the passengers took an omnibus for Paris but Mrs. C. chose to remain in Passy for the night not having strength enough to proceed Here Margaret was really a show, a parcel of little children ran down the street screaming, "Le Diable" with all their might while the grown people looked in much amusement. A nice breakfast

and left at 11 in an omnibus, 14 passengers. one an old lady 109 yrs of age dressed in Pea green silk, white bonnet trimmed in blue, a quizzing glass instead of spectacles.

At St. Germaine took the railroad and 1/2 hour was in Paris. Custom house again and then we drove to the Hotel de L. Europe on Rue de Rivoli, opposite the Tuilleries. Oh how lovely are the Tuillerie gardens—statues—fountains—orange trees—kept in the king's cellar in winter. We saw the obelisk brought from Egypt and the triumph arch. most singular places—Cabinets d'aisunce or privies! in the open streets every 40 yds.—1 ct entrance. What think you of that?

But ma I do not like Paris for all its beauties—every few steps a naked statue meets your eye. You hear music in the streets. Paris will never do for me. Sunday is not observed at all. We know no church and remain at home in desiring to spend the Sunday in the best manner possible.

Mr. C. has seen the dr. who says that Willie will be quite well in a year, no hump at all will be perceptible when he is grown. M. though with her relations cries nearly all the time and says she will return with Mr. C. I felt really desolate but would not cry for that it would make Mrs. C. feel badly. I noticed that she was much troubled about M.'s wishes. Mrs. C. is not so well and little M. sick, they have now removed to Passy near the institution.⁹⁵

And now of myself. Mr. C. has placed me at Madame Trigants. It is vacation and my companions are an old lady, nearly 70 and a little girl ten. When Mr. C. left me could hardly refrain from tears, but Mlle. Bandin with the greatest kindness welcomed me home and gave me some grapes and light bread.⁹⁶ She looked over my clothes and had them marked with one number 20 to distinguish them from the rest. Expressed much admiration at my nicely made clothes and my perfumes. She has given me a little wardrobe and my trunk is put away for my return. A little box for my combs and brushes and a little blue tumbler for my teeth.

The second day having taken a warm footbath and placed my feet on the floor (which is brick) I caught cold and was afraid of being sick. In the evening Mrs. C. came for me to ride out—passed along the Boulevards—a very wide street neated with beautiful trees and the loveliest

stores you ever saw, fronts of glass entirely.

When the old lady saw my poor foot was much distressed and washed it with oil after making me take a gargle of barley water and foot baths. All were very kind. all the servants came up to inquire after me and M. Trigant spent 1/2 hour with me. The old lady gave me a little candy clock filled with some rock candy and sponge cake. with good food I was tolerably well and able to walk about a little.

I have taken 3 music lessons and have a very good teacher. The french lessons a good teacher also and one writing lesson. M. and Mrs. Colhoun and I will take lessons on the guitar and endeavor to learn as much as I can. The harp I cannot perfect myself.

A very little shady garden is attached to the house. we never go out except with an older person or receive any persons in the parlour without Mademoiselle Bandin. I like this very much. Mdme. Trigant will return in 3 weeks with 2 American girls (from Boston) Misses Parker. Only 20 scholars.

Ma all are very kind, but I am still homesick. If I were once at home I would never leave it for school. I miss Mrs. C. who has been so kind, as a mother, very much and dear little "Merry" who reminded me so much of Florrie. But I felt the want of somebody in whom I can confide and when once and commenced writing to you dear Mother I can never know when to stop. Oh how dear are all at home and how much anxiety I feel. When you write do not neglect giving me an account of everything and everybody in H. write in the same way that I do and leave cross wise room and write as full as possible.

I really thought that I would be obliged to return with Mr. C., but I suppose now I will be obliged to stay. Did you think I ever would be such a baby as to cry whenever I leave Mrs. C. But really I cannot help it. You see my dear mother that my letter betrays much of my feelings, excuse it. I will be more composed.

Emmie tells me that they are very happy here and so I have found it. Do you wish me to buy a thermometric. [?] I read my two chapters every day. My journal I do not neglect. The french lady who came over with us is in Paris and has been to see us. she has promised to send her

little children here. she is a very sweet woman is a member of one of the first families in N. Orleans. We spend our evenings very pleasantly in the parlour with Mr. Trigant who accompanies Mlle. Alexandrine on the violin.

Mlle Bandin is now sick and I try to repay her kindness. When I first arrived she told me that I could have milk every morning. all the scholars drink it. All wash their necks every day and take a bath whenever we wish.

I speak french with much more ability and hope that with practice I will speak well. Ma remember me to all my dear friends in H. with my love, not omitting one. Misses Margaret Russell and Thompson. and my father my best love and thanks for your kindness in giving me so many advantages which I will endeavor to improve. My dear Sisters how much I miss you. Your sweet kind offices in my prayers and I feel as if I am with you in my dreams you stand prominent in the picture of my imagination. My sweet little brother, I hope you have not forgotten me, and dear little Florry has she learned to talk.

To the servants my love. I remember them all and feel much the want of their kindness. Love to Sunday school class and my dearest mother. All have been kind since I left you, but still home sweet home how dear!

. . . the last link of the chain of Love that binds me to a home so dear.

(Mary Lewis to Ellen or Eliza Lewis from Paris, Sept. 20th)

Many, many thanks to you my sweet sis for your nice little letter and as it is the first I shall always prize it very highly. 'Tis impossible to suppose that you who have never left home can realize how precious every thing that concerns my native village is to me, and really I treasure the little packet I received in New York as though it were the last link of the chain of Love that binds me to a home so dear.

I am at school now but as it is vacation I have only French, Music

and Writing to attend to. For the first place I must tell you what struck me as being most different from the customs of our native land. The little regard paid to the Sabbath. All go to mass (the Catholic worship) in the morning and then as if all the sacredness of our Lord's day were passed, leave the church for some kind of work or sinful pleasure.

Last Sabbath there was a fete at St. Cloud where all danced and regularly every Sunday the working class are immersed in their customary avocations while the shops and stores are open and often crowded with customers. The public gardens are filled with children playing at their different games, the peasants are thronging to the market laden with vegetables. finally all appears to consider this holy day more as a holiday than anything else. The little children here dress very prettily in different colored velvet spencers and either white muslin or mousline de Laine skirts. the larger girls dress very plainly with the square collars or crimped ruffles, hair merely twisted in a bow knot behind.

The servants all wear caps, some of them indeed are very pretty. the lower classes called peasants are so sunburnt that they resemble our mulattoes. the women wear calico spencers and skirts while the men may always be distinguished by their large blue shirts worn on the outside of their dress. Since I have been here I have seen several turks dressed in long gingham gowns and blue broadcloth cloaks, while a rich turban ornamented with a long tassel or short ostrich feather completed the unique costume.

But my sister I am much hurried to have all ready to send by Mr. Colhoun, forgive then my short uninteresting little missive. Love to all dear little Myra and Sarah Allan particularly. your dear sister M.F. Lewis

I think now that I shall be quite happy . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother from Paris, Sept. 30th)

Sweet darling mother

Two weeks have elapsed since last I wrote and true to my promise I again address you. Shall I give you an account of my progress during

the fortnight? yes I know it will please you and then too I shall feel as contentedly as the Irishman did when he gave his friend's secret to a neighbor to keep for him.

Sept. 14th rose at 6 o'clock, which you must know is an early hour here. nay Mrs. Trigant tells me that in winter day dawns at seven! I practice from 2 to 3 hours each day, read 8 or 10 pages in French, write a very parsing lesson and phrases, copy several pages and jabber 2 or 3 dozen to the domestics and Emmie who all appear much amused at my eagerness to learn the language. I succeeded very well in giving them an idea of our Indians and negroes in French. As I finished they complimented me by saying that I conversed with more facility than Miss Parker who has been here several months. Oh! I'll speak French after a while I hope.

The weather has been extremely cold and rainy for 8 or 10 days and we were thus prevented from out of door exercise. our only resources were to dance, while Mlle. Bandin sings "My Normandy, Home of my childhood" and "O! Miss Mary." Owing to the humidity of the atmosphere Mlle. B. has had an attack of rheumatism and one of her friends Mdme. Pouzet has been staying with us.

She is one of the kindest women you've ever seen and taking pity of E. and myself she took me to mass with her and though I could not join in their worship, still I enjoyed much the privilege of prayer in the house of God. After mass was over I wished to return, but she insisted on taking advantage of my opportunity and accordingly we accompanied her to see the Madeleine, a church commenced by Napoleon and just completed this week. Truly 'tis a most magnificent temple built of white stone in a circular shape and surrounded by a colonnade which is supported by large fluted columns and ornamented with statues of various saints.

The interior surpasses all that I have ever seen. The ciriling [ceiling] is openwork of gilt—here and there mingled with flowers of various colors. In front is a large picture representing Napoleon and all the other kings of France. Indeed I think 'tis a pictorial history of France. The sides are covered with large pictures of the saints and panels of all species of marble. The congregation was chanting and though no instrument was used I have never heard such sweet music. Though it was pouring down rain

the church was so much crowded that the officers were prettily busily employed to preserve order.

We next visited the "Tuilleries." here all appeared familiar "La place de Concord" situated between the "Tuilleries" and "Champs Elysees" is I believe the center of Paris.⁹⁷ The whole is paved with stone and where the guillotine stood, the Egyptian obelisk is erected and the fountains. Oh! how lovely ere all playing, sending up columns of water 20 ft. high. The C.E. I discovered. Mary and myself had walked in before without knowing the name. it is a large forest with trees tastefully trimmed in arches and unlike the "gardens" carriages are permitted to pass through and trades women are allowed to carry on their little traffic.

I commenced this letter 3 days ago and since then Mdme. P. has taken me to church with her to a protestant Episcopal Church and you cannot imagine my delight. 'twas the first time since I left home that I had heard the whole service and if I can make arrangements with Mrs. Colhoun today to attend church every Sunday I shall be contented to remain.

I have now 6 girls with me and so joyful have we been that we dance nearly all day while one plays on the piano. One is exactly like Ellen and though only 10 yrs old plays beautifully on the piano and has a touch similar to Mr. Bode's.

I have been very lonesome before the girls came and to cheer me up Mr. Trigant lent me Sheridan's "school for scandal," and produced the desired effect for I had something to excite my risibles for 2 or 3 days. It is written in rather a loose style, but you know I have a happy knack of forgetting all that is not well for me to remember. and Mr. T. tells me that I need not be ashamed to own that I have read it before gentlemen. I found by accident several of Washington Irving's works and amongst them Rip Van Winkle which I found very interesting and afterwards amused myself by relating them in French to Emmie.

I find that France has rather an inhospitable climate for me and accordingly I am supplying myself with winter clothes. Mlle. B. has had my travelling dress dyed black. a new pair of sleeves and wadded cape which improvements will render it much more comfortable for winter.

I have bought 2 knit jackets—50cts. apiece with long sleeves, 2 pr. knit silk stockings—60cts. a piece and warm shoes. I have yet to buy a shawl, cloak, shoes and dress for Sunday and after all is finished I fear my bill will be very extravagant. I have altered my night dress sleeves merely by lengthening the cords and find them very comfortable.

I have not yet a teacher for the guitar but will be supplied when Mdme. T. comes. I think I had better take singing lessons. Don't you? I would like dancing also, we have a master in the house and I think it a very pleasant mode of exercise. I think now that I shall be quite happy and I regret very much that I did not insist upon one of my sisters accompanying me. you cannot image how much the mind is expanded here. children of 13 converse like grown girls.

Write soon I pray you. I have not heard from you since three or four days after my departure and you cannot imagine my anxiety. Write often. Best love to my dear father. my letters you know are for you all, but I can address you with more ease. Love to dear sisters and brother with a kiss for each. Love to Uncles Joel, Wallace and cousins, friends and (companions with Withers particularly). Love to our servants. and dearest loveliest best of mothers accept my best love. Oh how I long once more to embrace thee and be with thee never more to be parted. Don't forget that I heed much advice. yrs. most affectionately

Mary F. Lewis

address your letter the care of
Mdme. la Baronne Trigant
Rue Pigale No. 8

I look upon your hours now as precious as pearls or drops of gold...

(Mary B. Lewis to Mary Lewis in Paris, Oct. 9th)

My dear Mary will you not weary of my long letter, but it reminds me so much of one of our old familiar conversations to read your letters, in which you gave me your thoughts so plainly and confidingly, and I

must indulge myself in taking my usual share in the conversation. It will easily be perceived that I write as I think by fits and starts—my family frequently calling of my attention and breaking the thread of discourse to you.

I feel anxious too to direct your attention to those things (of which I have but an imperfect knowledge) which will add to your and our pleasure and information for the future, as well as present and particularly your reading. Let me suggest another plan to you; when you visit these places again, which you have but partially glanced at, you will perhaps have leisure to notice all you see thoroughly, but with out adequate knowledge, you will be viewing the casket [box], without being able to unlock and find the inestimable treasure. have your lists or slips of paper, unconnected with your notebook, in reading, almost anything you will after find allusions to things and persons. Whenever you find a name or fact, note down. You will be surprised to see of how much use such lists placed in alphabetical order will be to you, for quick recurrence to. 'tis an easy task is it not.

Make it a rule to write a composition upon some given subject. sometimes once a week regularly or more or less. state a time and do so yourself. what for instance do you think of Water for a subject? first you will find it one of the most prolific subjects you have written on. 1st as regards its effect upon life compared with bread; 2nd upon vegetation, beauty of trees and flowers; 3rd quadruped animal existence, human existence, beauty and health of person . . .

As the Catholic religion consists most in external ceremonies 'tis more natural that all connected with it should be grand and magnificent and so much more apt to affect the senses. you will find ourself entranced, excited when under the influence of their music and painting and thus it is that Catholics are so hard to make protestants of. but again I acknowledge the beauty of their charitable, their benevolent Sisters of Charity, the extreme cultivation and refinement in education of their jesuitical priesthood.

but the Popes and cardinals—bah! I'll none of them, I've no objections

to the foot washing instituted by our meek and lowly Savior himself, but save me from the kissing or pretending to kiss the Pope's toe. Certainly they do much good, but more harm, the good is much in their superior acquirements—Teachers.

I am happy to hear Mrs. C. is improving in health, hope the little boys have also. Is Miss C. as great a novice as yourself? and pray do you not tease Mr. C.'s life or patience out by questions?

how was your bonnet trimmed? indeed how is my lady Mary L. dressed in all respects. Let me know every particular concerning your own dear self my child, not the most trivial escaping thoughts of yours. how do you look: ugly you say. are you healthy now.

Myra and Sarah are taking vocal music lessons with Mrs. Bode, a large class too, they learn well.⁹⁸ Our Town is sometimes entertained by "musical soirees" and again by "Tableux Vivant." and here and there a marriage or a match broken off. of the first—L.A.B. to Dr. Horton. Rev. Lowell to Idella Huelot!!! of the last—B. Irwin and James Mastin off! M.E.F. and Lykes off! 'tis said Mr. Peete and Rob Bibb in love with Miss Rogers.⁹⁹ Miss Childs sends you much love. She takes much interest in your letters. She has bought Blevins house and will teach in the Masonic Hall. expects a finished Teacher from Eastward.¹⁰⁰

Mexicans have invaded St. Antonia, Texas, and taken possession and will take Galveston I expect.¹⁰¹

Ward in Country has purchased Acklen's house. Hopkins sold his to B. Robinson and will move off to St. Louis with Mrs. Percy and family (whose house Mrs. Clarke has leased for 2 yrs. or more.) Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Mosely Hopkins, Bradley, Pleasants, broke up and Bibbs, all of them, placed in a very awkward predicament by the debts of that concern, for which their Father went security; Sarah Bradley enquires with much interest for you and your progress as do all the girls.¹⁰² What a pity Parliament was not in session that you might have seen the peers in their various robes of office. Did you think of the description of the Queens marriage and coronation when you were in W. Abbey? and how, as Sam Slick would say, "did them Coachmen have on plush or velvet breeches."¹⁰³ There is a young Mr. Sewal, himself a clergyman, from U.S.

travelling abroad and may be in France. his father is the antaganist of Pherenology. with him too was Bishop Soule (Methodist).

5 or 6 October delightful, mild fall weather plum trees all in bloom and our May and June cherries. have put on nothing warmer than calico and a small fire in the A.M. we are all in good health. servants all wish to be remembered to you. Dr. McCall's little child that was sick when you were there, soon died. Saturday 8th October just returned from a walk after breakfast with Pa. thought for Margaret's [Mrs. Calhoun's slave] gratification we would stop at the fence of the residence of her family and be able to say we had seen 3 of her children who look well and in good spirits, except the eldest who is up, but looks a little less strong than the others. Here I saw (the immortal Bryon's namesake) her only son. Aunt P. [Patsy] and these children send much love to her and think by the time she returns she will be almost a french woman. did not see James, but he is entirely recovered they say. you need not tell M. that her youngest child died of dropsy in the brain about a month ago.

Walking out to Mr. C.'s Country residence a week or so ago, saw the old servant, who was the first Judge S. owned. [Priam] Consequently looked upon as faithful a servant with interest as well as curiosity He is decidedly the finest specimen of his race I ever saw and his fine, open, generous, good humoured countenance is enough to redeem the whole race from the unfortunate stigma resting upon it. In a country of his own Colour, he would look a king of great dignity. I was surprisingly impressed with his fine face and powerful frame. there is not one white man in a thousand, the world over, with as good a face, or indeed from report, as fine a character. but human nature is the same at last. I wanted to see what kind of wife he was satisfied with. did not see her, but was told he had lost, by death, an old wife and was married to a handsome young wife.¹⁰⁴

I wish you to read but not to mislead you. A blacksmith gave us a lecture on temperance and took many of his figures from his trade and companions. Has studied about 2 yrs. only and uses excellent language, sentiments and arguements, but clips the Kings english. says "are" for "is" and so on.

the way I answer all your letters. is while reading them to take a pencil and make a list of the different things seen and questions asked (notes.) do likewise of my questions. I'll tell you what is going on in Town only to keep you from forgetting too. of the vanity of Riches—M. Bradley has wrent Dr. Moore's old house to live in, his new one is to be sold! we are to have J. Bradford as neighbour (wrent) Mrs. Weakly enquired affectionately for you and sends her love.

Lindsay says every day "Ma I have not forgot Sis Mary give my love to her." children all send vols of love and wait for letters patiently. Dr. Allan says "tell M. not to be led astray by allurements of Paris." Mrs. Boyds is most affectionate, Howard, Irby, Mrs. Pope, Mrs. B.P., Mrs. W. Pope, E. Irvin Clark. Pa says he will write every 2 weeks his love to you. you must write regularly now every fortnight too. learn to draw and if you can find time anything in the way of accomplishment should be learned. embroidery, shell, bead, waxwork or any such pretty pastimes. I look upon your hours now as precious as pearls or drops of gold. Adieu to you my dearest Mary. forget not your prayers or your bible.

M.M.F. Lewis

I am as happy as possible (without you) . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to her mother from Paris, Oct. 16th)

A merry Christmas to you all

Dearest dearest Mother

How much I am taken by surprise, a month ago Mr. Colhoun charged me to prepare a packet of letters to send home, and I in the fullness of my heart intended having a lengthy "epistle" for each of my friends. but how times flies! I find that even my moments are so precious that I cannot think of employing them in any other way except with my studies. Not a letter have I for one of my friends and only one for Sis Sarah. "Viola tout" [that's all] as the French say and here I am in the fourth story scribbling off "je ne sais quoi" [I don't know what] as fast as possible to hand Mr. Colhoun tomorrow.

When last I wrote I was to spend the day at Passy with Mrs. Colhoun. Let me tell you about my visit. We left about 11 o'clock in the omnibus and rode to the first station, but finding the next vehicle too much crowded, Mr. Trigant proposed walking the remainder of the way. The country was lovely, though not so tidy as England. hedges and flowers of all species. there soldiers were exercising in the "Champs de Mars" a large open plain used only for the military and sometimes for the races I believe. Passy, a dear little village where our [Benjamin] Franklin resided, was really enchanting and Mrs. C.'s little "home" was the most picturesque little spot you ever saw. situated next to the Orthoepic Institution, with a small flower garden in front, at the entrance of the Bois de Bologne. [Boulogne]

Mrs. Colhoun received me as though I had been her own child and even little "Merry" held out his arms to embrace me. We went to see Willie, who appeared perfectly happy. he was walking at his ease with a kind of machine which held him perfectly strait, at the same time causing him no inconvenience. The grounds surrounding the Institution are very extensive and tastefully arranged, ornamented with trees, flowers, fountains and statues. it formerly was the palace of Louis 15th and afterwards the residence of Marie Antoinette.

After a pleasant night, Mr. and Mrs. C. with Mary and myself, visited the garden of plants similar to the Zoological Garden in London. though on a much larger more expensive scale. Every kind of plant is here and the hot houses are numerous and magnificently arranged. to make the spot more lovely the whole is situated on a slope. All kinds of animals are here too, and are much more comfortably situated than in England. Ichthyology even, is attended to, and the inhabitants are as hospitably accommodated as possible.

The walks are much wider than our streets and covered with sand and gravel. The best of all is that all this costs nothing, and the poorest peasantry may here be enabled to improve his stock of intelligence, as well as the wealthy.

After this we visited the place where the "Gobelin Tapestry" is made and of all the surprising and beautiful things, this surpasses all! The

work is executed by the peasants, who are seated on the wrong side of the picture and instead of working with a needle as I supposed, bobbins were used. The first picture we saw was a portrait of "Peter le Grand" in full Russian dress. The next specimen was a portrait of Louis Phillippe. The third was a representation of the Peter the Great when a boy. The Russians are about to massacre him, while Catherine the virgin, dares any one to touch him. This is really perfection its self. The expression is natural and all so well finished that no one would ever suspect that yarn had anything to do with it.

Afterwards we went to Galignani's English library, where I bought a prayer book and a bible for \$3.20.¹⁰⁵ Now I read two chapters night and morning in the old testament as well as the new. And now that I have finished my account of all I have seen, a present of my own important little self (oh! the egotist). Mrs. Trigant with her sister [Mlle. Elisa Liot] has returned. school has commenced. we all study as diligently and I am as happy as possible (without you). Mrs. Trigant, says she will be my mother, is one of the kindest women you ever saw. Mlle Bandin is always my friend and as she says, I ought to be contended, for now I have a grandmother, mother and sister. The girls all profess to love me very dearly and we are all friends and consequently happy. There are 14 of us. all sleep in a large room, in separate beds, except myself who sleeps in the 4th story with Mlle. Bandin. I tried one night to sleep in the room with fire and in the morning I was so weak and faint that I could hardly manage to raise the windows.

Mrs. Trigant last Sunday carried me to the grave yard to place 4 chaplets on the tomb of her parents. the cemetery was so simple and beautiful, every tombstone was covered with chaplets of white and yellow flowers or ornamented with crosses. Mrs. T. also took me to the mass with her and I heard a sermon addressed to the children of the different Schools. (I understood all.) the sight was beautiful, all the schools have a different costume or uniform.

A'propos, I take lessons in singing and to my astonishment, my teacher tells me that I have a musical correct voice and with practice, I will be enabled to sing very well. I practice my piano nearly 5 hours

every day and am making rapid progress. I discover that I know nothing of the rudiments of music at all. French, I can not yet speak with much facility. I have taken two dancing lessons and how much amused you would be at my awkwardness. We danse an hour every evening and play two hours in the garden for exercise and all is pleasant.

I have had my teeth operated on and found 2 to be plugged and all the front upper teeth to be separated.

Mr. Colhoun gave me Cousin Mary Anne's address and Mr. Trigant was kind enough to send it for me. Mr. Pageot and cousin W. called immediately and welcomed me as if I had known them before. but to my sorrow, Mr. T. minister to America leaves with Mr. C. The little boy 9 years old, speaks perfectly French, Spanish and English.¹⁰⁶

There is here a little "Marquise," who has the most lovely playthings you ever saw. she gave me a little set of plate all perfect for my little sisters. she dresses in light colored "rept" [heavy] silks every day, while all the rest of us have our most common clothes. There is the most perfect order observed here, the rule is that all shall rise at 6 o'clock, and I am always the first one up and practise 1 hour before breakfast. Mlle. Bandin, bids me say "bonjour" to you for her. She says I am her favorite and she keeps all for Elodie Desgault and myself.¹⁰⁷

Farewell my dearest, best of mothers, you will now be cheerful, I know, when you are sure that I am happy. Best love to my dear father, sisters, brother and companions, remembering my S.S. class, all my friends. I intended writing to them all, but "some how or other" I didn't. Love to the servants.

The old coronation chair, republican as I am, methinks I should have pressed its seat with my humble person . . .

(Mary Betts Lewis to Mary Lewis in Paris, October)

My dearest child

We are just rejoicing over the receipt of two letters from you, after waiting patiently almost 6 weeks. we were anxious about your trip over

the Ocean. altho' we saw in the papers the arrivals of the Great Western and Acadia and found that several merchants in H. were in receipt of letters from Liverpool.

However as surely as sunshine follows clouds and stormy weather, so in this instance the tears and anxious thoughts chased away by smiles and cheering hope again upon your distant home. your letter from London came first. Pa did not open it, but we were at the breakfast table, when your Uncle sent it and everyone made a rush to read and would you believe that I was selfish enough to insist on their reseating themselves and let me read it peaceably? but indeed I was not allowed this privilege. Your Father sat by me and commenced reading aloud and when he could not make out the word, I would slip in two or three lines and so on until I came to your expressions of tenderness for one, so welcome too, but still the unbidden tears would flow in spite of me and until I could behave myself, I was not allowed to read, which you may guess was not long.

On the next night when engaged in entertaining our kind Pastor's family (six including my dear old friend Mrs. Boyd), your Pa recounted to Dr. Allan your first impressions of London and of Liverpool. You were spoken of by all with Parental fondness. your friends all flock to hear from you and If I were to give your love to all who enquire for you and all who I am sure love you my dear child I should not be able to find an indifferent person to your journey. I am often forcibly reminded of the little hero of "Hope On, Hope Ever" whom his towns people seemed to claim as their own property and prided themselves in the fact of his going into foreign parts.

We are frequently enquired of if you were sea sick and I am agreeably surprised at your being so little annoyed. what a contrast did your voyage present to your Mother's when a year younger than yourself—17 days from N. Orleans to Havannah, nearly all the time confined to the berth and not a female on board and a cargo so disagreeable and everything in such helter, skelter, that the order reigning in Noah's Ark must have been Paradise to it.

From H. to N.Y. boisterous weather half the time and very severe storms—very sick and fearful of yellow fever on board. no female on

board but what a change too.

You did not know that Mrs. McCellan and her brother were in N.Y. when you were, the latter saw you at Niblo's and followed you, to note your striking resemblance to yourself, not knowing you were in N.Y.¹⁰⁸

Let me impress upon you to note down much of what you see and recall all, however trivial. I impress this on you not only as a pleasant pastime, but upon principle. she who has her mind so well disciplined, as to regard a regular routine of duties both with regard to body and intellect, is forming for herself, future years of usefulness and quiet happiness. you will recollect, my wandered, that if you live, a change must come "o'er the spirit of your dream" and you, in spite of travel in defiance of all the allurements of Paris and a finished education, you must again become a backwoods woman!! regard all you see and feel now and be able to return to them when you please, perhaps in the vale of years, when memory wanes apace and you will think that "such things were" or even in the hey day of youth, memory is too treacherous to depend on.

From your present observations, it will be a gratification to you to be able to note your own improvement, to see how inexperienced you once were and crude your views, yet how you were able in a great measure to counteract them by self examination and a systematic discipline. How in the world have you managed, in the hurry of Travel and quick departures to recollect so we all you see? but pray do not regard postage. is it hurry which prevents you sending me two sheets. you see my dear child how selfish we are, even Pa looks for long letters, yet praises you highly as does Uncle W. [Wallace] for being able to write as often and as well as you do. and "still the wonder grows, how one small head, should carry all she knows."—Goldsmith's Village.¹⁰⁹

I would have you regard the present, more than the future now. had I an opportunity of seeing even the old coronation chair, handed down from the time of Edward the Confessor's time. Republican as I am, methinks I should have pressed its seat with my humble person.

You will be able to pursue a course of history both English and French with much more interest and more profit now you have passed through and will reside in those places of which you read. After reading

a large English History I would like you to read Scott's novels of history relating to the Stuart reign. "Tis well tho' to read the history first so you may mingle his agreeable fiction with his history and the first without a knowledge of the last is mere child's play.

And you saw the tomb and inscription of "rare Ben Johnson." He was buried in his coffin erect. 'Tis said he drank his tea so strong as to get drunk upon it. Do not doubt it. I have been more excited by tea and coffee than wine. A horrible depression of spirits is the result tho' and Johnson wrote "Rasselas" in one week to defray the funeral expenses of his mother, she a corpse at the time. His dictionary seems as great a work as he ever wrote.¹¹⁰

you saw the towers of many poets. Poor Spenser, you say his was also an eventful life; he lived in Queen Elizabeth's time and she was the only one in high life he ever flattered, altho' a common failing of Poets. He married at 40 and had to leave a residence in Ireland, in time of disturbances there, in such a hurry, that an infant was left and burned up with the house, of which heart breaking event 'twas that he never recovered and died in want and suffering.¹¹¹

How wonderful are the lives of Poets! How diversified with fame, ambition, disappointed hopes and death, in misery and want, and yet their writings delight the hearts of those who indifferently see them suffer. The great poets of Spain and Portugal were Cervantes and Camoes. They both died in want and great suffering the last in a common hospital of Pestilence and thrown into a common pit with many others. And poor Byron. A fugitive from his native home, an embittered life to review. It strikes me, they spring from low origin too in many instances. Some of those most celebrated the French Rousseau was the son of a shoe maker and even disowned his father at a time when the poor old man's heart had kilated with joy at the success of his son, who refused to know hime when he went yup with others to congratulate him. So one might suspect, from the character given of some of his works, that he did but little good, for in consewence, he was exiled and died abroad. But the great Rousseau. was a Genevese, also a son of a watch maker, wrote more of both good and bad than his name sake, was exile too in consequence

of his writings and they burnt [the books] from unpopularity a most miserable man even in his best days.¹¹² So altho' Poets are pointed out as great and their tombs held sacred in death, yet with few exceptions they are a useless and unhappy people.

Scott [Sir Walter Scott], Kirk White [Henry Kirke White] and such as these who compared with those above are considered mediocre Poets because they write more chaste and sacred poetry. They are still men of eventful and unhappy lives, there seems to me to be a curse attached to those who devote their health, youth and vigour to this effeminate accomplishment. Poor woman comes in for her share of misery and we may class Mrs. Hemans, Miss Landon (died in India by poison, Sheridan's sister and very beautiful), Mrs. Norton and Mrs. Sigourney of our own land as best in chaste and beautiful poetry, but the first are known to have lived unhappily and to have parted from their husbands. Our poetess is said to have a husband beneath her in literary acquirements and uncongenial in many respects.¹¹³ I never read poetry much you know, and I have all their disagreeable associations connected with it.

Oh what a world of interesting things you are seeing, what associations to be where all the great events of the reign of Terror took place, where a bearish, weak minded, cowardly, effeminate man ruled with supreme power, longing to hand down death from day to day to every creature he looked upon. And to think of so many interesting characters who escaped but narrowly. Bulwer has thrown a singular charm around that period in the last of a novel he calls "Zanone," The hero, one of a sect called "Rosicrucians."¹¹⁴

Your account of the zoological gardens pleased me much, but I hope you in your leisure will recollect more and record all you so think of. They must have been very extensive and a study in themselves. How beautiful it must have seemed to you to have been in the heart of the city in the old World. Did you think of the good chess board, Don John of Austria had? I shall revive my taste with a game now and then with Mr. Withers, who sends much love to you. How large a portion of Regents Park does the gardens occupy? In the water lot did you recognise that wonder animal with the body of beaver, bill of duck, called in Australia,

duck-billed platypus?

Just received a visit from Mrs. Breck, she says "give my love to Mary and tell her I feel a deep abiding interest in her." wished to know if you saw by chance the Queen.

Have you heard any thing of "mesmerism" in your travels? in London was Dr. Eliotson, who makes the world stare about curious and truly wonderful experiments he has made upon his two epileptic patients, young ladies. however coming nearer home, you may open your eyes quite as wide with wonder. Dr. Caldwell of Kentucky has written a book, relating to many experiments upon the subject and there are lectures going about the Cities and Towns and trying their hand at it too. we had a Youth of 19 here who was lecturing and upon a sickly youth, a year or 2 younger performed some singular, but now, in our Town, common experiments. they are you will find out, put to sleep and charged with, I suppose electricity or animal magnetism and become, while sitting in an upright posture, rigid as though dead. then follow questions, which are promptly answered such as what am I thinking of and what do I see and taste.¹¹⁵ Mrs. Cloyd mesmerised a little negro girl and could not wake her by the reverse passes and she became very much alarmed and had all the Dr.s and half of the Town there to see her servant. the girl slept from 1 o'clock in the middle of the day, until next A.M. Mr. William Mastin has succeeded often, to a remarkable degree and young W. Weeden, who is not very strong witted, was put to sleep and his mesmerizer became frightened, left him for a Dr. and in his absence, the young man foamed at the mouth and seemed to be in much agony. The flower mania has subsided and Mesmeric, nearly I say no more, thinking you know all about it. 'tis only to let you see our village is still the same for excitement about something.

No doubt you made some pleasant acquaintances on board ship. The Rev. C. Constantine Pise (you didn't spell his name right) tho pronounced pease is said to be very handsome and in Boston, a very wealthy young lady and beautiful too, I know her name but forget it now, wrote a note, offering him her heart, hand and fortune. he told her to give her "heart to God, her wealth to the poor and her hand to him who wanted

it." now did you ever hear a more pithy courtship? I suppose 'twas Mrs. Pageat, your cousin, whom he christened.

I was quite surprised to hear you speak of an out of tune piano on board the Great W. it cannot be the finely furnished vessel that the British Queen is.

*[There is no signature or ending.
Perhaps there were more pages or it
was included with other letters.]*

You are now in the midst of monuments of the most thrilling interest . . .

(E. R. Wallace¹¹⁶ to Mary Lewis in Paris, Nov. 7th)

My dear Mary,

I write this my first letter to you since you left home. the task is not the less agreeable however since it enables me to express my gratification at the reception of your several letters from N. York, Liverpool, London and Paris and to apprise you that I am highly pleased with their contents and to entreat you not to relax your efforts in putting down daily in journal form the most trivial incidents of your scholarly life. It engenders a spirit of thought and enquiry and imparts facility in the embodiments of ideas and transmission to the paper. It was this habit on the part of your Uncle (Judge Wallace) commencing with the study of Law.

You are now in the midst of monuments of the most thrilling interest in the heart of a great Empire. How fortunate you have been in having been able to see them with your own eyes. get you a Paris Directory or guide with large Map. In your stay in Paris do not forget to treasure anecdotes of the most distinguished men. I mean Civilians and orators and military men, they are a part of the history of France. I have not mentioned any of the medical profession. I estimate them not the less for surgery they have no equal. among the most distinguished in his branch is Jules Guerin the head of the orthopoedic institution at Passay. Your conversation with Mrs. C. may enable you to visit the institution. If so

send me some account of all you see.

In your stay in Paris do not forget the treasure of anecdotes of the most distinguished men. I mean Civilians and orators. As to the military men, they are a part of the history of France. Among those M. Thiers and M. Guizot, their early history and private character, etc.¹¹⁷

You will perceive I have said little to you about your course. I must leave that to Mrs. C. who must be the best judge in conjunction with M. Trigant. I trust however that you will on no account omit the full cultivation of your voice and that to immediately also the art of dancing, do not forget to give me full details of the opportunities you have of cultivating your manners. the French have the best in the world.

We are all very happy in the domestic circle but frequently say how much we miss you. I give but little or no local news and limit my remarks from the fact that you have over looked the most interesting of my family circle to wit Saten Blackberry and her daughter Dewberry, the latter of which still improves in appearance and manners. Your Uncle Joe took 10 premiums at the agricultural fair in Cattle.

[There are many damaged spaces in this letter and the ink is faded. The next two paragraphs appear to be about the manufacturing of candles that have displaced sperm oil and the comparative prices. This is followed by a discussion of agriculture prices and merchant fees.]

The 3 most important staples in America [he suggests] are Bread stuffs first, cotton the second and now the Hog instead of Tobacco the third. This will bring prosperity to all the coves in the mountains and the remotest Land lock regions in America. It is a staple that neither John Bull, the autocrat of Russia, or any part of the old world can [match]. I do not hesitate to say that the last whaling ship has been fitted out from America.

Next to this business is the discovery being announced which will give Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa a staple superior to Tobacco. I mean a new process of Rotting Hemp by Steam. My intimate friend, Mr. Hewatt [?] of Louisville, Kentucky, has succeeded in thoroughly separating the bark from the wood of the Hemp and wholly freeing it. The discovery has not been fully announced,

but it is certain that it is as white and as fine as silk and well adapted to manufacture of Duck and Cordage.

You do not mention Mrs. Pageot to whom I gave you a letter. should she have left Paris, I would like you to send her the letter to let her know you are in Paris. she always professed great confidence in and affection for me and I should not be unwilling for her to have an opportunity of manifesting it in a small way toward you.

My friend Mr. Thomas Kirkman of Florence¹¹⁸ has sent his son to Paris to get his Education under the charge of Doct. Hunt. He will call and see you. [Give] Mrs. Colhoun the grateful feelings of our affection and gratitude for her kindness to you. I beg you fail not to let us know of little Williams improvement.

Accept my kiss of affection

yrs

Your accounts of Paris will be studied here . . .

(E.R. Wallace to Mary Lewis in Paris, Nov 9th)

[Two letters within two days, Judge Wallace may have been writing from kindness or a practice letter was kept.]

My dear Mary

You have not written to me; at least I have not yet received a letter from you. But I have read all your letters and journals to your Mother; and I am indeed, from reading yours of the 13th Sept. to believe that you should be glad to hear from me. In that letter you show a little homesickness; and as I know a good deal of that feeling, I hasten, as a friend to contribute as far as I can to relieve it, if not remove it.

You are now in one of the most, if not the most polished and splendid cities in the world; you have before you and around you, the temples of genius and talent in every branch of art or science. All around you are the memorials of the past and present greatness of an ancient and mighty nation; every day is teeming with novelty, and in every hour add to the amount of your information.

you know that I am not in the habit of flattering any body. I despise

it in others; and I do not practice it. Now I must tell you, that after attentively reading your letters and journals to your Mother, I am convinced that I have heretofore underrated you. I have always thought highly of your mind and your leading moral sentiments; I have rejoiced in your judgment, or what is sometimes called your common sense. But I was not prepared for the discrimination, the judicious reflections, the patience, the prudent conduct, the discretions which your letters exhibit.

Do continue, then, to think for yourself. Look for information in every book and in every conversation; but do not take much for granted. Learn how to rely upon your own self and you will be happy and safe.

I fear very much, my Dear Mary, that when you find yourself near the bottom of the third page of my letter, without any news, and nothing but heavy advice, you will not thank me much for my trouble. I will do better in future. And now, with the help of cross lines, all the news that I can think of.

It is very natural to begin with what is personal. You must know then that I am not yet married and cannot say when that desirable event will take place. My boys are all well. I have declined sending William to N. York this winter as I intended. I do not know that I told you that I had some idea of making him a machinist. The northern effects upon him, at his present age. I may send him on in the Spring. George is still boarding with D. Breck. Ed continues with Mrs. Bradley, but they break up house keeping in a few days and go to Flemings to board, so that I must get a new boarding house for Ed. Charley is at Mrs. Spotswoods,¹¹⁹ in fine health, with a bigger head and more in it, than you find in Paris in a boy of his age. Will is now at the Round Bottom and will remain for two or three months.

Your schoolmates are, I believe, just as you left them with this difference, that they all think your lot in life much more fortunate than their, a slight feeling of envy which you will notice when you return. It is thought that Miss Beall will be married in a few weeks to Mr. Norvell, though he has not yet arrived. Wm. Lykes and Mary Eleanor Fearn are off forever, it is said. Dr. Fearn objecting positively. The young ones seem to bear this misfortune very well. America Yatemen is still single.

You know that Jim Martin and Betty Erwins [?] are off. Cabaniss will marry Virginia Shepherd in the Spring. I believe this is all the news of this set I have.¹²⁰

Some changes have taken place since you left. Judge Hopkins has sold his home to Bill Robinson the sheriff, and intends going to St. Louis in March to live. Mosely has gone to Louisiana. John J. Walker will go next year. Wm. Percy left last week never to return. The illustrious Dr. Walker Percy, M.D. left also to the great joy of the greater part of this population.¹²¹ It is probable that Benj. Pope and family with the W. Peetes will remove to Mississippi in the course of a year.

Mrs. Childs has bought John Blevins house and will take possession of this first of Jany. She has also rented the Masonic Hall where she will keep her school. She will take boarders. Miss Rogers will live with her, if Bob Bibb does not take her off. There is some such talk just now. No body is courting Mrs. Childs.

There are three young ladies here from Tennessee, a Miss Anderson from Murfreesboro and Miss Burris. They stay at Turners. And a Miss Walker from Memphis. Miss W. is quite a belle. She is beautiful—very animated, much disposed to be agreeable and polite to every body. But she is not as delicate and tasteful in her dress as she might be; she is considered a good deal affected and is very remarkable for the nearest approach to the hoop petticoats of the days of Queen Elizabeth, that has ever been made in Ala. She stays at Col. Rice's who is her relation. She must have a fine time of it with Elishia, your old admirer and friend.

When you write to yr. Mother again, tell her to make Ellen stand and walk straighter. She is bent so much as if she was an old man.

Your accounts of Paris will be much studied here. Mr. Pope has many views of Paris, its streets and palaces, brought over by Charles. And with the aid of a strong magnifying glass, it is very easy to transport ourselves to Paris and be in these localities you describe. I looked at some of these scenes a few nights ago, I fancied almost that I could see you in some of them.

I could write more, it would afford me great pleasure to do so, but I would have nothing more to communicate. To inflict letter after letter

of advice would be disagreeable to you. and besides you do not stand in need of more advice. And yet I will take the occasion to say that you should make your health a paramount consideration. You may possibly be too anxious to acquire information, and in this way it has often happened, that the mind has been injured and the body decreased for life. You are in some danger, from your ambition. Remember, therefore, to be temperate in all things. But I have such confidence in yr. good sense that I feel almost ashamed to be offering you advice.

And now Dear Mary, farewell and remember what an object of hope and anxiety you are to your parents and friends. How they will rejoice if you return to them prudent and accomplished and how happy you will be yourself at the time well and wisely spent in France.

Affectionately yours, E.R. Wallace

Home...there is a loneliness that steals over the heart

(Jane H. Childs and Mary Lewis to Mary F. Lewis in Paris, Nov. 25th)

Well I hardly know what to tell you first! Here I sit at my old post. The girls have just left the school room, after quite a happy day passed with good conduct and fine recitations, at really has awakened my kind feelings towards them so much, that I believe I must write of them first.

Mattie Pope promises to make a fine Piano performer if she would only practice three hours, instead of one each day. We can never make any great attainment unless we daily devote to it hours of patient preserving effort. In a crowded school I was allowed but twenty minutes each day to practise, and consequently I learned no more in two years than most girls learn in one.

We expect to go to house keeping by the close of the year as I have purchased Mr. Blevins's house. Perhaps you will meet some French girls who would be wanting to come home with you and be my Teacher. but I will write more of this in the future. I have a friend now in Scotland who expects to go to France next spring. I will give her directions where

to find you, and I know you will enjoy a mutual pleasure.

But to the school—We have about fifty this term. Miss Ann Matthews did not return. Should I go North as I expect to do next summer, her Ma wishes her to go on and remain at school for a year. Mary Jane is growing up quite a beauty, with her soft black eyes and silken lashes, and is really an intelligent girl.

Virginia Hale too is quite a charming girl when her good qualities predominate. Senisa [?] B. is unlike any one else, as ever learns better than formerly. Mary and Susan Spotswood are improving and are fine girls.¹²²

Soph. Walpole for her age is one of the most intelligent girls I believe to be found. With the advantages which I think she will have, she will make a star of no ordinary brightness. You recollect Irving's beautiful observation respecting genius! that although it may be choked by the thorns and brambles of early adversity, yet it will struggle up heavenly into sunshine. Poor child hers is a humble lot, but I have high hopes respecting her. [One wonders what became of this promising child.]

My dear boy [Willie Childs, perhaps a nephew] who was suffering with a fractured limb when you left is quite restored and I think he is a boy of considerable promise. He was reading the other evening a description of Versailles. I said to him Willie if you are a studious boy, Ma intends you shall go to Europe and see all the wonders of the old world. He replied with perfect nonchalance "indeed Ma I had much rather go back to the Virginia mountains, I don't know what I would do in France!"

Our town has recently been favored with a revival of religion, and numbers have been added to the church. Of your acquaintances Misses Webster and Rogers and Mr. Sykes are three and never will they have to regret the step they have taken if they continue faithful.

Your good mother has allowed me the pleasure of reading many parts of your letters. I indeed sympathize with you. There is a loneliness that steals over the heart when we are far from home, with all its pure and joyous associations which almost as makes us feel that we are alone on earth. We wander in a strange land and miss those familiar voices which have quieted us from childhood. We may be placed among the

one hundred and the best, be ever surrounded by the blandishments of Paris and there become the love ones of sweet companions, yet amidst it all the voice of memory will recall those hallowed images of home, and whisper that in splendour and admiration there is a loneliness which they have no power to dispel.

Miss Rogers often speaks kindly of you, and sends much love. Says there is some danger of my living here. I hope and believe not yet, but you shall be advised upon the subject. We have only nine in our music class, and they are doing well for beginners. I shall send this to your ma to fill up the other end of the sheet. Mary many happy returns and ever may you live to bless and to be blessed. Ever remember me as your sincere friend.

Jane H. Childs

The girls besides much love write an autograph to send you

M.J. Blevins	Susan Spotswood
Elizabeth Pervis [?]	Mary Spotswood
Virginia Hale	Susanna McDowell
Mary J. Matthews	Eliza A. Walpole ¹²³
Sophonra Walpole	
the other sick	

[P.S.] My dear Mary, I knew from the pleasure Mrs. C. evinced in receiving a letter from Mrs. Williamson traveling in Scotland.¹²⁴ She is 60 yrs. old, goes to see a sister, wife of a british officer (Cameron). relative of F. B. Ogden's Consul—somewhere! very intimate with Mrs. C. Mrs. C. would like descriptions of all you see. you share comparison of your country, 'tis pretty and modest in you. there can be no criticism upon describing things as you see them.

lovers—R. —. Peete and Rob Bibb.

If you have any little private reports of yourself slip in 1/2 sheet. Pa will not read it, on a promise from him. I want to keep your letters as your Uncle Joel says I want it as "family records." be as affectionate. I love to hand that down too. I have seen Mr. C. and feel as tho I had seen you. how can I repay ever in this world your good friends Mr. and Mrs. C.? Never. you must do it yourself for you alone have the power now. He is well and by opening 2 streets in our end of the Town and his liberality in giving \$150 worth of land has received the thanks of the mayor and the Corporation who would have to pay it.

Mary Lewis

I really believe that I am under a lucky star . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to her mother from Paris, Nov. 27th)

My dearest darling Mother,

How strangely negligent you will think me when you notice my date and the more so as I acknowledge the receipt of your welcome letter. but mother I know you forgive me when I assure you that the fault was unintentional and that it shall never occur again; Two weeks ago I wrote a long letter to you and without thinking placed it in my pocket and entire forgot it until the other day when to my sorrow I discovered that it was so much soiled that I could not send it.

And so you are pleased with my "natural" manner of writing; well so much the better for me (a real French expression) for all were mere random "charcoal sketches" and I had not the least idea that Uncle would ever see them. But of all that you gave me an account of, nothing was so agreeable to be as the reception of dear Aunt's missive and your approbation of my visit to New Haven. I was a little afraid after all was over that you would not like the course I had taken, but Aunt was so very kind that I was confident that you would thank her for the pains she took to render my time pleasant (cousin had told her that I hated her). You remember I feared she would act in this manner.¹²⁵

Cousin John Claiborne did not call on me when I was in New York, and I was disappointed. But the other day I received a very affectionate letter from him expressing his sorrow at this not having been given the note which Uncle Knox left for him at the hotel.

Since I last wrote I have been to Passy and as usual spent my time most delightfully; Mary [Miss Mary Calhoun of Phila.] and myself after church visited Pere la chaise. Oh! How beautiful 'tis the greatest treat I have had since I left home. so much magnificence and beauty combined so much overwhelmed me.

I took leave of poor Mary [Calhoun] who was too anxious to see her mother to be able to spend a year at Passy (she disliked the quiet village life which I so much appreciate.) She was a very sweet girl, and as she was even more of a "Mammy child" than I, we found no difficulty in sympathising with each other in all our little troubles.

November 1st was All Saint's day and we all had holiday. the girls all took the sacrament the previous sabbath and M. de Trigant gave us permission to spend the Saturday evening in religious reading and prayer. 'tis the first time I have ever had the same feeling as when in our prayer meeting. all were so fervent that I forgot entirely our difference of faith.

Now Mammy I have finished with all that I have seen and must give you an account of my own dear little self. I really believe that I am under a lucky star, all with whom I have formed any acquaintance have treated me with the greatest kindness. Mdme. de Trigant says that I am the only one of the girls she will spoil, because my tender mother is too far from me to shew that love of which the others have the advantage.

There are 20 of us and I have a room to myself with a bonne who stays with the young ladies in the 4th story. I have as much privacy as I wish and suffer very little more from cold than when at home. Mdme de Trigant fearing that as I was accustomed to the warm climate of the South I would feel more sensibly the cold in the morning sent up breakfast in the room of Mlle. Bandin and by a nice little stove I study and read my chapters.

I now study the lessons with the others and find my time very full

employed with them and my accomplishments—dancing, singing and piano. The guitar Mdme de T. tells me is considered really ridiculous and 'tis an instrument used only by the street players, but since I asked her to procure me a teacher I have received your long beautiful letter in which you express so great a wish for me to take lessons and I intend again to ask her.

She is as careful of us as if we were her own children and I have very much in hopes that she will teach me to be more orderly. She teaches us in the most thorough manner and you would be surprised to see girls of Lel's age teaching with as much facility as a grown person. They all write beautifully and are quite intelligent though not more advanced in their education than our girls. I do not think I am deficient in any of their branches except Mythology. In arithmetic and Philosophy, with chemistry I find myself more acquainted. We have the advantage of a professor of Physics and the experiments appear quite familiar. Miss Swift had explained them to me so frequently when at home.

[There is no closing, this letter is incomplete.]

You must excuse this letter for it is only about the second one I ever wrote . . .

(Edwin Wallace Sr. and Jr. to Mary Lewis in Paris, Dec. 10)

Dear cousin

Father telling me to write to you and to tell you the news that I thought would please you, I complied with his request. I would like very much to see you, or to hear how you come on in Paris. I expect you can speak french very well by this time. We have all been well since you left. I believe. I am now boarding at General Pattersons and I am very well pleased with the place. But however I won't stay there long, since I believe father will get married in a few days. George is still boarding at Dr. Brecks and Will is now in Limestone with uncle Hickman. Charley is at Mrs. Spotswoods and is well and hearty and says that he wishes to

see you very much. He does not like the idea of coming to town.

We have got a new teacher at the Academy, he is an excellent teacher, and a man of sound sense. Mr. Hudson is still teaching here. He delivered two or three lectures here on reading, and put the town in as great a commotion as mesmerism did. Old Mrs. Lagrande and Mr. Doe died lately. Miss George Ann Beil is married to Mr. Norval and has gone to the north. [Georgian Beale and Reuben B. Norvell] Calvin Fackler has gone to Knoxville to school. Albert Erskine and George send their best respect to you.¹²⁶ You must excuse this letter for it is only about the second one I ever wrote.

Edwin Wallace

My Dear Mary,

Ed has brought me this letter to direct for him, and although it does not seem of quite sufficient importance to cross the ocean, I have concluded to send it, by adding an item of news. It is a well written letter for a boy of thirteen, and the mere attempt to write to you, at his age, shows that he is a boy of a manly and courteous disposition. And as it will please him to think that he has written a letter to a friend in Europe.

The item of news which I promised to add is simply that I am about to be married on Thursday the 15th inst. to Miss Ann Penn.¹²⁷ It is now no longer a matter of conjecture. I have myself invited your father and mother, Uncles Joe and Hickman to the wedding. I have told all of them, what I now tell you, that although I am about to commit myself with another family, I have no expectation as is too often the case, of letting my old friendships and attachments become weak and cold. I hope always to feel a lively interest in everything that concerns your family and if any coolness should spring up, it shall not be my fault. Nor do I believe that Miss Penn will every give any occasion for a break between us. She is very much dispensed to adapt all my opinions and all my partialities. I hope for increased happiness by the marriage.

Ellen is growing very rapidly and that is very usual, she is proving handsome as well as larger. My boys are doing well; and they are all growing rapidly. When you return you will hardly know any of them.

It has not been long since, I wrote to you. I was a good deal disap-

pointed in not receiving a letter from you by Mr. Colhoun. He left here a week ago for New Orleans. He made himself very popular with the citizens by permitting a street or two to be run through his grounds near Green Academy and by giving a lot to the Society of Mechanics. The newspapers have complimented him highly.

Yr. friend

E. R. Wallace

The girls all wonder how you could contrive to write so much

(Mary Lewis to her mother from Paris Dec., 1842)

[This is only part of a letter and undated, but from the contents it probably was written after Christmas and before New Years of 1842. It was noted on the outside of the envelope, that the letter was not received in Huntsville until February, causing some concern of the family.]

The celebration of New Year's day the girls tell me is paid much more attention to than Christmas, and we will all then have holiday 4 days and Mrs. Colhoun has promised to come for me to spend the holidays at Passy.

I have visited her once since Mr. Colhoun left and oh! mother the people of Huntsville know nothing of her character, she so often reminds me of my sweet mama in her tenderness and affection for me and really I love her dear children as though they were my own relations; Little Meredith who had been sick was entirely recovered and Willie is so much improved that I have no doubt but he will recover.

Poor Margaret wished very much to return and Mrs. Colhoun say perhaps she may go with me next fall; most singularly she told me that she dreamed her infant died in much pain; she can make herself pretty well understood in French and amused me very much with her account of the manners of those about her. The Restorateur at whose house Mrs. C. is now residing has for a pet a large watch dog and M. says one morning she went down stairs rather early and found the old man in bed fast

asleep with the dog comfortably nestled in his arms.

Since I commenced my letter Mrs. C. sent your double letter! 'twas the greatest pleasure I have had since I received the other. I was quite hysterical and laughed and cried as I continued reading while Mlle. B. insisted upon inquiring into my excessive joy and grief and I with much difficulty translated the different parts which I knew would interest her most. The girls all wondered how you could contrive to write so much but I am sure they have no idea of all that a mother can say to an absent child.

I will attempt to answer but few of your many questions. And so our little village has not yet gotten rid of the habit of being carried away by every thing that is new, but mesmerism is more excusable than the flower mania since it appears to have more intelligence connected with it. On board the steamboat "Great West" Mr. Knox endeavored to put me to sleep and I to the great amusement of all pretended to be overwhelmed and commenced to nod.

You ask me about the girls—two Americans are here now, two of the sweetest girls you ever saw, one fourteen exactly the same day that I was seventeen, the smallest is very much like Matty Pope. The other girls I find every variety of character from the most polite and refined to the rudest from the most pious to the most regardless of the principles of religion. All play on the piano and study their lessons Sunday and appear to consider it nothing.

How do I dress you ask. I have bought a cloak of black merinos costing \$15 which is quite pretty, a black satin cape and a kind of drawn bonnet and for every day a "lise merino dress" which is very coarse, but warm. My travelling dress I wear Sunday, I wear my hair under my ears. I do not wish to spend one more cent more than I am obliged to, I found that I needed all my flannel for winter. I bought 3 plain cottons as sis Eliza calls.

Of vegetables we have spinach, lettuce, potatoes Irish, beets, turnips, cabbage, cauliflowers, carrots, leeks, onions, rice and many different kinds of salads. Fruits pomegranates, pears, apples, grapes and I do not know what after.

Fashions—all tight and plain sleeves and plain bodies, large capes, all kinds of bonnets with satin, plush and velvet short cloaks in shapes of capes. All the girls dress with much simplicity.

But enough! let me leave a little place for my messages. Tell Pa I am patiently waiting for his letter. Tell Sis Eliza to write and laugh a week after.

Our first snow fell November 6th, weather now cold, rain and damp. You ask me about pavements, I noticed them of wood in London and here of a kind of composition resembling grey stone. I am in excellent health, fatter than ever I was in my life, face covered with bumps, no colds. I have not had my courses [menstruated] for 3 months. Mlle. E. consulted the physician and he is now giving me some medicine. We have a physician who comes 2 or 3 times a week. All have chill blains except myself.

I will undertake to answer your letter next time. Give my love to cousins, Withers all, and to Charley McClung and the Nameless knight who regrets my absence. More love for you and Pa than all, embrace sisters and brother a 100 times for me.

P.S. I will be Sis Myra and L's teacher when I come. Love to Mrs. Ch., Br. and all my friends, W.H. particularly. Love to servants. S.S. scholars, dearest Sis. E.B.M.W.C.L. and best to yrself.

M.F.L.

IV

The Letters—1843

We had a very severe earth shake, but no damage . . .

(Mary B. Lewis to Mary Lewis in Paris, Jan. 29)

You do not know my dearest child what anxiety your mother feels from not hearing since Nov. by letter from you. Sometimes I ascribe your silence to sickness and am only aroused from such long and frequent reveries by the tears falling. We have heard once through Mr. Colhoun in which he said Mrs. C. spoke of you spending the last Sabbath with her. again I think, poor Mrs. Colhoun is sick, in the absence of her kind husband, and Mary, as she would I know be attending her sick couch. The little one shares her kind attentions and love, "Merry" and William, I hope are in as good health as Mr. C. left them. The children, here, pretty well. Ellen was becoming so crooked from weak lungs and breast, that I felt uneasy and have braces on her now. The boys have a play thing I think I will have, a kind of "gymnasium" cut off the top of a live tree, with a driven iron peg in place on this a pivot, a piece of iron in 4 corners, suspended from there, large ropes; pieces of wood for handles across the lower end. It is excellent for swinging by the hands, acts upon the muscles of the sholders and lungs. Uncle W. tried yesterday at the Academy with their new school master. What a fall he got and the laughter following. after they left and we were at dinner, he tried it. 'tis well they were private they say. Pa, R. Fearn, Mrs. Walker, Mary C. Fearn, Mary McClung and Dick Walker are in N. Orleans and will be

at home in four weeks. M. Mc and M. F. and Pa promised to write to you from there. (He will tell you that L.A. Spotswood marries Mary Jane Mathews, Father \$10,000 a year income!) ¹²⁸ That his brother [Spotswood] who stutters and almost beats himself to death when he talks, will, it is thought, marry Sarah S. all pleased at the other match.

Uncle Wallace and Aunt Ann [the new Mrs. Wallace] and Mrs. McDowel, our good friends and host of children, 12 or 14, dined with us yesterday. Charlie and all seemed very happy. She will do as well as any young girl can in her trying position I think.

Clement Clay is to be married to the pretty Miss Tunstall who visited our Town with her uncle Tom. You know there is some anxiety about the match in the families. But she is much praised and I hope will make him a good wife.

I msut say something of Lindsay for Willie. I was teaching him and when he saw he was learning and knew what I explained he would jump up and hug and kiss me. I walked out with the children and wishing to see if he were near-sighted, shewed him the weather cock and told him what it was for, said he, "Ma does it crow when it shews us which way the wind blows, oh! it looks like it should."

Heard you had an earthquake in Paris in January. We had a very severe shake, but no damage. We were all alarmed, as were many, some were not. Much damage in Memphis, chymnies shaken off in Nashville. I believe 'twas 13 January. Eliza says, "now suppose it swallowed up Paris." for an instant my heart really ached.

I must not forget to tell you one effect of the earthquake. Mrs. Hopkins lives with Mrs. W. at Steeles new house. Little Mary H. (about 10) was so alarmed that she has ever since had a nervous affection called "St Vitus' dance." 'tis melancholy to see the poor child and she seems idiotic, can't articulate well at all, scarcely ever talks and looks bewildered. What a misfortune!

Uncle Joe [Lewis] has made us a long visit, he took a great deal of

interest in your letters, followed you on the map. he knows a great deal of Paris, but says since examining your letters and the maps, he thinks he has been there. Uncle Knox has sold out and in June will be living in Baltimore.¹³⁰

'tis gloomy and hailing now. for 3 weeks we have had spring weather, but one spell cold enough to fill the ice houses; great consternation all arrivals from Tuscaloosa, that the Alabama banks closed, except the state bank. Losses to the merchants and they are indignant.

Susan comes to tell me about the church matters with the col.d gentry. she says they have a "Benevolent Society" have paid for a very genteel church and bought a hearse, but no body is to be carried in it but the members of the society, and she will not join as they are "rags" & c. she "would rather be taken to burial in a cart than be with such a set."

Do you visit Galignani's library often? I see a great many choice things there, beautiful paper and I suppose english publications. Could you not have some interest by paying a small sum as in the other circulations libraries?

My dear love to your school mates whom you love. I always feel a kindred love for the french from early associations. Present me most warmly and affectionately to Mrs.C., also your Protectors and Teachers. saw all the Colhoun family last week all are well and in good spirits. Pa will see Mr.C.in N.O. ch. all send their love.

The girls call me for vespers, evening shades are fast gathering around me . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to her mother, from Paris, Feb.5th)

My dearest darling Mother

My companions have nearly all gone home and though I wrote a short letter to Papa last Sunday, the pleasure of writing to you sweet Mamma is so great that my sabbath cannot be better occupied than in corresponding with my darling family.

M.dme Trigant shared a evening with "her children at home." A

delightful little soiree' we had of it; the girls played several charades, and M.dme T. related some most laughable anecdotes and read one or two of Moliere's comedies. One was "Spa Comtesse d'Escarbagnas" and "La critique de l'ecole des femmes" a criticism of one of Moliere's own plays by himself. One of the principal personages is a Marquis who . . . more than once makes use of the expression "tartes a la creme" (a bad piece).

We have also read some most interesting stories of the celebrated men and women of France during their childhood. Napoleon the great hero was first of all. And there was an amusing little anecdote of M.dme De Stael Holstein formerly Miss Necker who at ten years of age wrote a letter to Monsieur Gibbon (the celebrated historian) requesting him to come immediately to see her to transact some important business.¹³¹ Gibbon arrived and being conducted in the saloon asked the young lady her important affair and was thus answered, "Mons. Gibbon are you married?" and receiving a negative reply continued, "Do you intend to remain an old bachelor all your life?" "I have never thought about marriage," replied the Mons. Gibbon. "Well then Mons. Gibbon, will you accept my hand?" The great historian, astonished at her gravity, wished to know how he could please her, a young lady. "Is it my fine form?" said he as he displayed a corpulent and ungraceful person in the centre of the room. "No, no," replied the child. "I never saw anything more awkward." "Is it my handsome face?" "Why no," said Mlle. N., "was there ever such an ugly assembly of features?" "Is it my voice then?" "You have a nasal twang M. Gibbon." "Can it be my conversation which you admire?" "I can't say that you have guessed right, for I have more than once been weary of your long talks with Papa, but Papa admires you so much Mons. Gibbon that I formed the resolution to marry you for my father's sake. As his son in law you will be obliged to stay always with him for he loves you so much." The story reminded me of Myra's declaration of love to Colonel Pope. I will purchase the book for my sisters. History frequently makes more impression on the minds of children when given them in the form of amusing anecdotes than when studied at school.

I have not been out since I last wrote and consequently not yet seen our dear little Willie. During the whole week we have had rain, hail and

snow rather unwelcome winter visitors, who far from asking the hospitality of our little "pension," prevent us from even walking in the garden. The pretty buds of spring were just putting forth, every bush was carefully watched by each scholar. The tender blades of grass so much cheered us. Alas! the cruel frost has destroyed our green buds.

Our professor of Philosophie told us the other day that winter would soon take a leave of us, so much the better. I hope that with the Spring our kind friend Mrs. Colhoun will visit Europe and then sweet mother the Summer will restore me to your arms. I hope to be able to impart my knowledge of french to you and my sisters, with dear little brother. We can perhaps continue the education of Myra and commence that of little Florry and brother. My riches and recompense for applications at school will be to teach and aid you in the instruction necessary for our little family.

I must not neglect to tell you that young Kirkman called the other day, but as the visits of young gentlemen are not permitted in the "pension," I did not see him. It is to be hoped that he is better pleased with Paris than when I last saw him. Does he intend staying four years.

Here my sheet nearly filled warns me that I must bid you adieu, the girls call me for vespers, evening shades are fast gathering around me. farewell darling mother. I send thousands of kisses that I leave you distribute at will to the best children. My love to Uncles, Aunts, Cousins and friends. A kiss to each of my companions. Give my love to each servant. accept sweet mother my tenderest love and softest kisses for Papa and yourself. Your submissive and affectionate child. Mary Lewis

. . . the arrival of a Magnetisee and a Somnabulest

(Mary F. Lewis to Myra Lewis from Paris, Feb. 18th)

My dearest little Sister,

And so you really began to think that Sis Mary had forgotten you. I commence to write an apology for not having written before. My first Sunday after the one that I spent with Mrs. Colhoun was interrupted by

what will no doubt be considered a most singular amusement for the holy Sabbath in our dear primitive little village. What think you it was?

Why no thing less than the arrival of a Magnetisee and a Somnabul-est. all my companions were in the greatest commotion and Mesmeric Mania has passed in Huntsville, it is at the highest pinnacle of glory in the great Capitol of Paris. The Somnambulist (a lady) upon whom the experiment was performed was placed in a chain in the centre of our School rooms. and after many gestures by the Magnetiser was put to sleep. She touched the hand of little Emmy who had one side paralysed. told us the nature of her malady and prescribed vapor baths or steaming and rubbing. the arm she says will be entirely restored, but the foot unfortunately will always be turned. (Tell Sarah Bradley this remedy perhaps it may be useful to her.)

She touched the hand of a lady, gave an account of her state of health and entire description of her house, each apartment and even the pictures and to our amusement complained of the reflection of the suns ray on the mirrors dazzling her eyes. The porter who magnetised also came in and touched his hand at the same time magnitising her, she appeared in the greatest agony and when told that he was a Messneriser replied, "Oh, I would never wish to be magnetised by him."

I remained at home Saturday night and was taken with very sick stomach all day. Sunday was confined to my bed with sore throat, headache and sick stomach. Monday and Tuesday I was an unwilling prisoner to my chamber and Wednesday I was too feeble to take my usual Singing lesson. The Sunday after I was again taken sick in the same manner and was entirely relieved by an emetic of 22 grs. of Ipecac and now taking 2 pills of oxide of iron each morning and footbaths with mustard.

There are a great many little girls here of your age and Lel's but the latter think that they are real women and laugh at the idea of my being considered a child at home. Nearly all are American Creoles from Guadaloupe, St. Doming. or Martinique and you would be amused at the description they give of the manners and customs of the natives. I astonish them with my description of my Native forests and our American Indians, and American companions. My dear American family is so different from

those of my little companions whose parents and particularly mothers are nearly always engaged with company, balls, theatres, promenades, and pleasures of every description instead of making the society of their own family circle their principal pleasures.

So Uncle [Wallace] is at last married. How do you like Aunt Anne and how are our little cousins pleased with the match? Eddy seemed in his letter really delighted. I hope the others may as he, be also happy. Who teaches your lessons to you? How does Florry look? Does she talk yet? How does brother look? Does Sister Eliza draw yet? Indeed give me the news of all. for my part I have none except the weather again today 23 February. the most lovely spring flowers—Iris, roses, violets &c.

Tomorrow, Friday, we have holiday for the Carnival and Mrs. Colhoun will come for me to pass a week with her. Oh! How delighted I am and have not been out for five weeks. We will see the “Bouef Grad” attached to a kind of chair, ornamented with gilded trappings—ribbands and all kinds of beautiful decorations. A little child dressed as a cupid is seated in the chair and with the most lovely music all will be conducted through Paris.

Miss Warren (the English lady) tells me that she has seen a large number of young men in masks and disguised in different costumes on horseback amusing themselves on the Boulevarts. Now is the season for balls, parties, and pleasures of all description, how I wish Mrs. C. went more in company. Not because so much gaiety is very agreeable but because I would like to satisfy my curiosity. all is so novel to me!

My dear Mother, Again I commence my address to you. Are you well my mother? If not I will not expect letters so often, but if you can possible write, do. Your letters are so tender. Farewell dearest mother, forgive all my faults. I am in real Bedlam. Love to all my many friends and Sunday School class. Best love to Sarah Allan and all the other girls and next to her majesty, Myra, I give you many kisses for yr. self. Besides much love to be distributed as you please.

...perfecting yourself in whatever domestic circle...

(Mary Lewis to Mary F. Lewis in Paris, Mar. 5)

I have received your letters of Nov. 27th and January 16. they make one very anxious. I feel you are not confiding enough, you should never have allowed a week to pass without consulting friends and using means to restore your health. Do you think to wear thick shoes and warm woolen hose? Your feet should never be very cold. Leave your studies and take more exercise and change of air to pure and fresh as much as you can. only attend to your music when pleasant to you. your health is of much more consequence than accomplishments and let me know how you are.

You say your letters would be meagre. I do not wish you to fatigue yourself, but if you have time, write if it is only 2 doz. lines. send me every other only half. recollect it, all you see every day is new to us. The experiments in your school room, new opinions, new school books, new appearance of every object under your eye, shrub and flower and tree would relieve you of the tedium of writing a fine letter and be quite as interesting. give us your reflections, your opinions, your comparisons.

I am glad you are taking guitar lessons. it may be common, but in a family it is so heart-kniting and so combining—A song now from Lel by my fireside in my own room, lulls me as often in your absence as one from you did in your Father's. Without being aware of it the Piano is more scientific and the Harp more melodious. The humble guitar for my own or your privacy and do you know my dear one, there is much art in making that charmed place a magic circle? Music has a share in it we know. So let "duty and sweet associations" still assist you in perfecting yourself in whatever adds a charm to a domestic circle. For what is the fashionable world to compare with our own humble affections. Then whatever makes a young lady agreeable and happy in her home holds the greatest charm to her character.

There is a spirit of improvement moving upon this land. 2 days ago Maria Pope married James Scruggs. next morn they left for the North in company with Louise Hopkins. S. Lowe and Kate Fearn for Madame Canda's school. In Spring G. Thornton and Kate Maltbie who is now here will go too. M. E. Fearn and S. Allan go with Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins to St. Louis to live. M. on a visit. S. on a visit to her sister Mrs. Smith near there. M.A. Cruse has been in Philadelphia several months. So you can see changes will be occurring.¹³²

C.C. Clay has returned with his wife, and they are all pleased I understand.¹³³ Mrs. Clay was telling me last week what a laugh Withers had upon Lawson for saying that when he got married, his wife would perform those gymnastic exercises you so much admire in your last letter of yesterday. I have had the one I told you of erected and can't you think how prettily the girls exercise with it. good weather 8 or 9 times, they are daily here between 20 or 30, so you must learn and take drawing of yours and we will have them if we live for "brother, father and all."

Pa is still away, but I am looking for him Monday. he will be so happy to read your letters. Uncle sees some of them now. Since his marriage I do not see him as often. I saw here, they all seem happy. children call her Ma and your Pa quite reconciled to her. she behaved so prettily to her company, husband and children when married. he was pleased with her; she is now not well enough to tell how she will be able to manage and I do not allow the boys to make the shadow of a complaint even if they were inclined to which I do not think they are.

Uncle Hick [Hickman Lewis] has been nearly dead and professed religion! have not seen him when he was in town. last I addressed a note to him entreating him not to forget himself so far again as to allow himself to discharge his brother again. he answered me affectionately, left town, was taken ill and no doubt the reflections came home strong upon him as I used as an argument that he was probably the future happiness and respectability of his own children by it. He told Joel he would come an see me and says he has no ill will to his brother.

I suppose Pa wrote to you. He saw all the "Denaridels" all live in Mobile. Ad. and Ang. have sons. Mrs. Walker has just returned. she says

Adelaid is a most splendid woman and performer and singer upon harp and piano which she obtained in Paris.

Contrive to bring me some of the seed of the pretty flower the french call "immortels." I think they are yellow, never wither, never die, or change colour. we call them strawflower I believe. Mrs. Smith once shewed me some. Tell Margaret all are well at home and she ought not wish to leave her mistress. tell her too Aunt Patsy expects to see her highly accomplished and "quite the french lady."

Of Lindsay—He has a dog "Amie" an English setter. As he is a fine hunting dog, the gentlemen try to exchange with him, but he would not. One day his father says, "Lindsay, Mr. Fearn and Mr. Mastin want to give you their beautiful little little white dog and \$5 to boot for yours." L. "no sir, he can't get him." M.A. says the little dog can smoke a cigar and ride behind you Lindsay. L.—"well I'll have him." Pa now says, "Lindsay when Mr. F. has your dog tied to take him away what will he say to you." L.—"he'll just bark." "Well when you see him going out the gate, he looks back, with his tail hanging down, barks so slow and soft, don't you notice him." Lindsay ran off crying and screaming for his dog and hugged and kissed him and if you wish to insult him now, ask to exchange dogs with him. Nothing can part them.

I am teaching Myra [8] to write now. She is very anxious to write you. Myra says "tell sister Mary there is nothing on earth I wish so much as her return home"! Her very words. She has an accurate ear for music. Ellen and Eliza are learning Latin very well (with Mrs. Meuse who teaches in Mrs. C.'s school.) Eliza is at Algebra and geometry, but says they are very difficult to her. They are all improving in composition slowly.

Mr. Colhoun was with Pa in N.O., but I have not heard whether he is coming this way. I wished to send Mrs. Farrar to you. suppose you get Mrs. C. to subscribe for a religious N. Paper for you from London. (I take the N.Y. Observer.) but N.Y. 'tis so much in opposition to the Catholics, I would be afraid to send it to you. that is the best way of your getting religious information and now will be new too.

Coz Betts and all your friends, sisters, and the servants send their love to you. Harriet Mitchell Hokes and your beau Figures are married.¹³⁴ N.

Patterson and young Dr. Matthews they say are to marry. Mrs. Childs's friend [Mrs. Williamson] may be in Paris, she is to return in the fall too, perhaps you could come with her. Mary hand this note, enclosed, to Mrs. C. Tell her Miss Ware desire me to send her Mrs. C.'s address in Europe. She is a Northern lady, teaches school, "Nubin Ridge."¹³⁵ I will not be the means of annoying Mrs. C. unless she directs it to be done. I hear she is very smart, about 40 and a fine teacher but eccentric.

"Temper" is the book I tried so hard to get for you here. My old Aunt made me read it aloud to her several times when I was 13 and 12 years old, since which time I have not read it. Miss Austin is a beautiful writer too. "Pride and Prejudice," "Persuasion" and some others are hers. do you like travels? we are all reading them such as "Marco Polo" "Landers."

My dear Mary I hope in your letter to your cousins you made no allusions to anything Myra said. If you have, do not again mention to any of your kin anything you have heard of the rest. you do not how true it is. I have just received a letter from Mrs. Lea complaining bitterly of Mrs. K.'s treat to Myra on here route and after somethings repeated to you. Say nothing of it to any of them. Mrs. L. hears your being prejudiced and is affectionate. (do not be so.) [written in a little circle] —cut this off.

The girls wonder "how Ma can write so much. do they never wonder how they can talk so much. when friends and relatives are together they are always talking and I could write to you a month I believe and find more still to say.

Pa tells me to stay two years. Do you say yea or nay?...

(Mary F. Lewis to her mother from Paris, March 12)

My dearest darling Mother,

When I wrote to Sister Myra I was preparing for my visit to Passy and accordingly early Friday evening Mrs. Colhoun's bonne came for me. The day was bright and cheerful and having been in the house five weeks you may well imagine that my feelings were similar to those of a liberated prisoner as we cleared the gates of Paris and entered the beauti-

ful "Bois de Bologne."

I found Willy and dear little "Many" just recovering from chills and fevers. Mrs. C. was pretty well and M. as usual delighted with Paris and Parisian modes. The following morning was unfortunately rainy and having the Cholic I did not venture out but remained nearly all day in the house. I read *Ballad Singers* by Miss Edgeworth and *Amelia Mansfield* by M.dme Cotton. Several days after I read a biography of Louis Philippe with an abridged history of the Revolution and the Orleans family. I have also read in French *Les Veilles du Chateau* by M.dme de Genlis which I found so beautifully written and instructive that I intend buying it for the children when I return.¹³⁶

So much for my literary pursuits in the vacation not forgetting as to go to church. In rain and damp we sallied forth to take some exercise in Passy, but finding the streets very muddy we took a long walk in the Bois de Bologne again. I begged Mrs. C. to walk and we went nearly as far as the fortifications that are nearly finished in the back.

The next day was the celebrated "Mardi Gras" and though I felt but little inclination to visit Paris, Mrs. C. insisted. We, Margaret, Cecile (our *bonne*) and myself prepared ourselves and at 10 left in the Omnibus.

We arrived just in time to see the "Boeuf Grad" and all the imposing procession. On the way on Rue St. Honore I met Ellen and Clara Peabody but such was our haste that I had not time to talk to them, but only pushed by like lightning giving Ellen a kiss and "bonjour" as briefly as possible as my guides were already mingled in the "gaping crowd."¹³⁷

At the head appeared in great number of "masks" on horseback disguised as Turks, Arabs, Indian, Italian Counts, Spanish Marquises, French Barons, English Lords & c. And Oh! how beautiful was all to me, all seemed theatre Splendid. Everyone with long curls, moustached imperials and beard under the chin. They were followed by 4 of the largest men I ever saw, real giants dressed as savages or as Hercules, with large clubs and tomahawks and rustic wreaths of coarse evergreens bareheaded who lead the "Boeuf Gras" a large steer more than three yards in length with gilded horn and a superb covering of Crimson cloth embroidered with gold and decked with garlands of flowers and ribbons of every and

all colors. What think you was the price given for him \$900.

Now a smart cart approaches let us stop and inquire into the "faction" (as the children say) of the tremendous roar of laughter. 'tis 4 men of the lowest class of life, dresses of "sacks" of bailing with horrible masks, noses as long as my hand and quietly eating or pretending to eat raw carrots much larger than my arm and conversing in the most familiar manner with the multitude cracking "vulgar rough" jokes on all sides.

let us leave these and give our attention to the little troop of raga-muffins on the other side of street who attract the attention of the common people. Nothing ever appeared more motley than the little group covered with rags and pieces of colored cloth, masks, fool's cap, turban, bead handkerchiefs and a band of musicians at the head and forming quite a concert, a "cat concert" of all means of whistles, broken fiddles, banjos and shrill fifes.

Here let us push our way through the insolent throng and if possible see the little miniature band of troops. the mass is so dense that we fear to move, but take courage and pass on. a rough man gives us a pinch and wishes to have a place, but I keep my own pretty well and by elbowing a person, I as possible pass only before and leave all the quarrellers behind, I feel such dizziness that I can hardly walk another step. the constant fear of being run over by the carriages, wish to keep my new silk dress out of the mud, and to preserve my bonnet from the rain nearly distracted me.

Margaret begs to return and after buying some cakes for "Dear Willie and Manny" and a little boat and purse for the latter we call for carriages and quickly arrive home. Mrs. C. is better and listens to my ecstatic joyful description of all my wonders with pleasure and is much amused at my independence on the streets.

Willie says—off with your silk dress and bonnet and play with us. show me how to make my boat sail, sit down on the mattress with me, play cards with me, and tell me tales about Napoleon and Josephine. What demands! stop a minute and I'll do it all, and soon am settled on their little Pallet before our snug fire.

Pa tells me to stay two years. why the vagabond! he really wants to

get me off his hands as quick as he can and I think or fear that if ever I return he will be putting me off together. But what is your opinion of the occasion? Do you say yea or nay? 'tis you alone that I will obey. Everyone tells me that my advantages will in two years be doubled in force. Mrs. C. has been saying all the while, "Ah! Mary if you could muster up enough courage to ask Pa to let you stay two years. You have no idea of the progress you would make." But though I am content enough in school still I have always set my heart on returning. To think of staying yet 20 months calls back all my homesickness which so afflicted me when I arrived.

You say learn drawing, painting, French, harp, guitar, piano, fancy work and cooking and heaven knows the rest. How can I ever find enough time. Practicing three hours my piano and knowing guitar teacher tells me to study my guitar two hours per day. My mistress of singing wishes me to sing one a day. M.dme T. requires of me all the studies that I commenced at home. My dancing master's lessons take four hours a week from my studies and my mistress of arithmetic has three hours a week. Thus you see I am constantly busy, not having even time to mend my clothes.

Painting and drawing I will leave for Sis Eliza she has a decided taste for both and I for neither. As for a pretty wardrobe now I have no idea of it. Winter has passed and I have been clad in a school dress costing \$3,20.

And you had an Earthquake at home. Most happily we had no such misfortunes. We received the word of a most desolating one at "La Guadalupe." there are 3 young girls here whose parents from being extremely rich are reduced to loss of their fortunes in this unhappy island. Today Sunday, we have been to church and a heard a most impressive sermon on the pettiness of man and his dependence on God, the vanity of earthly possessions and folly of giving too much time to world affairs and pleasures. A collection was taken up and a pretty good sum was raised to the unhappy persons for Guadalupe in all the churches of Paris. It is to be hoped that their conditions will be more prosperous soon. 'Tis the 3rd scourge that they have had since 1795.

Today is a most lovely day, warm as summer and I hope to go out

next Saturday, and I hope in 4 weeks to spend several days with Mrs. C. I am now well but not _____. When sick again (while in Paris) the Dr. recommended me to try leeches. Wishing to escape, I have been to Notre Dame de Lorette to church this morning. I have seen nothing of Paris since Mr. C. left and expect to see nothing until he returns. What a dear woman Mrs. C. is! She regularly sends for me by Cecile or comes herself. I have been to church and heard an excellent Sermon from Mr. Lovette. Mrs. C. and myself walked from Paris to Passy. Chaillot where the church is situated is a distance of 2 miles. I wanted exercise and persuaded her to undertake such a promenade.

She and the children are all well. Margaret tells me to thank you a thousand times for going to see her children and begs you to give her love to them, her husband and friends. I have been just endeavoring to make up my mind to stay until 1844, and I think have nearly enough courage to do so. Saw some lovely flowers in Paris—japonicas, roses, violets, hyasinth of all colors, crocus, iris, pansies, box vine, marguerites, etc.

Give my love to friends, companions, relations, sisters, brother, Uncle, Aunt, cousins, my dear father and yourself. Do not forget to send me some religious books by Mr. C. with my scrap book that Uncle gave me to copy poetry. My love to Susan and all our Servants. Mrs. C. sends her love with Willie for Lindsay. M.dme Tr. and M.lle B. send their love.

Have had the leeches applied and have been much improved by them. Many kisses for Pa and your dear self.

APRIL FOOL—

MERRY CHRISTMAS—

HAPPY NEW YEAR

It is my maxim to reap every advantage of the present moment

...

(Mary Lewis to Mary F. Lewis in Paris, March 31)

My dearest child

With much joy we received your last letter of Dec. 27th. I am truly

grateful that your health is comparatively good however, but you are complaining much of tooth ache, is it with the remaining jaw tooth which Dr. Harrison left when he drew one for you? I know it is not a want of courage which causes a hesitation in having teeth extracted. you seem to hesitate tho' to bother others. Do not indulge this my child, 'tis a weakness of character.

I see you highly appreciate your advantages of seclusion in the heart of Paris, 'tis all the better for your studying, but I hope before you leave you will be able to see more of the citizens, know more of the Society polish of Paris. As much as you seem to object to it, on account of appearing to others, you had a distaste of village life. my dear child, how do you know where life is to be spent. It is my maxim to reap every advantage of the present moment.

Do not, as Pa did when was in N.O. neglect to go to the Opera to hear the "Stabat Mater" then attracting the whole N.O. world. And then he came home to regret it.

The markets in every City are interesting spectacles. Pa was delighted with a N.O. Market, superior to any in the U.S. he says. I regretted your not seeing N.Y. and Philadelphia markets. You see at such places the peasantry and better and more industrious class of poor people, which you will see no where else under like advantages. for that alone I would like to see them.

You have by this time I suppose received the N.Y. Observer. 'tis (as is every other religious Protestant Paper) against the Catholics. I am almost afraid to send it to you, but suppose your Catholics do not read it. You will love the poetry of "Mother, House, and Heaven" I know. do not encourage the direful disease "Mal du Pays" but look with hope to a return in Fall and let thoughts of house and friends urge you to improve and fill both mind and journal with fruitful sources of pleasure to us and yourself in years to come, living here or else where.

Miss Basset made us all laugh immoderately at our ignorance here of good music the other day, having met her with a good many ladies in visiting.¹³⁸ G. Beale [Georgiann] is in Phil. says she heard "Norma" and heaven forbid she should ever have to listen to Madame Bode and

Maria Walker sing at any more of Mr. B. Fearn's Soirees! the truth is this, poor Mrs. B. lost her voice but she certainly knows how singing ought to be done. she knows the style and she is a thorough musician, if she had taught you first instead of Mr. B., who does not know how to impart his knowledge, you would have been better taught. but you know how it is here.

I wish you to search out for new ideas on this subject too. You can bring some varieties of pin cushions and little useful things &c. recollect when you are coming to arrange all you wish to bring as articles of wardrobe which always pass unmolested. A gentleman wished to smuggle a peice of broadcloth. he had it doubled in lengths for a cloak drawn up at the neck and arranged as a cloak, a pretty awkward one tho' I think.

Mrs. B. has on a visit to them a German Mechanist who as his Partner will import Pianos and will have there the interior machinery unscrewed and fill the hollow with sewing silk, which sells there for 29 cts. per., I think and here for 25\$. what a speculation! it is no harm there, but if caught here, they forfeit the pianos.

But excuse me for looking to the future, you may even now be sick and in no humour to read. what know we what a "morrow may bring forth" and you know I am no "castle builder." Mrs. Hopkins, whom I called upon yesterday as a farewell visit, she leaves on Monday for St. Louis, Mary. E. Fearn with her. she and Sykes no longer think of each other, take warning from what she said to me yesterday in answer to a remark of mine. "Mary keep single until you're 22 or 23 and don't allow a childish, romantic, fancy to blind you to faults in a lover which tho' they allow a childish, romantic fancy to blind you to faults in a lover which tho' they seem trifling, may in a husband make you always unhappy!" "Indeed Mrs. L., I will not. I shall have many changes of opinion at 22; even in a year; a man I would chose at 17 would scarcely look at now at now and almost feel a contempt for him."¹³⁹

I believe I told you of C.C.Clay's marriage and arrival. I have now called on her. she is by no means the beauty I expected to see. she has a strong face, brown hair and eyes and clean brown skin, at lest not fair; C.C.C., jun. had a few days before given (in a street fight) Judge [John C.]

Thompson a caning, cutting his head badly and some fear of brain fever a night or so getting well now. I could but think—how many miseries—how many heart burnings—how much temper! but ticklish sensitiveness! how much doubt! fear and hope and unpopularity all feel and show, who are connected with the family of a political man and feel bound to resent every newspaper paragraph of him. This arose from editor Thompson calling J.C. a “little man” and some other such things. no necessity for a fight. The young lady looked spirited, a little too much. but ’tis a very difficult case for a young woman with no experience to behave well in, they all seem to like her very much. she seems affectionate. CCC jun has more difficulties than that tho’, a little slander I won’t speak of.

Describe your episcopal church and preacher and ceremonies to us. trying to get up one here, but I don’t think they can succeed, Pa would not subscribe because he says, so few cannot support a Church. the churches already here are not half supported. Mrs. Beirne is very anxious for one and says Mrs. C. promised them an organ. Col. Pope gave them the lot joining the Masonic Hall. They say ‘twill not suit and wanted to ask Mr. C. to let them have the P.Office lot opposite his house. But he [Rev. Lay] would not ask, leaving it to them to ask as he though the other lot much the best situation for church.

Hear anything of “Puseyism” in Paris? ’tis a turning away of the Episcopalians to the Catholic religion with a little modification.¹⁴⁰ Does your church escape it?

I gave Mrs. Hopkins as a parting gift what I wished you had, “the Ladies Closet Library.” “Martha’s Mary,” they are beautifully written.

Florry talks quite plain and when asked says, “Sis Mary gone to Paire.” L. is manly and affectionate. Myra improving rapidly under my teaching. Pa says she beats others in Geography. I am gratified as well as Pa at you looking forward to assisting me. Ellen and Eliza improve. The experiments you speak of the lectures, I know are improving to you. Your father bot a microscope. we have examined a few minute things which are wonderfully magnified, but not water or cheese yet.

have your teeth operated upon. you don’t know how great a source of regret the loss of my teeth is to me. tho quite sound at marriage, you

see sickness and calonnel, the Southern diseases making it necessary, have ruined them.¹⁴¹ Hope dearest Mary your health is good, pray watch overself better.

Do not send your backwood daughter across the ocean for nothing . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to her mother, from Paris, April 9th)

Dearest darling Mother,

Now that I have nearly finished my letter to Pa I employ my Sabbath sorrrie in answering your sweet "lamoncholy" envelope that arrived day before yesterday and in thanking you for the interesting New York Observer. How quickly they both came and what a surprise.

The letter to Mrs. Colhoun I have sent and she will soon answer it, she is a very punctual correspondent. But mother it appears that you are determined to have me either sick or badly taken care of but just to spite your malice I must tell you that I never had as good health in my life and am watched as closely as possible to keep one from any imprudence. It is even forbidden to change any article of winter clothing for our summer garments. I never have cold feet and to prevent it in winter Mlle. Bandin made me wear not only woolen stockings but warm shoes lined with thick flannel and if ever we went out in the mud, it was always supplied with stout warm overshoes.

M.dme Trigant was so particular about my getting damp that she did not allow us even to step in the garden in rainy weather. For fresh air I have my Easter holidays to pass with my "mother in France". Dear Mrs. Colhoun and my little companions "Willy and Many." I intend making some little Porte-Allumettes for Mrs. C.

You merely thought that I was in bad health because I gave you a detailed account of every head and stomachache that I happened to be troubled with, and behold you have got all up in quite a respectable pile and sent all back to me when I had forgotten that I ever had them. Why Mother, remember I have been here nearly eight months and have

lost not more than two or three days altogether. My cholics that I had were chased away by 40 pills of iron rust and leeches. Week after next I commence to take bitters. Our physician comes twice a week to see us all, and he pronounces my pulse is very regular and healthy.

I cannot wear my last fall dresses at all and am obliged to have them altered, so do not I beg you my tender dearest mammy attempt to persuade yourself that I am suffering when I am blessed with fine health, good appetite and good night's rest.

Do not send your backwood daughter I pray you across the ocean for nothing and allow her to stay another year. You cannot tell how quickly the time will pass by and how much more useful I will be to you when I return. Another year will in some measure perfect me in my french and music whereas if I leave all now I will have a mere smattering, a thing that I am persuaded you detest even more than I do. The sacrifice I know is great. Oh! how much greater for me than you yet mother, the joyful anticipation of being able to repay you a little your love, instruction, kindness, and patience by the same services in an humbler degree to my sisters and brother gives me courage and with your consent which I hope to obtain, I would like to stay.

Oh! perhaps that you are afraid of my eloping with one of these mustachioes monkey Counts if I stay too long. the other side that I will be an old maid when I return, tell me which! You say that Clem Clay is married and even my "old beau" Mr. Figures. really after such sad news you may not be surprised if I pine away and die of despair and melancholy. Clement promised to wait for me. Behold his "constancy" and Mr. F. Don't let Charley McClung take a fancy to anyone I claim him for my beau. He at least will not desert me.¹⁴² The girls all [my love].

Ma says my letter is not worth postage and unworthy of crossing the wide Atlantic . . .

(Eliza Lewis, age 13, to Mary Lewis in Paris, April 17th)

Dear Sister Mary

We miss you very much. It seems as if years have passed since your departure. I have tried often to write you a letter, but in vain. Ma never reads it without saying "it is not worth postage" and I really think them unworthy of crossing the wide Atlantic but I will endeavor to do my best this time and will send it by all means if as Sarah says "nothings well and all happens" to prevent my doing so.

You quite flatter me in you last with reference to my drawing. If the young ladies improve in drawing as slowly as I do it would discourage their teacher and it would take him a "coon's age" to perfect them in that elegant art. I draw very seldom now, and then I a like the Quakers I only do it when the "spirit moves me." I drew the boy extracting a thorn from his foot, from the Penny Magazine, I expect you will remember it. his foot is resting on his knee, and what do you think the foot was taken for—a loaf of corn bread in his lap and the toes looked as if they were the cook's finger prints. Do you not think this one instance in my statue drawing is enough to discourage any attempt of this elegant art, but I will specify another piece of my splendid drawing.

Caledonia found an engraving of a goddess in a state of nudity retiring to bathe, near Mr. Colhouns gate very much soiled. I was delighted with it, and immediately seated myself to draw it. You never saw such a deformed creature as I have made of it. I expect you would laugh at this. One of her breasts is nearly to her waiste and the other nearly her neck, and she looks as if she were grabbing it with one hand, her head thrown back instead of modestly forward. it surprised us, this drawing and we wondered how it came there. None of us have seen the original except Pa who told Ma about it.

He is now in Huntsville, having just arrived from Florence, and we missed him very much as he always studied our Latin lessons with us. I already experience the improving effects of this language, and I feel that it will be of good use to me hereafter, my other studies are very interesting but I was obliged to discontinue Geometry and algebra on account of time. I think I am improving in composition since I have entered Mrs. Childs class. And Ma says "'tis the results of a better informed mind."

We have a paper in school now to which we gave the name of "the

Tattler," each week the best compositions are selected and copied and it is read Friday evenings and seems very interesting to the school.

I know you are anxious to hear from the girls, you will see from Ma's letter who has left for school and on visits. Your friend Mary McClung has departed from life in this town not for a "better land" but for Knoxville by her Uncle Hugh's invitation and she never expects to return except on a visit. C. Betts will go on a visit to her sister to stay for the summer. I expect Ma will be very lonesome as they always come to inquire for you. It is thought that W. McClung and M.C. Fearn did not enjoy their visit to N. Orleans. Report says that Mr. R. Fearn would never leave them for fear of Mr. D. Walker stealing Miss McClung's affections, which you know would have been very indecorous, particularly since none of the families are willing that he should.

What do you suppose that I am going to tell you now? Madame Judy Spence was married to a coloured gentleman belonging to Mr. B. Robinson. as usual no darkies were invited, but the house was thronged with white ladies and gentlemen, the youthful bride was arrayed in a delicate blue figured silk with a handsome nosegay in one hand, and the bridegroom was arrayed also in a blue vest to correspond with that of his bride. the supper was elegant, and was arranged by Mrs. Cavanaugh. We were not invited, but Uncle Wallace and Aunt Ann who are near neighbors to them attended, and I believe they were much delighted, but in the mean time let me tell you the couple made their appearance at church, the following Sunday, from which they say she is to be turned out, for her Lord and Master it seems has another wife from whom he has never been divorced. I could tell you more about these romantic lovers, but I have other things to relate to you.

Amongst the agreeable wonders that are constantly happening, the Spotswood Uncle died and left a large sum of money to be divided between them.

I will now tell you something about home. Florida talks with much facility, and when asked for you she says "Sis Ma gone Paris." Lindsay remembers you and prays for you every night. and often wishes for "the time to come for your return." he has two beautiful rabbits sent to Ma

from N. Orleans by Dr. Putnam (since dead). one of them is white and the other grey. we feed them on clover, parsnips and bread. they are very tame. Pa had a house built for them, nearly ten feet high, and twelve long. and Ma says if she succeeds with them she intends making a present of two to the Methodist fair in May or July.

The Brass Band had an elegant concert at the "big spring." they say in C. Clay's office and the spring was crowded with people. Charley McClung is one of the performers. he often speaks of you and wishes for your return and many others. Mrs. Bode says she hopes that you will "return with the blossoms of Spring" and sends her love. Miss Mary Howard and Mrs. Donegan send their love to you. Sue Withers sends you three hundred kisses and all her love and says make haste and come back.

Pa says he has written to you in his last letter to ask M. Trigent to procure him a microscope, but he came across one in N. Orleans and gave an hundred dollars for it. and he has just arrived from fishing, he stayed two days and brought us a fine mess of fish for our breakfast. He said Mr. Gray accompanied him and he asked him the reason why he would not marry Miss Toney. his reply was "before we are married two weeks her Father will want me to dress in white cotton shirts, breeches and drive a mill cart."

Pa has just received a letter from Mr. Colhoun in which he says he will take our letters and for this reason Ma will write you a letter herself. Mr. Catherens supped with us last evening and he makes himself quite interesting. He said he had lost children, a girl about 20 and a boy 25 yrs old and thus he cam from Ireland and he had improved the Brass band wonderfully.

Pa's about to have a new kitchen built in which will be a room for us to study in and he will also add another room to the house for you to occupy. I forgot to mention that the McGehees have left for Mississippi and they never expect to return. Mrs. M. was quite distressed when leaving her dear friends that she was so much attached to. The girls that left for N.Y. found a boarding school very different from their homes and their life is very mean. C. Fearn particularly complains.

Miss Thompson sends her best love. Lindsay sends his love to little

Willie and Meredith and Sister Margaret. James Smith sends his love. tell her all the children are well. the tulips and trees are in bloom and they make the house look quite handsome and she says the garden is coming along very well. tell her aunt Patsy says little Byron's well and Marie can sew very well and can spell in four syllables. Mrs. Childs sends her love to her dear pupil.

You have improved wonderfully in your hand writing, you will make a finished lady. Ellen has just written to Cornelia Hopkins and Ma added a long post Script. I intend writing to Louisa Hopkins soon, poor thing. I feel quite sorry for her as it is the first time she has left home. I suspect you will think I'm very careless by seeing grease spots of my letter but it was entirely accidental. I took particular pains as you see with this letter but saturday evening Pa said he would be obliged to send them and I finished it in such a hurry that it looks quite bad.

Myra wrote hers entirely herself, every word. I hope I will receive a letter from you. When you write choose the prettiest sheet of paper you have for you know I am passionately fond of pictures and paintings and besides as "it will be handed down to posterity" as Ma says. you can enclose one in your letter. I would write more but I am afraid it will spoil the looks of my already meanly written letter.

The Brass Band gave a concert on Friday night . . .

(Ellen Lewis, age 15, to Mary Lewis in Paris, April 19th)

Dear Sister,

It has been so long since I have written you. But as you say better late than never. You cannot tell how much we miss you; do come home in the fall, every body is in favour of it, except Miss Mary Howard and Mrs. Murphy who say that you ought to stay two or three years. Ma says she cannot spare you more than 18 months.

Since you have been away I have not enjoyed myself at all except with our gymnasium which is our swing. the girls are here every day to swing. it is quite an amusing sight to see them. Sometimes they fall from a great

height, and hurt themselves. but none have seriously injured themselves since it has been put up.

I suppose you are quite destitute of news from your native land, I will attempt to tell you some. I can tell you what is going to break up our town. All of the young girls are leaving our town at once. The Hopkins have gone away, and were accompanied by S. Allan and Mary Eleanor Fearn is going to stay a year. Her father left today for Philadelphia Synod. Laura intends staying at Major Read's (Mrs. Betts). Sarah Fearn thinks of going to the white sulfur springs in Virginia [now West Virginia] with her Father (nor at all) in 2 or 3 weeks.¹⁴³ Mary McClung and Moll Coleman have been to New Orleans but have come back the same old thing. Puss [McClung] left for Knoxville a week ago to live. All of the McGehee's have gone to Mississippi to live. Mr. Fackler's nieces have been on a visit to them, they are very sweet girls indeed, they look to be about 20 or 22 years old. They are about to leave and Mrs. F. is going to Kentucky with them which is their home.

The "Brass Band" gave a concert on Friday night. nearly every body was there—but me. I was much disappointed in not going as I had not proper protection, as Pa was away. They got 100\$ that night. They had very good music and Mr. Catherens gave a lecture on music which was very long. they played the "Love waltz", Marseilles hymn and the "Huntsville march" composed particularly by Mr. C. for them and many other pieces. Mr. C. is their Teacher, he can play on all of the wind instruments, but not a note of the piano. but can teach on it elegantly.

I must tell you something about the mammy of the town as they say. she got married the other night to Mr. Robinson's black man who is only 30 years of age. she looks old enough to be his grand mammy. he has another wife and aunt Judy is going to be turned out of the church for doing so, she say she loves the very ground he walks upon. Mrs. Robinson set the table for and it is said to be as nice a table as ever was set in Huntsville. the waiters were Nancy Hall and Mrs. Charity Lemons girl. not a single black person was there but the waiters. the house was crowded with white people, all the Pleasants were there and Uncle Wallace and his wife and Charly. On the second day after the marriage she had on a black

satin and she had on a black velvet cape. I hear that she was married in a fine blue satin but I know not how true it is. (what a pity!!!!) no doubt Sister M. and Margaret are highly interested in this Romance. the Bride will purchase her husband. Squire Aldridge married them. Uncle Billy Harris who married her before thought it not lawful and would not do so. as I have nothing more to tell you about Mrs. Robinsons wedding I will tell you something about my studies.

I am still going to Mrs. C. and study History of C., Grammar, Philosophy, reading and writing, not Rhetoric yet a while. (oh!) all of us are coming on very well, it is reported about town that Miss Rogers is going away in July. I think it true. She has but a few scholars both in music and French.

Florry, or Polly, as we call her, is the smartest thing I ever did see. she can say any thing she wants to, she is also very saucy. When she sees any one crying if she has anything she always goes up to them and tells them to brake a little piece, and after they've broken it, she takes it away. she will not have anything that is broken or has a hole in it, even a batter cake. she is 2 years old the 17th of April. she seems to have cut more capers that day than any other. When she wants to suck she goes up to Ma and says, "Ma give me a titty, Pa give you a dollar" and she always gets it. she will not give it up no matter how much we shame her. Brother knows his letters and is now spelling in words of two sylables. he often talks about you and says he wants to see you.

I forgot to tell you that Flory would call your name very well when she is asked where sis is, she says "sis has gone in paris." Myra sends her "best respects" to you and says she will be "very glad of a letter you promised" her or "even a postscript." she reads and spells and writes pretty well for a little girl of her age.

Sarah is going to Mrs. C. and is study Grammar, History, Fr., Geogrophy and reading and writing, both of us have taken writing lessons from Mrs. Tackwith [?] but my writing does not look much like it.

Pa just got home last night from Florence, he has visited New Orleans and lived very high. but he paid for it when he got home he had more biles on his face than you could "shake a stick at." he was quite unwell

for a week or two.

I reckon you have not heard of the great fight between Clem Clay and Judge Thompson. C. came very near killing him. he nearly cut off one of his ears and cut a large vein in his head. at one time Pa thought he would take the brain fever and die, but by the help of God and the doctors he is well and going about. there's morality and murder mixed in a witness. I saw all the Withers and Clays yesterday. all send love to you, of the ladies only.

I must now let you know something about my own dear little self. I still take music lessons from Mr. Bode. I play very much by ear as you know, but Mr. B. has found it out and has begun to make me learn the Overture of Mr. Colhoun's book. tell him that I play some of the hardest of 11 pages. I take lessons on the Guitar from Mrs. B. and she says that I come on very well. Mary Jane Bradford is very ill. she has a fever, the doctors do not expect her to live. they allow no one to enter the room.¹⁴⁴ Better now. Mr. B. lives at Mrs. Donegan's old house.

I am reading "Sears wonders of the world" a most interesting book. it has 500 engravings which are a little coarse but very good and which belongs to me. We have "Inez's wonders of the world" which belongs to Sarah.

Clem Clay is married to a Miss Tunstall and a very pretty young lady, she plays very well both on the Piano and Guitar and sings. she takes lessons from Mr. Bode. Aunt Spence sends her love to you. Sally, Susan and Uncle Jack and Jim Moore particularly send their love to you and want to see you very much. Indeed everybody sends their love to you. not a servant can see me unless they ask me something about you. you are beloved by all. even Mr. Hudson takes a great deal of interest in you.

Charly McClung sends his love to you and says you are the sweetest and the prettiest that ever was in Huntsville. About 2 or 3 months ago I was at a party at Mrs. Bradford's and C. Mc. was there. he asked me to dance but I refused. he said "I wish Sister Mary was here and she would dance," meaning you. give my best love to Mrs. Colhoun's Maid Margaret and tell her that her husband, children are well.

As night is drawing near I must bring my letter to a close and you

know money is falling short. Please do not think hard of this badly written letter and the miss spelt words. I remain your affectionate Sister Ellen.

[P.S., written by Ma] My dear Child, you will laugh at E.'s letter. I am sure heartily and will appreciate it when I tell you she stays at home a week! from sickness and thus employs herself. she wrote you a sheet like this full all over and did not intend letting me see it. but Pa and I stole it out of her drawer and nearly died laughing over it. she tells you that I objected to her going and there she gave me some impudence and would not let her go. she said "it's Pa's money and I said to her "utter astonishment" she might stay at home. She made a great more about our reading it and when I told her, there was much bad spelling to write it over and I would direct it and that Pa was away and you never went at such times. she expunged of her own accord and wrote this as you see it. her hand is much improved. we have all taken writing lessons and she beats us all.

P.S. Sally has a little baby 5 months old. it is quite ill. we do not expect it to live, it has had spasms all this morning. Sally is much distressed. Sally and Aunt Susan say that they will write to you soon.

Ellen Lewis

(The little child is dead, to-day is buried. M.L.)

I gave Mary a complete scolding . . .

*(Mary Taylor Colhoun to Mary B. Lewis, from Passy to Huntsville,
April 27th)*

My dear Madam,

I regret very much to perceive by your favor of the 5th of March that your mind has been distressed respecting your daughters health, and allow me to say very unnecessarily. I gave Mary a complete scolding, and indeed could not refrain from smiling when I looked at her ruddy face, and rounded form and had you been present would have joined me. Be assured that I would be the first to inform you could I perceive any thing

menacing her health or happiness.

I cannot introduce her into gay society for I have given up balls, theatres, and operas since the death of my beloved child, my darling little John. My two remaining little ones are doing well, and their lively prattle is my great solace. I am now anxiously awaiting the return of Mr. Colhoun.

Mary was very well some two or three days past, and I expect her to be with me on Saturday. Every thing now is as it ought to be with her. She has made good progress in her French, and I am sure that you will be pleased with her general improvement, and trust that she will be a pride, and comfort to her parents.

Margaret begs that you will say to her family, and Aunt Patsey, that she is well, and sends them her love. Poor things I often think of their unprotected state. I can write no more my heart swells almost to bursting, when I contemplate upon my home, and the last sad weeks I passed their. Present me kindly to Mr. Lewis, and my respected friend Parson Allan to whom I shall write ere long. With sentiments of regard, I remain Dear Madam,

Yours truly,
Mary Smith Colhoun

The Equipage of the king passed and he raised himself from the seat and bowed very politely to Margaret . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to her mother from Paris, April 27th)

My dearest Mother

Happy, happy tidings and an end to our solicitude! Since last I wrote I have been to Passy to spend my Easter holiday and Mrs. C. who had received your letter kept me constantly on the "trot" for exercise, and this with the remedies that have been applied have produced a most favorable effect and now mother I will endeavor to be more prudent in future and guard against giving you my tender mother so much useless ingratitude. Indeed I thought several times that it was egotism that induced me to tell

you of all my little pains and aches, but you have indulged me so much when with you and encouraged me so affectionately to confide every thing to you that I forgot myself entirely and perhaps exaggerated all. Madame Trigant and M.lle Elisa were quite rejoiced when I told them and the former made me immediately write to Mrs. Colhoun and beg her to inform you of my good health. Now I hope that with calmness and pleasure you will listen to my account of the pleasant holidays with dear Mrs. C.

Sunday as usual we spent at church and heard an excellent sermon from Mr. Lorette. At 2 o'clock we returned and instead riding home I proposed walking. Poor Margaret who was with us was sadly tormented by the remarks and gazes of all we met. We passed a company of soldiers and all with one accord saluted her leaving us entirely out of the question. A number of peasants bade bonjour in a most polite manner to her but the most annoying attention was that of a parcel of little ragmuffins who as soon as they saw her left off playing marbles and commenced saying "bonjour Africain au revoir Bedouin St. Dominique, American." [Good morning African good bye Bedouin St. Dominique, American.] Most fortunately she did not understand all and was much amused when I told Mr. C. of it. the other day as she was walking with "Merry" on the Bois de Boulogne the Equipage of the king passed and he raised himself from the seat and bowed very politely to her.

Monday though cloudy was passed at Paris shopping. Mrs. C. purchased a lovely little leghorn hat trimmed with ribbon in the form of morning glories and a long white feather at the side costing \$6., clothes for Willey and Many and took them to a tailor (for children only) to be made. I bought three summer and spring dresses on a light fawn mouselino de lame. Mrs. C. chose them all and says that hereafter she intends purchasing all my things for me. for the whole gave \$17.

Tuesday we spent again at Paris and we visited the first store in Paris "Le grand Colbert." Le Petite Jeansette and the Bayodisc[?], not neglecting Delisel and Paris Royale too. We went to see to buy some strawberries for Will, but guess the price for 6 we were asked 80 cts. and several dollars for a large bunch of asparagus. Here we saw Easter eggs made of china

half open with little Cupids coming out with their bows and arrows. In the streets we saw carts filled with dyed eggs and it appeared that every little peasant we saw had his egg.

Last Saturday April 21 Mrs. Colhoun sent me an invitation from Dr. Higgins (her family physician) to a ball telling me that if I concluded to go she would arrange my toilette, but the difficulty was who to choose as a chaperon. M.dme Trigant does not allow the girls to go into company at all and I would never consent to be among strangers with a feminine chambre alone, particularly in France where girls are never seen on the street alone even in the day time. Mrs. C. never visits at all and does not wish to see any of the "bear mode." poor M.dme Cernant the french lady from N. Orleans who crossed with us has been to Passy twice and though I half playfully scold Mrs. C. for not returning her call, I cannot persuade her to budge. When Mr. Colhoun was here he would make her visit M.dme Cernant in company with Mary and myself.

But to return to my subject—M.dme Trigant wishing to keep one from feeling any disappointment from her refusal to allow one to attend the ball took one in company with 5 or 6 girls to a concert given in Reydelles grande salon. M.dme Dorus Gras sang again as sweetly as a nightingale her voice so soft that the sound melts upon the ear and all without the least effort and with a pretty agreeable smile. M.lle Mattman (a German lady) performed admirably on the piano but her head danced as much fast as her fingers.

Last Sunday was rainy and I did not attend the mass and I spent my day in reading your letters, my bible, and the papers that you sent me. You would have been amused to see me endeavoring to decypher your asterisks, figures and hieroglyphics and all of which I could neither discover head nor tail. The girls were amused when I explained all your signs mingled with printed letters.

You ask me about royalty. I hear of nothing but complaints of the avarice and peaceable disposition of Louis Phillippe. It is said that he has dismissed no less than 50 domestics from St. Cloud and this attributed to his love of money. the "fete dar roi" will much less splendid than formerly, very few balls and the fireworks alone will be worth seeing. The Tuilleries

will be a curiosity for me however all is to be illuminated.

Last Thursday, the 20th, the princess Clementine was married to Ferdinand de Saxe Cobourg, the Tuesday before he arrived at St. Cloud and from Passy we saw the brilliant illuminations.

The fete of Passy commences next Sunday when the balls will be given on the green. Yesterday I saw cherries and large strawberries selling for \$1,40 the half dozen. Cucumbers, snaps, asparagus and green peas. Mrs. C. amused me very much the other day when I asked what was called good living she replied viz. "to eat everything out of season."

Mrs. C. is well and William's much improved. The Dr. says that he has stopped the growth of the deformity and can cure it with facility. Mrs. C. sends her love to you, and Margaret begs you to give her love to her husband and children. she went to see the fire works last night but says it reminded her too much of judgment day to be admired.

Give my love to each sister and brother with many kisses, love to dear Uncle Hick, Joel and Wallace with Aunt Virginia and aunt Ann Wallace and little cousins. love to the relations in Nashville when you hear from them. Love to friends and companions and accept my dear mother my best love and kisses for Pa and yourself. I would like if possible for you to tell me if I can stay. Pa says "yes," can't you too? but I will not press you. give me your wishes if you will, and if you do not say "no!"

Too much reclusion and reflection makes one not only unhealthy physically but mentally . . .

(Mary Lewis to Mary F. Lewis in Paris, April 27th)

We are all very happy and healthy (comparatively) except poor Lell, whom we think of keeping at home to pursue her latin & c in order the better to administer to her the proper medicines recommended.

You recollect Eliza's commencement of bad health at the Seminary. one day you know I had to send for her, she was quite sick and I believe you told me you followed her out and will recollect it. Ellen effected

something the same way not fainting but languid unambitious this week. I heard you say you would always like to know of the health of the family when away, so I write you this.

I hope she will be as fortunate eventually as our amiable, affectionate Sarah. no one need say to me hereafter the colour of the hair regulates the degree of temper. she is docile as a lamb and as meek under reproof and withal confiding, a passport to any parent's heart you know. Sarah's hair grows very long and even and she wears it plaited and tied with a ribbon.

Ellen I can't get to tie her hair to save my life. she has it hanging about her neck and I threatened to cut it off when she's asleep, but she is very cunning and gives the excuse her head is so tender (which is so.) She cannot bear any tension about it. I often look at her beautiful large blk. eyes, alternately melancholy and languid or vividly bright and sparkling and think her most beautiful. She has just returned from a walk home with Miss Thompson who boards with Mrs. Picket, the Landlady now of the boarding establishment kept by Mrs. Hazelrigg who with all her boarders and many others are inmates of Mrs.'s P.

There, too, is a most unfortunate case—a poor woman as lovely and unprotected, whose talents and agreeable qualities would grace any land. Her husband unhappily gave away to the demon in an hour of prosperity to his family who have ever since been reaping the fruits, the punishments due only to him. and woe to those who place faith in their own power to govern themselves independent of a higher power. he has become a paralytec now, is deaf too. tis said he is intemperate in drinking. Once as temperate as your Uncle W. is now, but then as intemperate as Dr. P. is now.

Consequently all went wrong with the wife and husband. she determines to try to educate her children and support herself and says 'tis to give him a better opportunity to provide for them unencumbered. Oh woman how great a load of care will pride enable you to bear. Here, my child, is a match made up of materials altogether dissimilar—tastes, habits, early training, age and all in haste and upon the misrepresentations (of a fortune on her side) by others.

A fine family of children too, pretty, proverbially smart and lady like in behaviour. poor children I often think of them as I look at them, if only had the opportunities some around us have, who evidently do not appreciate them. As to A.H. it seems as tho' the idea was that poor Mother must have her cup filled to overflowing bitter tears. 'tis common to hear of him prostrate in any street and yet when you meet him sober, no one is more polite, genteel and kind.

But why do I write you these things? it is not to gratify an inclination for gossip, you know me too well for that. I want you to know something of that kind of life. You will only find out by experience. The way to shun such acts of bad judgment as result in future misery or at least discontent, to guard against certain events which may happen to all if not provided against.

Shall I tell you then of a circumstance which has called forth all my woman's heart, with all its indignation, its sympathy, its hopes, its fears, its determinations to be guided by its own dictates, looking upon it as an honest heart. Miss T. was once an inmate of our family and proverbially modest and in look, word and deed, as you may well recollect. Her hostesses, each with whom she boarded say the same of her. but she is without protection and at a boarding house with no gentleman at its head. she came to see me a few days ago. I found her falling off and looking melancholy and care worn. I saw her look troubled and insisted on knowing what was the matter and if I could help her. her answer was "I wish you could" and she commenced weeping.

When I saw her communications would be of a confidential character, I closed the doors. And she told me that for nearly a year, she had been persecuted by the insulting watching—staring in the face—placing himself near the window of her room at night. I was surprised she had not before told me and come to my house immediately. I offered her my house as a home. but Mrs. P. and Miss M.R. justly advised her to not give publicity to the affair by leaving, a proof of their believing her correct. Pa and myself in our every evening strolls, call by for her. She is now more cheerful and sleeps all night instead of sitting up half the night. seeing persons of respectability take an interest in her will probably make this

unprincipled fellow (no uncommon character) a little more particular and less choice in his victims.

However as she says so true is it. "Had I a Father, brother, or any male relation here he would not dare insult me by his nightly station at my window." It is true that the reputation of a woman is of a most delicate structure, as brittle as china ware and a flaw as little excusable. Mrs. P. observed 'twas a disagreeable affair. I very plainly told her boarding house would be injured by allowing such fellows to prowl around it, that I had daughters myself and God knows what may fall to their lot. I was not sure they might not be found without friends some day and exposed to the insults of some cowardly villain.

And now my dear Mary, I have left for the last to let you know, that I united myself with the Presbyterian Church in this place of the 8th of this month. I felt no trepidation, the importance of the subject occupying my mind. I had always thought it would be a trying moment. but the passage of the scripture was ever in my mind and is now. He or she "who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven."

On the next S. I went prepared to take a S. Class, I was much importuned to take Miss Swift's who leaves in May. but I saw 8 or 9 girls, sweet little girls whom I begged to take charge of as they had no teacher. Mrs. McClellan is doing very well for your class.

Eliza is improving very much and Pa wants you to stay until she is ready to go Northward soon after you return. Gertrude Thornton goes to Madame C.'s soon. all her family and her 2 sisters were delighted to be with Madame C. Julia P. and Kate F. take it so hard because she has no religion. L.Lowe has. I had forgotten her becoming a convert about 6 months ago.

Ellen and E. told you all I have not. I saw James at his plantation garden. Pa and myself walked there and saw the trees from france, most of these budding. He and his children and their acquaintance on the farm send their love to you. Aunt Lydia particularly who seems a faithful excellent servant. Miss Russel enquires with much love for you and do all your friends, Mrs. Erskine, Russel, Breck, Irby, Cruse & C & C.

Weather very fine. Spring was very late coming but it seems as though leaves and flowers had all bursted out in two weeks. Thermometer at 80 for 5 or 6 days. In the fall I inoculated upon a white rose bush in two places moss rose buds. and they are coming out beautifully, several leaves on them, will it not be pretty? I also put agreville [?] upon a wild rose vine on my back porch trellis and several others doing well. Don't die laughing at Myra's letter. she has been learning to write about 10 days in all. she has a taste for it.

I believe Sally's little girl was born and has died since you left. it was a beauty for a little negress. It died very suddenly at 5 months old of croup. she is very careful with her children and washes and dresses them every day as I do mine. she is very calm now altho' she cried much the first day or two. I hope it will impress her seriously. I have tried to get them all to finish their business in 6 days and have Saturday always to themselves. and no cooking on Sunday, having two dinners cooked on the day before.

Sally you know is lazy really, so I tell her I am anxious to see them all, men and women, have Saturday. she goes about her work, very briskly and respectfully and cheerfully too and succeeds in getting now from 10 ct, which is much to high, having the privilege to visit or invite company. the others likewise will do so. the men you know have always had Saturday after sweeping the yard.

Caledonia is still a constant friend to Florida, coming to see her every day and just comes to give her and her Mother's and Sisters' love to you. they are as modest and well behaved as my daughters. I often lend C. a book which she reads and returns in good order.

The children complained to Pa bitterly about their "fare" as they say while he was in N.O. my account shews 11 turkeys, 2 ducks, chickens, vegetables, and apples in abundance bought or raised for them. well you know I always have good dinner the day I expect pa and so we have very excellent one. but Pa having lived high in N.O. preferred temperate living and intended to give them a lesson for complaining so. he gave directions but for two dishes. they dare not say one word after telling tales on me you know. and he often says "children don't care about that dish, William

put it away.” they soon saw they were receiving Job’s comfort and no more complaints do we hear of bad fare no matter what we have.

I hope when the weather is good and Mr. C. returns you and Mrs. C. will be able again to take your rambles around the City. I believe most sincerely that the best thing for both you and Mrs. C. is to have your minds engaged in many other things than those immediately connected with yourselves or your families. too much reclusion and reflection makes one not only unhealthy physically but mentally speaking. one is not aware of what she is capable who secludes herself too much.

Your friend Mrs. Neighbour sends her love to “Miss Mary Lewis who was never too proud to bow and speak to a poor body and who is beautiful, her look is so kind and sweet.” There’s a compliment for you and unexpected tho not undeserved, I’ll say.

I have written enough to take you a month to read, you will not get another such soon. I wish you could see some of E.’s drawings. she is improving in it. she certainly has a great taste for and is improving astonishingly. M. wrote her letter by herself. she has only been learning and yet so eager is she to write she tries herself as play. my child, may God keep you in health, and the servants send their love to Miss Mary.

Happiness is often for the moment, but remorse is for life and sometimes for eternity . . .

(Mary Lewis to Mary F. Lewis in Paris, April 30th, 1843)

My dear Mary,

Your last letter disclosed to me the secret of your writing so well, it is that you do not write all at once, but “economise time and steal minutes” to write to me, consequently your mind varies and is with each renewal of your pen fresh and vigorous. But pray, fill up every nook and corner of your letters.

Pray don’t think yourself so gloriously except from the extravagant habit of expenses. Jesting aside, you are right my dear child and in this as well as other things you act with your usual good judgment, which

often surprises me for one of your years. Our object is only to have you as well dressed as those with whom you daily mingle.

I have myself felt and seen others feel even more at this disparity between themselves and others who were no better able to be genteel in appearance and whose narrow liberal mind caused them to make remarks upon the dress of their more unfortunate but more honest companions. I attended, one, of 175 pupils, and your mother raised or "reared" in expectation of a large estate, suddenly lost my father in Cuba. 'Tis known to be a difficult task to obtain pay of property in those circumstances. Knowing the fact I then commenced economising and happily, having a very handsome and rather full wardrobe, I was encouraged to do with care, what I had never even tried to do before and thus made myself independent of even my relations, who kindly offered an open account in any store, which I would not accept. But fashion did not always rule the day with me then, but I was so unconscious of deserving reproof to turn a deaf ear to all tirades upon fashion and thus learned one of the most important and useful lessons to me, as your mother—self denial and self-control.

So what necessity forced me into your own good judgement has gently led you to a conclusion to lay up for the future a little store of resources which will bless you with independence both in your character and circumstances. But it was not always otherwise with me, I had often with my "pin money" an allowance of \$5. per week. I had no mother to guide me.

Here at home can I convey the idea of absence of a mother—a young girl of 16 or 17 who attended school with you, who had the care of her large family of brothers and sisters in her mother's absence, who is proverbial for her modesty, her ladylike deportment, her knowledge of housekeeping, her use of a gun as "was her mother before her." Their town residence was given up for one in the environs of the village. The sisters walked to school.

One of your acquaintance in our very large circle of acquaintances, was a youth who prided himself upon his pretty face, graceful turn in the dance, a little popinjay of a fellow and several well behaved sisters.

Alas! for them! These two youngsters fell in love. The girl's father forbade him the house. She still continuing to walk to school, of course they meet, she forgets the school house, and often too. The "Mistress" sees the Mother in all ignorance of the proceedings of the truant. It results in all the family being taken from school, from those frequent walks seen by many arise reports, at first innocent and as "a rolling stone never catches moss" so a circulating report never catches or keeps if caught. The truth the poor child is now the subject of the "Town Talk" and Heavens where is there such a monster!!

The tale has been added to until it is now a very scandalous report. He is but about her age and of course too young to marry and she in consequence will have to wear out these reports before she can marry another. However innocent, imprudence is a great bug bear in the early part of a school girl's career and mother and no other can feel for and watch for and provide against all attacks upon her reputation. It is the Father to revenge or avenge an insult, but the Mother's to provide against.

Your sisters cannot too early be taught modesty and freedom from liberties with popinjays or encouragement to young men whom they see love them. They both are to blame. Of brother, teach him when under your influence to respect his sisters, to feel for your sex that maternal affection which precludes the possibility of insulting a decent female. I always think a man who is respectful and affectionate to his Mother and sisters will have too much respect for them and himself to insult a female.

Do you see any more wonders in romance than in real life? Could you get "Evelina" which I am allowing Eliza and Ellen to read.¹⁴⁵ You would only find much of it true to nature and more of which you have no experience, equally true. My object in allowing the novel to be read is that the children listen to Mother mechanically and in at one ear and comes out the other. It is well said "oh ma is always talking so. I wonder if she ever did anything wrong when she was a girl. well, that's exactly the way with my Mother! and mine!! and mine!!

You'd think people in "old times" as they say were perfect and I don't expect they were any better than we are. And where's the rise of being

so particular—can't take a walk without leave even. What can catch us in day light I wonder. Don't the girls go to church with boys at night. Look at 'em riding out with the boys and spending such delightful times on the Mt. and just hear how happy they laugh."

Ah! my children this is the light side of the picture all in moderation and not too much of this. Happiness is often for the moment, but remorse is for life and sometimes for eternity.

As to a "May Festival" here—the first of May and all things quiet but now and then a shout from recess of Miss Swifts last examination till Fall, when I fully believe she will return as Mrs. Allan. All laughed at the idea, however we'll see. They are cunning old coons, both.

As the mending of your clothes, I thought they were all new. Get someone to mend them for you.

Madam Bode and children have left for N.Y. to see her brother. It was reported and I fear true that much noise and screaming occurred there a few days before her departure, the "great head" of the family administered a little dose to the eldest son, which the "2nd head" thought too severe and in putting in a word, received a blow or two. "heaven deliver me from such a son in law!"

I advised Mrs. Bode to go to Europe while in N.Y. and I hope she will and stay too—poor woman! She came the very day of her accident to give E. a lesson and strove so much to be cheerful and lady like notwithstanding her red and swollen eyes, that I could have cried myself for her. At the meeting M. Bode got up to the astonishment of all, some laughing, but none feeling deeply for him. He was greatly agitated very white and voice trembling.

I attended a Temperance society 2 weeks ago. Mr. A. Hillis pro-manaded a beautiful lecture. Judge Thompson was then called up, and surely he scourged the methodist many of whom were there. He accused the members of their own church of drinking and challenged a committee of gentlemen at any time to call upon him and he would prove it. There was a "great shaking of dry bones" amongst them and I understood they would form a committee and call upon him.

Mr. McDowell called him to account after he had spoken but he

had mistaken Judge T's words and course it looked like an idle venting of spleen. It is a pity any temper is shown at these meetings. They are very interesting and all Judge T. said was good tho' severe and some very laughable. He says "my friends, I fear temperance is at a low ebb here. It is even prophesied by the malicious, that, as there is a great quantity of ice put up and that the mint crops are so fine, that there will be a great falling off in the cause this summer" - great laugh. No one drinks juleps and of course the mint crop is good, ours is. I do not admire the judge or his wife but he tells some very wholesome truths to the "President of the Meeting."

I must now give you a great proof of my affection for you. On Tuesday having received a very pretty invitation from the "brass band" to join in an entertainment to be given on "Monte Sano" I went with your Pa who very much desired me to go, Ellen riding behind. I wish I could convey an adequate idea of it to you. Sixty persons went up and it was a very select company. They would not invite B. Cruse, Miss Bassett, Miss Howard and many others which they pretend to have resulted in mistakes. Any how they were excluded. We saw 3 vehicles going up. Mrs. G. and her brother-in-law. Mr. Burton in a barouche. Martha and John Patton in a buggy. Mrs. Clement Clay (a most frivolous, giddy young woman) whose horse ran with her at starting returned home, got another buggy with "I went Gee." Lawson and some young lady following. There are some so sweet and non ability—vanity and ridiculous. Sensitiveness on all occasions that we only see them to feel almost contempt for them. Heaven preserve me from such sons in law or daughters.

But I digress. We rode up to Mr. Pope's old residence. Poor E. upon getting down found her dress soiled thro and thro by the perspiration and we sent her back to Mrs. Northcote and her 7 daughters—widow of the man who L. Brandon killed for slandering (or telling the truth they say) upon his sister.¹⁴⁶

[At Mrs. Northcut's] Betty washed E.'s dress and in an hour she joined us where we met M.I.E., Miss McAlpern, N. Pat, Mrs. I. Bradford and sisters. M. and C. Blevins and in the distance and avoided when he boldly embraced that little "Popinjay" and many other young persons.

The band managed themselves under the shade of a tree and played some beautiful airs and then an interval and more music and so on. In the intervals the "young people" danced to the music of Mr. Patherine's and a negro violin and all the dancing! The young men had no gloves on, upon which I remarked. Neither had the ladies except one or two children had mitts. Now I enjoyed myself in seeing these youngsters happy, but E. did not dance and was not allowed, indeed, by me. Pray never dance in day time. It is excessively disgusting upon reflection. The momentary excitement attending such a pic nic prevented those sage reflections at that time. Indeed tho I laughed and was amused I was thunder stricken, astounded at this nonchalant manner in which Lykes, W. Clarke, J. Acklin, L.C. and others behaved to the girls.

Mr. Grey was genteel and solely taken up with his preparations for the dinner. Pa likes him very much since his trip to Florence with him. He says he is a good hearted fellow. Pa says he advised him to marry a rich girl. I told him I would laugh if his Florida lands should help to make you so and Ned G. should "a wooing come" to Miss Lewis. But he says "while N. was listening very gravely, I commenced "M. Patton to him" at home he turned up by his nose in the greatest contempt saying "now how would I look taking her home? to my beautiful lady like mother?" Says Pa, "Ned who was your mother?" "A Miss Bradford" "ah! any kin to Joe, Ned?" "Oh, the D___, not a drop!" Of the others J. Patton, G.M. as were the most genteel.

D. W. and __.W. and Dick Clarke had their under half of their faces completely enveloped in whiskers beard. And then W. C. and told N. P. he would not have her unless she could tote an urn of water on her head without letting it fall. Lykes ask her if she had ever discarded anyone. She implied no. He said, "then I'll give you a chance but will you discard me?" Oh, said she, I'll not tell you until you come. I shall look for you" He said to M.J.E. your hair is considerably humbled up there" putting his hand on her fore head. "Umph (says she) I think you have a little impudence." Pray never let any young man take the liberty of addressing you in this impudent familiar style. Surely Mothers do not talk to their daughters about the impropriety of such conduct. No girl can respect

herself who is treated with as little respect by the opposite sex.

Dinner was placed at 3 on tables under a tree, half shaded with sunshine. You will recollect the magnificent view from the top of this mountain rejoicing at the departure of winter—verdant meadows (fields really of green of different shades mimic lakes freely) sloping and sliding and level and perpendicular with the most beautiful forage in the world here and there the shadings of the clouds darkened in the distance upon the plain and rustic farm house dotted here and there to vary nature's monotony and to the West a birds eye view of your City with ravine and precipice interweaving, rugged rocks and circling mountains giving to this lovely cluster of houses, the appearance of a retreat in a valley of loveliness, romance and security—sufficient to satisfy a monarch when sick of the trappings and heartless gaiety of a corrupt court. Add to this our dinner! composed of ham, pickles, light bread provided. Mrs. B. and myself had cheese, all variety. (At L.D. of cakes, almonds, pecans, candies, crackers &c &c &c.)

Dancing—more music at sundown. All for our departure. The band having placed themselves in the yard of our old rendezvous (Dr. Moor's lot), just as 50 horses with their respective burdens came in sight, struck up the Marseilles march. The whole effect was enchanting and decidedly the most imposing part of the whole entertainment. We remained still 1/4 of an hour, after which we proceeded and as we wound along the mountain sometimes the whole train visible.

Just let me tell you what I look upon as a result of the manners I did not admire yesterday. Mr. Cox (post master) discovered two letters addressed to Miss McA. and Miss Atwood the latter not of the Mt. party. Last night they looked (the letters looked suspicious) and he opened them. The poor things were thus receiving of the most brutally insulting letters with inclosed pictures which would have reddened their innocent faces for weeks. He shewed them to several young men who said nothing but are upon the watch. He suspects who 'tis and will duck them when caught, no doubt some plebien fellows who thought themselves slighted by these young ladies. Mr. Cox is intimate with your Pa, told him to tell you as a warning. (Anonymous letters are often written and one must

have much moral courage to withstand their blighting effects.) I had a much agreeable chat with Mrs. Gee and Martha also.¹⁴⁷ Now do find a fiction more wonderful than facts.

Pray it, when you write again commence with dark ink and cross with the light. Your last is not as good as the others.

We only wish you to shine by fireside . . .

(Mary Lewis to Mary F. Lewis in Paris, May 30, 1843)

Present to "Cecile" my kind love for her kind attention to you and the protection in the crowd of the carnival as also to Marguerite and I will not add another word before I tell her that after your letter I stopt at the fence and a "long talk" with Aunt Patsy and the children of your col.d friend all looking well and happy and rejoiced at the receiving intelligence of their Mother and friend. There are no cases of sickness with any of the servants and as I often accompany your Father in our walks to the Plantation of Mr. C., I can truly say that I never saw a more industrious, cheerful, or healthy looking people with innumerable enquiries for their beloved Mistress and her children and servant with much love given to be sent to them.

The garden is as clear and luxuriant and as prettily ornamented with shrub and flowers as tho' their Master or Mistress were expected to walk in the next day. And James has set out grafted trees and planted slips of the fruit trees sent from France all of which have sprouted, budded leaf blossoms and are now (many of the apples trees) are in full bearing to our astonishment. They seem dwarf apples to us. His trimming served to have saved them as well as given extra trees. Grape vines also are budding and he will stoop to shew the bud of vine and tree with as much interest and curiosity as the result as his old Master [Judge William Smith] could have done and no doubt his revered memory is associated in the mind of the faithful servant with every tree and every object of interest to his owners altho' they do not seem (for want of intelligence on this

subject) to be making much improvement or money. Yet they plod on with the perservance of people who have positive and unequivocal duties to perform.

I am much amused at conversation between Pa, Priam and James. Their respectful attention, their frequent bursts of laughter at your Father's opinions of their monotonous way of carrying on their farming, and urging them to become "rich men by their superior management over their neighbors." You would really suppose that the proper pasturing of cattle, culture of the different grapes, changing crops, introducing new varieties, new swine, changing the channel of old ponds to artificial new pools, encouraging corn by feeding freely, repairing old pumps, replanting old strawberry beds, over hauling asparagus roots, cleaning out rotten timber, curing cattle of mange &c &c &c were as spirit stirring themes to Priam, James, and Pa as the sound of the Bugle to the old War Horse. Even aunt Lydia may be seen. She gradually approaches when Pa slips in a word about ducks, turkeys, milk, butter and chickens. Their faces brighten at the idea of repair to the pump in the yard for little or nothing and giving all a plentiful supply of Adam's ale.

You say "does Ma laugh too?" Yes to see Mr. Lewis so great a farmer and so fine a manager on other persons' farms and so perfectly unconscious of his own little domain. I am just finding out how long he has been "playing opossum" as the children say and affecting so much innocent ignorance of all I find now he has known all the while. I have given the garden into his own hands now and in all things, to his and my agreeable surprise, he is much better manager even than Ma ever was. Neither will I let him give up his post and am delighted to see him practicing upon Mr. C.'s little farm.

You alarmed me in one of yours at the array of accomplishments you cause me to request you to learn. I really did not mean to impose upon your ladyship, but my object was to direct your attention particularly to all you saw and by observation one will learn as much as many who literally sit down to taking lessons on every thing, enquiry is the great source of knowledge with girls.

Did you read the story of "Eyes and No Eyes" that conveys the idea

two persons may pass through the same town with equal advantages one observing and enquiring the other calm, quiet, unenthusiastic and in fact un-everything. Of course one will know little. the other all. And that is the way I expect you to cook and do many other things.

So I do retract my lady but command obedience and as to the Harp learn at every hazard. It may in after life be your fortune, all the other instruments are common and the polished world will at a future day make it more common. We must all have our day of adversity. Should you need it, it will be a solace to you and to a family and a source of enjoyment to yr. friends. It may be troublesome to learn to manage it, also expensive—'tis not more so than a good Piano.

I suppose your every day course of study has added greatly to your stock of solid information, but gracious my child you may study all your life and never accomplish a finished education. Learn those things which you now only have and probably ever will have an opportunity of learning and pursue the other branches at leisure by daily study. That is my idea not that I wish you to give the preference of accomplishments over solid information.

I have received Mrs. C.'s kind and considerate letter. Thank her for me. I do not agree with her in my fears being unnecessary for altho you might have the glow of health upon your cheek and the flesh of health upon your form, a time might come when both would suffer.

Tell Mrs. C. I can truly appreciate her feelings relative to her home. It looks sad, 'tis true as we have been accustomed to seeing it tenanted by those who have commanded our love and respect. Nevertheless 'tis also flourishing with mellowness over its sad history and its population is both healthy and contented people—farm and town establishment and she may rest assured that no harm can result to them from an *apparent* unprotected state, as the citizens, any of them, would punish quickly any infringements on their rights. Father often sees James at the Plantation and in our walks often see the servants of the Town House. Aunt Patsy has her little garden opposite. They do miss Mrs. C. tho' as they often wish her back to see her, for her and old Priam's merry face brightens at the prospect of seeing her again.

I want James to let me write a love letter to Margaret for him and he seems pleased at the idea. My letter from Mourning to Jacob in Nashville was tender and true and you would have died laughing could you have seen her when I read it to her. You know she will take the name of her Creator in vain, but seems so sincere you almost forgive it. After listening and her eyes and blackface glistening she exclaimed, "Oh my God Mistress, how do you know my heart so well. 'Tis true every word I vow were." I understand Jacob shewed it to a great many gentlemen to assure them of his "rights as a gentleman."

Week before last I invited a party of our friends to a feast of strawberries and ice cream (not custard, not ever). Berries measuring from 1 to 2 and 1/4 inches round their base, having several gallons and other pretty agreeable preparations for a party. We had a most delightful evening. All your young friends, Mrs. Childs and two or three old married, Aunt and Uncle W. inclusive, and a relation of mine Mr. James Betts of Charleston, S.C. who came to H. on business having employed Mr. Parsons as a lawyer, he being a merchant. Mrs. P. said to me one day "there is a gentleman bearing your name in Town very much like you and Mr. P. says he is one of the most perfect magnificent men he ever saw. He is modest, eloquent and pious." Do think I hesitated to own him? Indeed no such kin are common enough. Besides he is a relative of the Hon. Judge Betts of N.Y. and so am I, you know that's settled.

Well I told Pa and he called on Mr. B. and found him a slight-made, tall in medium, very much like us and brought him to tea. I felt that the same blood was in our veins and the result was a cordial shake of the hand, by the by, and he shoke hands at meeting and parting and more cordially and sincerely and agreeable than any on I know except the Presbyterian minister, Mr. McGruder, from the same place, who preaches for Mr. Allan while away and between whom and Sarah Allan I want to brake a friendship to say the least of it. But Mrs. Wallace says it would be a pity to have two such ugly people marry.

He says Mr. B. lost an interesting wife about 2 years ago having been married but a short time. He looks calm, quiet and dignified, very agreeable face and when laughing decidedly handsome an individual (30

yrs. age). The more you see and know him the more you would like and respect him. His sentiments are loft and ennobling most modestly and respectfully expressed, no levity, but an agreeable happy, cordial flow of conversational powers which convinces me more of his modest worth. Without being too reserved like Uncle W. he has an agreeable manner of expressing himself.

Pa says Mary will think you're in earnest about her honourable cousin. But jesting aside I love my kin and no one will ever hear me speak slightly ugly of them poor or rich. I told Mr. B. if he were a relation of mine—all our kind had to distinguish them was their freedom from riches and sterling worth—and I am happy to tell you he comes under that title. Mr. McG. says he is one of the best men he ever knew. Our families are both from Wilton, Conn., and many of them still there. He is alone in C. None of us know where our destiny may be or what; and the more pious, good people you know the more protected are you.

Two or 3 weeks ago a Southern gentleman by the name of Gardiner with a married sister, Mrs. Smith, and a Miss Brand (I believe) came up on a visit to Miss G. The object in view being a matrimonial alliance—to happen soon. While court was setting Mr. G. sent in to Mr. Joe Acklen (an officer in court) that he had a little matter to settle with him. He instantly came. James Gee having been the messenger had heard the slander of J.A. that he was told by a man in Mobile that G. sufficed him “to slap his mouth” not willing to have his sister marry a man with a coward reputation. He told of it and the message to J.A. was the result. G. wished to know if he said it. Acklin owned it. G. struck him. A fist fight ensued. G. beaten, eye blk. More slanderous reports put in circulation much worse—as an interesting col.d protegee and progeny at home. Match broken off. Father and brother averse. G. being rich. Burton and Mrs. G. anxious to send the daughter with her Uncle Burton to Virginia. Young Dr. Beasley [Dr. James A. Beasley] anxious to court Miss G. independent and a neighbor, he may succeed.

Not long ago was told Miss Sarah F., and some say her Uncle Robert, that his friend Mr. Dick Walker had said that he had not intended marrying. She immediately told her lover, who denied it (I believe it. 'Tis

just like those Walkers and Percies and Percy Walkers') Words reiterated, hot and heavy and eventually another street fight ensued. Neither acting with bravery. We'll see the result. I can't see how master. W. got out of his love affair with Miss Mc_ unless by their taking her away. He is a delicate constitution. breath awful! Laid up often with Rheumatism. He was fined \$5 being the assaulted. Gardiner \$50. for contempt of Court added to assault. So when you have lovers from abroad look to their houses and when young boys mooning come about, don't let them deceive you into a belief that they are sincere. Don't allow a gentleman to squeeze your hand or kiss you any way. Keep them at a respectful distance. Above all keep out of Miss Betty W. scrapes. I leave Mrs. C. to tell you about the moustached counts. I confess my woeful ignorance as to their courtships.

As to marrying not at all—I so love and respect many of my friends who are aged in single blessedness. I can't say I would very much regret yours. At least you will have to make up to me these 2 long dreary years you are absent from me.

The Miss Walker at Mr. Rice's is a sister of the once beautiful Mrs. Hockett (now dead). She is prettier, something like you, so white and clean about the neck and ears. They say she is affected, some airs and graces, but is a sweet manner girl. She will keep the young men at a distance. 'Tho polite and very cordial has 3 beaux—Winston from South and rich. John Patton likely to succeed. Walker Percy sat by her 2 or 3 hours at a party "without stopping to rest" as the children say. (A small flirt he.) Poor Betty J. gave up on J.M. for him 'tis said. Young Waddie Scruggs is pleased with M.J. Ersk. 'Twill do I think.¹⁴⁸

While Kate Fearn was travelling Northward (Maria Scruggs, who called on me yesterday, said) an old widower with several children on board the boat took a great fancy to her and before Mr. J. Scruggs returned, the man who is rich wrote to him in Huntsville to inquire who she was only knowing her name to be Kate. W.L. shewd the letter to Pa. He says there were not half dozen words spelt right in it.

Maria L. says he left the girls all crying [at boarding school] and Mrs. H. will send for Loo. Young girls being brought up like so many pigs of

course they will be "pig headed."

How do the girls who have left school behave? You say just as though they had been married and had an interesting family for several years. You would admire their ease and self possession. Indeed I almost envy it myself. Don't you fall into the other extreme and be too prudish, which argues much vanity and self conceit. Pray behave just as God has made you—modesty—naturally—affectionately. I will say we only wish you to shine by the fireside where your interests will reflect light upon all around. If your fireside circle be a large one and you have as you say a slight parisian "polish" it will be a very charitable and respectable light, which instead of "taking off the shine" of those within its sphere gives a portion to them. We wish you, not to "put your light under a bushel," but let it shine that your good works may be seen of others, improving by example.

I really have enjoyed myself very much viewing some Parisian scenes thorough a camera obscura and I intend having one constructed. C. Pope brought engravings of St. Cloud and Napoleon's Funeral procession.

While I teach my Sabbath school that meet at my house at 4 every Saturday, I often amuse and instruct them from my "microscope" and this opens some of the hidden mysteries of the unseen God, for truly I don't see how one can be familiar with a microscope and be an infidel. We have "Carpenter's Compound Microscope." We have not been able to view the ammalcute of water or infusions, altho we have a magnifying power of from 7 to 90,000. I really have enjoyed myself very much viewing some Parisian scenes thorough a camera obscura and I intend having one constructed. C. Pope brought engravings of St. Cloud and Napoleon's Funeral procession.

I have made my microscope a part of my evening entertainment in place of dancing and other inconvenient amusements for summer parties and it succeeds admirably. No flagg in interest. The greatest wonders we examine—spider living, their eyes, some 4, some straight before, some in a row, but the eyes are looking different ways—magnified as large as bullets and goose berries. Pray have professor Madame to get you a Professor to speak in your lectures on the subject.

Give our love to Mrs. C. and most cordial thanks to Madame T. for her kind attention to you as also Mademoiselle Bandin and your companion Elodie, your blessed teachers, friends, and companions. Is it for nothing? No.

Do you know that tears are forbidden . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to Mary Lewis from Paris May 1843)

Yesterday your voluminous packet arrived and I have been employed ever since in persuing its interesting contents. My heart leaps with joy whenever they are given to me. At first when I received them I could not restrain myself but do you know that tears are forbidden. M.dme T. says "why my daughter I must teach you to control your tender feelings; learn to receive in calmness the joys and griefs of this life."

I read the "New World" when I am at Mrs. C.'s, besides Caligmaan's Messenger and other works. She is taking Scott's Novels and Shakespeare's plays for me to read. She sends regularly for me every two weeks and happy time I have of it. Margaret, Many, and Willy meet me with open arms. Mrs. C. says she watches at the windows of Willy's chamber until she seems me running up the walk.

I promised to give you a report of "La fete du Roi" which took place the first of May. Suppose that you accompany me in my promenade among the little novelities which don the lovely Champs. Here is a singular looking tent raised on a slight platform of 9 or 10 feet in height, ornamented with lamps of different colors and occupied by as large band of musicians who are engaged to play for the public amusement with another little establishment. We give a sou for a ticket and draw candy gums, dogs, birds, rattles &c. Here is another affair an old doll as large as life dressed as a Turk is shot at as a mark and the one who is so fortunate a marksman as to succeed in gunning it obtains a prize worth the sou he paid for the use of the wooden gun or bows and arrows.

Here the proprietor voice of the wandering fortune teller meets our

ears. We leave him to observe another little lottery or game of chance a large circular board covered in candies and nuts upon which is placed a wheel on a pivot and you turn the wheel. Boutigner for billards, draft-draughts, chess and every game you can imagine ready for public service at the price of 4 or 5 sous.

The most amusing assembly we now approach. Will you come with me and indulge in a merry laugh at the "Grisette Ball" held under a large tent gaudily decked off with garlands, bright flags and ribbons and consisting of Femmenes de Chambri women of doubtful and the worse character. Man servants, dandies and will you believe young gentlemen "commil fant" of the best families enter for 5 sous a piece to dance. Very well dressed young men assume the manners of monkeys and though they excite your contempt you cannot refrain from being amused at them, some whirling around with young girls with hats on, others dancing the "black Step, galopade, &c. All to the music of a lively "Contre Danse," rag muffins and all are on equality here. Women are handled about like babies or playthings and men throw off all the dignity imposed upon them by society. Margaret was completely disgusted and observed that she could not persuade the plantation negroes to forget their manners so far as to dance in so "free a manner."

The fireworks take place tonight. Mrs. C. told me that she was afraid I would stay after dark to see the fireworks, but she had given me an idea of the impropriety and I had resolved not to remain. Rockets were thrown up displaying a splendid effect the last the Bonquet was very beautifully done, bunches of flowers of all colors.

When next week M.dme Trigant took me where the first opera singers were employed. After this I would not care to hear Miss Beale's New York Norma, but I could listen in the greatest pleasure to Mrs. Walker or any body else from home. Miss Beale need not be so puffed up with New York. Let us talk about the concert. The piano was played while Hausman the best violinist nearly deranged me literally. I never enjoyed music so much in my life.

After this M.lle Eliza took me to the Louve to the Museum. We entered into a large Salle beautifully gilt ceiling painted with a lovely

picture. We proceed to another room quite as elegant and mount a stone stair, statues all around in a state of nudity and nearly all the pictures are. We afterwards went into the Apollo Hall—statues, paintings all of figures perfectly naked. how horrible! I left as quickly as possible. But such is now the modesty the present age in France, crowds of young ladies, gentlemen and children surround a naked sculpture or painting with perfect nonchalance giving their opinions in quite an amiable tone of voice! What would dr. Allan think when he hears I have been amongst a set.

The Louve is built on the same plan though not as extensive and magnificent scale that the house of Mr. Colhoun with a large circular inner court and separated by the Carousel. But the government intends joining the two forming an inner court of the Carousel.

I asked my guitar teacher to get me some English and Scotch airs but it appears that they are very dear in Paris and she brought me a whole parcel of old lumber to learn amongst them “the Rose of Alandale, My Father Land, Last Rose of summer” &c none of which I cared about “croaking.” I am learning to sing the roulades and cadences of some airs from the Opera, but I make poor work of it. My teacher says I have too little confidence in myself, but Mlle. Bandin calls it “nonchalance.” I do try right hard.

M.lle B. is still my good friend in all things. Sometimes I forget to make my bed, clean my basins. Under the furniture all is clean. I do lose my keys. I am in good health, very lazy. You had better let me stay another year. You will have a better chance of my escaping out of your hands for by the time I return I will be so ugly that nobody will care for me and I will be much better pleased to stay always with you if you wish.

And even if you allowed me to see more company, these french dandy monkeys would not tempt me to hang my leading strings, and most assuredly I would be much more unwilling were I with you my mother.

How sorry I am that dear Puss McClung leaves before I arrive. What a pity that our little number will be separated. When do the girls return from Miss C.'s? I hope we will arrive together. You say nothing of Mary Erskine. Is no one wooing her? She bade fair to be a belle. Tell me about

Mary Ann Cruse, who is the Methodist minister, has Henretta Thompson gone to housekeeping? Does Withers Clay speak well and tell him that I wish to come home to hear his lectures. Does Lawson have nothing to do with it or is his majesty as fond of seclusion.

Yesterday Young Kirkman called on us for the first time. His letter of introduction from Mr. C. having arrived 3 or 4 months ago and been retained by his banker who did not know his address. He called at M.dme T. but could not find me and come to Passy. He is a well behaved intelligent youth, says he's sixteen much dissatisfied with France because the boys are so cowardly. He has not become accustomed to thinking that in France and England negroes are as good as he is. He says the boys talk about nothing but their dress and the principal book they study was a work titled "63 ways to tie a cravat."

You can't tell how delighted I am to find some company of my own age with the same feelings, how noble he, though he loves mischief like coz Ed. With his disposition he wishes to be a naval officer, but his father objected. Now he wishes to graduate at Cambridge.

I have no more time to write. Goodbye, best love to my family, friends. Love to dear servants and accept dear mother for my father and yourself my best love and kisses. You'll find hundred mistakes but forgive them all. I have no time to read over or correct. No punctuation at all. Margaret's best love and thanks to husband, fellow servants, our servants and yourself with our family.

INSTITUTION

of Madamoselle Liot

8, Rue Pigalle, Paris

Invoice for: Madamoselle Mary Lewis

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1843

From 1 March to 1 June

Board	400 Francs
Piano	150“
Dance	45“
Singing lessons	120“
Expenditures	
History Book	8.75“
The Limping Devil Book	
(Drama book)	5.50“
Favorite Waltz	2“
Singing method book	12“
Poetic Art of Dugaty	5“
1 Universal History	
by Bosrier	3.50“
French history book	4.50“
Physics & chemistry book	5“
Chronology	1“
Mary Stuart Biography	2.50“
1 history book & 1 literature book	1“
1 Greek mythology	3“
1 folder of music	7.80“

Total Amount Due 782.55“

Mme Frigour de Latour

I decided to finish my education in France . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother, June 22)

My dearest darling Mother,

Indeed I was much surprised the other evening to receive a visit from Mr. and Mrs. C., and hear of their determination to leave in a month or sixteen days. Mrs. C. gave me my choice to leave with her now or wait until next year and can you believe it sweet mother I decided leaving next fall. Would you not have thought me much more dutiful if I had yield to my sweet temptation to return and seeing all who are most tender to my heart? In consulting only my feelings I would immediately have formed the resolution to leave; but mother on sage second thought and your consent I determined to finish my education in France and then to be ready to assist you in the education of my little sisters and brother. To leave now would be absolute folly.

Yesterday I spent the morning in writing my warning letter to you, and the rest of the day Young Kirkman was with us. He is placed in another pension and is much more thoroughly instructed in Latin and mathematics than formerly. He however wishes to enter the Navy and if his Father consents to it, he relinquished the idea of going to Oxford. Another day he was on his way to pay me a visit and passing by a boxing establishment, entered with an English boy to take a lesson. But before he had finished, his eye was so much swollen that he returned to his pension and was obliged to pay his respects another day. He is very intelligent boy and is much improved in every way through his love for la belle France is not too strong.

I must tell you some of his anecdotes which I intended as an amusement for Cousin Eddy. Christmas morning he says that all the school was invited into the Master's "salon." As the door was opened each teacher gave him two kisses, and as he proceeded to take his seat all the boys came "en foule" [in a crowd] to greet him in the same manner. At first he thought they wished to wrestle but upon perceiving the intention, he set on each with a hearty box telling them in vain that customs of America were different.

Don't you think! Craighead is here and never came to see either Mrs. C. or myself. Since the arrival of Mr. Colhoun, M.dme Trigant took me to the Palace of Luxembourg to see the statues and gallery of Paintings. We then proceeded to orbit the gardens. Hills and dells offer themselves in the most beautiful variety, the sides of the ruins being covered with verdure here and there interspersed with luxuriant rose trees produce a very pretty effect, orange trees in bloom, all kinds of flowers, trees &c.

Here I was interrupted by being called to read Vespers and attend dinner, all is now finished. Will you hear what we had—veal, excellent and “bouillon,” boiled beef, radishes, young pigeons, green peas, rice and cherries. Oh! I do not think I ever told you that we always drink wine and water for dinner instead of water. It's much better, water is not too good here—to full of animalcula, but good for the thermicroscope.¹⁴⁹ What will Parson Allan and you say to my breaking my pledge? You made me join for my “influence” and not to secure me against temperance; here my influence would be as nothing; all drink wine and it is so weak that they think no more of it than water.

I digress, will you hear what all do after dinner? M.lle B. has just summoned them around her in the garden under one of the trees while one reads aloud. I study my lessons and practise. I wish I had 20 pr. of hands and heads. I'd learn the harp, piano, guitar, drawing, French, English, cooking, write to everybody in Huntsville, everything else but unfortunately Heaven has not thus blessed your prodigy that she can perform wonders.

I took off my winter dress and stockings on the 27th of June and have my flannel yet. M.lle B. proposed sending home by Mr. C. all my old clothes for Sisters and purchase new ones! Emmy said to me the other day how economical M.lle B. is, could keep a purse always and never spend a cent.

M.lle Eliza made me a good dose of salts to take my bumps off and I rub my face with a “pomatum of cucumber”, all are disappearing. I flatter myself. I am uglier than ever I was in my life, my face is blood red and as fat as possible, my dresses lacked fully a finger's length of meeting and I am much taller than when I left.

Here my wandering cease. I am really fatigued having written nearly all day. I stop to read my chapters, and reread your charming letter which I can not read enough. You must eat your share of strawberries, they are mighty dear here. I eat [sic] some once at Mrs. Colhoun's. oh! no watermelons here, the girls did not know what they were. I pray you will send me some pop corn for M.lle B.

My best love to My dear Uncles, Aunts, cousins, Mrs. Child, Mrs. D. Foote, Miss Swift, Allans, Betts, Erskines, Russel, Aunt Spence, Mrs. F., Mrs. Steele, Dickey Mealt, sunday school class, colored friends, Mrs. Parsons, Mrs. Beirne, Breck, C. Patton, Cruse, Clark, Lowe, Bradley, Pope, and indeed everybody I know you know. I love them all. Send me your journals. Love to the servants each. If you can't get "Cousin Betts" to stay tell him I'll come around to see him when I come back. He must get married and be ready to receive. Uncles Joel and Hick. with Aunt V. I hope you always give my love to Miss Rogers too.

The centre danse, waltz and gallop are the most fashionable here in the way of dancing. Gentlemen don't dance here, they walk and Kirkman tells me like dancing masters. I love to dance now and will teach sisses and brother when I come. Good bye sweet mother. accept your daughter's best and love and kisses.

Am I not a real heroine? . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to Ellen Lewis from Paris, June 27)

Dear Sister Lal,

What a treat your welcome letters were to one, and your particularly sweet sis. Today I went to have a tooth drawn and finding it necessary to lose two, I consented and all was finished without budging; am I not a real heroine to keep from crying? if Pa was here I know he would have given me a paper of candy for "my anguish." My wisdom teeth are appearing and you can imagine how dignified and aged I feel.

The other day I was speaking of my little sisters and mentioned you as being one of the little ones. Oh! said one of the girls does she wear your

long sleeve aprons and do you really call her little? They were surprised when I told them that I was a little girl too at home and at fifteen wore the same kind of aprons, but they would not believe me.

The girls are all preparing pieces of poetry, dialogues and letters to present to M.dme Trigant on her fete day. Here I finish abruptly, my recreation is finished and I hasten to practice. Many kisses and much love from sister

I hope to have good common sense enough to be able to be contented any where and in any situation of life.

(Mary Lewis to her father, July 4, 1843)

My dearest Father

The birds have aroused me from my slumber this morning at 5 o'clock, and I employ the dawn of our sixty-seventh year of Independence to address you. Monday Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun came to bid me adieu, and in looking over our accounts together we all came to the sad conclusion that I had been too extravagant with my pocket funds having spent upwards of two hundred dollars since my departure.

Mr. C. says that I must endeavor to convince you that my expenditures will not amount to more than one third the sum this year. I supplied myself with summer and winter clothing for two years. All that perhaps I will need will be an occasional pair of shoes or the making or altering of a dress. So I thus beg you my kind father to pardon me for what appears to be extravagance. You will see two or three dentists bills in yr. account. The first last fall \$8 was for having my teeth cleaned, separated and two filings. The second 6 each for having a decayed tooth that gave me much pain extracted. The 3rd \$8 to Dr. Brewster for plugging two teeth which being near the old tooth were a little decayed. I went to him because ma told me to go to the first dentist not being aware of his exorbitant charges. My fourth for \$1 for having two teeth taken out, having paid \$2 to a dentist for plugging them and suffering so much was forced to have them drawn the next day.

For my school accounts I know they will be more reasonable, less than \$40 pr. annum—taking 2 lessons instead of 3 during the week, guitar 1 a week instead of 2, dancing discontinued at least for the moment, lessons in geography left off. (I was not told that this would be separately charged. My Physician's bill \$16 will I hope be stopped as well as my apothecary's.

Tell my mother she is more extravagant than her hopeful bird or "baggage" is. Don't you think, she wished me to learn drawing, fancy work and the harp beside all that I have commenced. It would prevent me from accomplishing anything as I wish to teach all that I learn. Besides too, Pa, I would do nothing but practise music all the while and be the greatest dunce about other things in the world. So in learning so many different instruments at a time I should be perfectly disgusted with the constant jingling.

Dancing perhaps I may resume a month or two before I leave to enable me to teach sisters when I return. Gymnastics and swimming I may perhaps learn (with your permission always). I was quite disappointed at not receiving a letter from your majesty by Mr. Colhoun.

To my mother and sisters I have given all the news and have nothing left for you except the sudden change of weather, excessive heat as I have felt in America. Today the 6th issue from a heating furnace and not a breeze the whole day. Notwithstanding this I have not yet taken off my flannel, my health is so good that I do not fear even a cold occasioned by a change of garments. The nights are nearly as oppressive as the days and I find it quite comfortable to sleep with nothing but a thin cambric nightgown.

Mr. Colhoun asked M.dme Trigant to take me frequently to see if our dear little Willy so as to enable me to write to Mrs. C. and give an account of his improvement. She has promised to take me herself and learn from Mr. Gaurin each time of the state of his health.

Parkers have arrived with their parents from Italie and say that France is nothing to be compared with it. Their description of the St. Peter's at Rome so much excited me that I would give anything to see it. Can't you persuade Mrs. C. to visit this lovely land again?

I was much amused at the girls when I asked if they would be satisfied to live in “wild America” after being so much accustomed to Europe. They replied “Ah! can’t tell at least we don’t wish to return now.” Mr. C. thinks that this will be my idea also before I leave. No matter, I will not reveal it at least when I am once more among my friends. I hope to have good common sense enough to be able to be contented anywhere and in any situation of life as every intelligent girl should be. For if I had for a moment supposed that a cultivated education would have rendered me less happy I should swear never to have consented to receive it.

Here I must say adieu my dear father, the girls have just finished their toilette and wait for me to aid them. Love to all and my most affectionate embraces for my mother and yourself from M. Lewis

I have paid another visit to our Willie . . .

(Mary Lewis to Mrs. Colhoun, July 1843) [This was probably the beginning of a practice letter to Mrs. Colhoun.]

My much beloved friend

I have paid another visit to our darling little Willie in company with Mademoiselle Elisa and two or three girls. I found him in Louis’s room playing draughts and as cheerful as he possibly could be. He has been very industrious and showed me a pretty work bag and a pair of garters that he had embroidered quite prettily for you and a purse knit with blue silk for Pa and said he was preparing to work a pair of Pantouffles for pa also.

He handed me the letter you had written to him and making me read it aloud two or three times wished to know if I did not think it pretty.

. . . I have two dollars for next winter!

(Mary Lewis to her mother, July 30, 1843)

My dearest darling mother

My Sunday conge’ has come round again and though I am not

indebted to you for letters the spirit moves me to write. All my companions are absent. Several left yesterday for their different homes and those who remained with us have gone to the Mass. Voila' your Mary quietly seated at a nice little table in her own chamber committing to write her "confession venenale."

By this time I suppose our kind friends Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun have delivered my packet to you and already have I pictured your warm greetings.

You will have been amused at Mr. C.'s conversation before he left. "Now Miss Mary if you are discontented or homesick bury your complaints in your own bosom, you know it is by your own choice that you remain." Yes, it is my own choice and I was fortunately so much attached to M.dme Trigant that I was pretty sure of contentment besides I gain here new ideas every day that I never once have dreamed of had I never left our little village.

Since Mr. C.'s departure Madame Trigant took me to Passy to see Willie, and you would have been so sorry for the poor little fellow—question after question about Pa, Ma, brother formed the principle part of his conversation. He told me he had been a very good little boy. As soon as I returned home, I wrote a detailed account of my visit to Mrs. Colhoun and directed my letter to Liverpool.

On the 13th of this month, the anniversary of the death of Duc d'Orleans, I attended the Mass and funeral services were performed in all the churches of Paris. Our church Notre Dame deLorette was hung in black. The altar was dressed in its mourning ornaments and the priests wore the black costumes. The congregation consisted principally of soldiers of the different regiments. Not one had a prayer book and only showed that they noticed the ceremonies by rising or sitting down.

The twentieth of this month was M.dme T.'s fete. Elodie's little play was chosen for the smaller girls to perform. We spent the whole day in amusement, those who were to perform in rehearsing and the others as they chose. I practiced two hours and read Racine's Polyencte.¹⁵⁰

We were much puzzled how to obtain some flowers for the fete and after much persuasion we prevailed on Mlle Bandin to buy some for us.

In the evening she bought us 30 odd pots of superb plants—dahlias, roses, cactus, geraniums, pinks, Monkshood, myrtle, orange trees &c.

You were boasting of your strawberry and ice cream feast. What a pity I was not invited, but since then we have had for desert gooseberries an inch and 1/2 circumference, the largest I ever saw. Raspberries of nearly the same size, red and perfectly sweet, small sugar pears, gooseberries red and white and quite small. So you can see that we not only have enough to eat but frequently some of the luxuries of the season.

Since I commenced writing I have been to pay another visit to our dear little Willie. We found him in Louis's room playing draughts. He was as before rejoiced to see me and showed me his mother's letter and his little presents that he was preparing for her on her return. His nurse thinks that all is very much changed since Mrs. C. left, but perhaps she requires too much and I feared to trouble Mrs. C. about it. Pa can however tell Mr. C. that he is not allowed to go in the park though the weather is the same as when he spent the whole day out of doors. The servant who used to carry him down stairs was forbidden to do it and Mrs. B. is obliged to perform his duty. He takes no more baths. These changes are perhaps best for his health but I inquire particularly every time I see him about the least minute items of his health and treatment and thus send you the little complaints that Mrs. Blaine presented to me. Mr. C. had better inquire whether 'tis best for his health to be such more confined.

Here dear mother I must say adieu before I have time to finish my sheet. Kiss each dear little sister very tenderly for sis Mary and twenty kisses for my only brother. do not let Florry forget me. My best love to my dear Father. Love to all my friends and companions, Miss Thompson particularly. Love to uncles, aunts and cousins. I have not yet spent my money that Mr. C. gave me, but have two dollars for next winter! send me some more I'll promise not to be so extravagant. I am in very good health. Many kisses and all my love best mother from your Mary. Love for the servants.

Madame says we shall go fox hunting next week.

(Mary to her mother from Persac Castle,¹⁵¹ Aug. 30, 1843)

The first of August, Mlle. Bandin my kind friend intended visiting a friend and knowing that I would be delighted to see the countryside obtained M. Trigant's permission for me to accompany her.

From the train we had a charming view of Paris, Notre Dame appeared in the distance. From the train we saw a strange looking affair—a big red circular piece of wood perched on a pole near which stands a man perfectly erect with one hand stretched out. 'tis to assure us of the safety of the road. So many accidents have taken place that it is right to commence some signs of prevention. The fashion of locking the passengers in is abolished since the dreadful occurrence of the Orleans train.

The sight of St. Cloud is lovely, we visited the Palace there and the friends of M. Bandin, she descended from English parents.

August 17th we visited Versailles with Mlle Bandin. On the 20th an English lady, Madame Duc the protectress of Charlotte Major (the English girl). Madame tells me that she will take me to the Opera if I wish to go. But though the temptation was great I could not. M.dme T. was much pleased to see that I was so careful in obeying you. She said she would take me four or five times next winter.

The next day was my birthday—18 years old! Did you forget it ages ago? I again made a resolution to do better in the future.

August 13 Charlotte came to tell me to prepare myself for a trip to a little village about 4 or 5 leagues from Paris. One of the little girls being very ill, M. Trigant allowed several of the girls to return home for the vacations before it became contagious. Mlle Elias took two of our little companions to C. to spend the holidays. Charlotte and myself go with her.

We returned to Paris early on the 26th of August. Mlle. Elisa proposed another visit to Versailles with Charlotte and myself to see the sights.

[Still later that same month] M.dme Trigant said Mary pack up your clothes quickly with Charlotte and prepare yourselves to travel with

me tomorrow at 7 o'clock. My letter to my sweet mother could not be finished and after busily packing until 1 o'clock at night retired, rose at 5 o'clock, breakfasted and left in a carriage with M.dme T., Charlotte, Ellen Parker and I arrived at the station by the diligence at 8 o'clock. We reached Orleans at 2 or 3 o'clock. Here we see the statue of Joan of Arc, went by another to Blois at 5 o'clock in time for dinner, all dirty and cold. We do not stay to finish, and leave in another deligence. We eat another cold dinner in the state, pass the night with broken Sleep. Pass through the "garden of France" in the night, stop at Midnight at Tours. A very nice breakfast was given us at Porter. I could not see the fields where the good king John was taken prisoner.

At last we are at "Persac" the Chateau. M. de la B. is here with his two sons, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren, a most amiable family. I am learning to embroider with Madame de la B. in canvas. Madame says we will go fox hunting next week. I anticipate much pleasure. We have here a little theatre and going to perform in a day or two all of which you shall have a description. Madame Trigant is very kind. We intend to visit in Rochelle and take sea baths.

Mrs. Child's friend Mrs. Williamson came to see me the other day. She talked very socially with me, is the kindest old lady I ever saw and showed me the likeness of her son. Perhaps she will wait until next year for me to visit H. with her. She sends her love to Mrs. C. and yourself. Madame de Long Champs intended asking me to dine with her. I told her that I was obliged to decline. Mrs. Parker also asked, and the politeness was declined also.

I am very happy though I wish more than all things to see you all again. Many kisses to dear sisters, brother

Mary Lewis

V

The Letters—1844

. . . when the weight of years will have bowed you down and rendered you feeble.

(Mary Lewis to John and Mary Lewis, Jan. 1, 1844)

My darling parents,

I wish you a very happy New Year. Thank you anew for your tenderness too fondly lavished on your grateful daughter. Dearest parents how much I owe you and how utterly incapable am I of repaying your love. Dear father, Sweet Mother I will endeavor to prove you my gratitude and affection by my implicit obedience and dutiful conduct when the weight of years will have bowed you down and rendered you feeble.¹⁵²

Today New Year we have had much pleasure. I expected to stay alone during the holidays but six little girls stay with us. Mademoiselle Elisa who is always so kind to me gave me the permission to buy some sweetmeats and went with me herself to purchase them. We chose a box of dried preserved fruits, burnt almonds, sugarplums and oranges for about a dollar. I bought also a box of chocolate, a map of France and a droll picture representing a nurse with a baby and the child eating. by a small string the baby is made to dance up and down, the nurse to open her mouth and the child to eat with a spoon. all for Willie, dear little fellow, whom I hope to see soon. I bought also a pretty prayer book for Madame Blaire.

You all have such quantities of cake and candy that I am sure you will not disapprove my little extravagance. Madame T. has quite regaled us with sugar plum pastries and creams and promises to take us to see Giroux's toy shop, the most celebrated in Paris.

You tell me that you allowed Mrs. Kirkman to read my scribbled sheet, her compliments were too indulgent. tell her that her wild Thomas has not been to see me since Mrs. C. left. Willie has not received a single visit from him.

The birth of Aunt Anne's little girl must have quite delighted Uncle. How happy I shall be to see my little new cousin. Do the children call Littleton uncle as they threatened to do? Tell me something about my aunt Virginia [Hickman Lewis's widow], is she at the Round Bottom plantation still? and Uncle Joel where is he?¹⁵³

Here I was obliged to leave off to visit the celebrated toy shop de Giroux with Madame T. and two or three of my young friends. you would have been so amused to see our predicament, before we were ready to leave Mdme. T. gave us permission to take our sugar plums with us and to eat on the way. we had not one—having devoured three large boxes of candy and a box of fruits. Mdme. T., on finding out that we had nothing, laughed and bought us some candied chestnuts and candy.

Now commences Epiphanie when until the Carnival we have the gateaux des rois in celebration of the visit of the Magi to our Savior. In the cake is a bean, the slices are drawn and the one who has the bean is queen and we amuse ourselves much by crying out whenever she drinks. We have one every day.

Madame is always very kind to us and has read the "Femmes Savantes de Moliere" with the miser and the Precieuses [Ridicules] which pleased us highly. I am more attached to her daily. Do endeavor to send my Sisters to Paris under her protection, you will never regret it. How rapidly the time flies I have not but 6 or 7 months to stay then will I bid a long adieu to La belle that I so much admire and set sail for my native land, how joyful will I be to embrace you all.

You see that I have spent some money in little presents for Willy. his mother was so kind to me that I cannot but wish to repay it in my attention to her dear little boy. I write to her whenever I go to see him.

Farewell dearest parents. I embrace you tenderly and charge to give my love to uncles, aunts, sisters, brother, cousins, and friends. Love to servants and colored friends.

Your affectionate and obedient daughter
Mary Lewis

[P.S.] Tell Sister Eliza to fold her letters as Mons. Zeminski taught us

. . . my mind is to obtuse to receive the Parisian polish.

(Mary Lewis to her uncle, Edwin Wallace, Jan., 1844)

My very dear Uncle,

If my long neglect has not caused you to forget your little absentee, will you permit me to wish you a happy New Year and congratulate you and my dear aunt of the birth of my wee wee cousin—Mary Louisa.

Your affectionate missive gave me the greatest pleasure, your kind advice was most welcome and the news of our little village as you may easily imagine much interested me. Your gaiety and sympathy were successful remedies for my homesickness. How much you encourage me, my Uncle, to improve by the interest you take in my progress. But much more is required of a person who visits Paris than is exactly just. Our countrymen appear to think that the atmosphere of the french Capital produces miracles. I feel myself incapable of realizing their expectations. Either my mind is to obtuse to receive the Parisian polish, or I have not made that improvement which by this time ought to be discovered. I sadly fear that on seeing your simple Mary on the return the same as when she left you will be disappointed. One thing, Uncle, I love you all if possible much more than when with you and this affection I rely upon to hide a multitude of faults.

You wish me Uncle to give you an account of all that was singular or novel to me on my arrival and during my stay in Paris. The slight regard paid to the Sabbath produced a more vivid impression on me than anything else. Sunday in France is the fete of the whole nation from the first Lord of the land to the meanest peasant, the dawn is the signal for the dissipation, balls, fairs, concerts, etc. occupy the attention of the majority of the people, music is heard on all sides, the stores and

shops are thrown open for customers and ornamented with the richest assortment of merchandises I could hardly credit my senses when I saw for myself these profanations.

The gaiety and elegance of the French next commanded my admiration and the superb monuments for which Paris is so celebrated next attracted my attention. The magnificent architecture so superior to even the first buildings of New York, the fountains, the jets d'eau, the columns, the obelisk, royal palaces, public edifices presented so many objects of interest that I found my time fully occupied in reading the history of each in my guide.

You ask me about the manner and customs of the French. you think them an "out of doors" people, I have very little opportunity of observing if your conjecture is correct. I asked one of the girls her opinion and was told that you were in the right. The Boulevards are nearly always crowded and rain, hail and snow offer no obstacle to those who "vont se promener."

The difference between the Parisians and Provincials I should have had an occasion of judging of, if we had not visited those persons who spend the winter at Paris and consequently had the same manners as the Parisians. The accent and costumes of the Provinces amused me highly, the pretty neat cap, the nice white aprons and short petticoat pleased me much more than the fine coifs of the Parisian "femmes de chambres." [maids] The Cochelasise costume, with the cap a foot and 1/2 high trimmed with wide lace and long ends of muslin pendant behind, short red dress, blue stockings, white apron etc is more elegant. The women are better looking than those of Paris and their naivete (a little rough now and then) pleased me more than the airs of the capital for servants particularly.

The fashions dear Uncle would trouble me a little as I never have time to notice them. the imperial whiskers and moustaches are all the "haut ton." You have no inclination to follow this fashion I dare say.

You tell me that my "School for Scandal" would not have been placed in my hands with your permission, I agree with you Uncle, but to avoid any thing that might injure us in the reading line, M^{de} Trig-

ant reads aloud to us the works of the first french authors. She has read us the amusing Comedies of Moliere "L'Avare," Le malade imaginaire, "Le Cartriffe" Les funmes, Savantes, etc leaving out those parts which might shock us. I have never yet visited the Opera though Mdme Trigant promises me to take me.

For myself I never was so "domestic malgre" more in my life though I am as gay and cheerful as I can be. I wish very much to see my dear friends at home. The girls are much more lively than those of America. though not so boisterous. they have so much intelligence that their society is quite agreeable and though not exempt from the faults of all young people, above all frivolity, I do not hesitate to prefer them to your young ladies. This school is very well conducted; the egotist is allowed no quarter, the elder girls are responsible for the deportment and scholarship of the younger "fry" and are required to protect them.

I beg you to give my best love to my aunt and tender kisses to much of my dear Cousins. Do not neglect to give my love to all of my family and accept dearest Uncle the affectionate embraces of your niece Mary Lewis

When I was at her house I was always at home . . .

(Mary Lewis to her father, Jan. 28, 1844)

My dear Father,

I am not very punctual myself of I would be tempted to commence my missive with a volley of reproaches, because you do not write even every month. The Sunday that I gave my last letter to Madame Trigant for you, I visited our dear little Willie and carried him my little New Year's presents with which he was delighted. I found him a little sad because his little companion Louis had left a day or two before. It appears that the parents of Louis were dissatisfied with his treatment and discovering a lump on his back took him home. Willie's health is pretty good but the deformity no better. poor child, I cannot think that Mr. Guirin can succeed in curing him. I wrote to Mrs. Colhoun on my return home, but spoke only of the health and spirits of her darling. I await anxiously

her return.

Madame Trigant has been so kind as to read us some more of Moliere's comedies, which have caused many a hearty laugh in our little schoolroom. "Le Tartuffe," "Le Malade Imaginaire," "Le Medecin Malgre Lui," "Les Fourberies de Scarpin," "L'Avare," "Les Facheux," etc. A young lady is not permitted to read these works of Moliere in general but Madme. T. chooses those parts which are preferable.

Since I last wrote, Miss Parker has been presented at court and gave me a most brilliant description of the royal reception: The diamonds sparkled on all sides, elegant velvets, silks, satins, etc. formed the toilets of the superb company. The queen, the Duke of Nemours and the Duke of Montpensier the youngest son of the King spoke to her. She saw also the Princess de Joinville, who is about 18 or 19 years of age and though very gay, appeared a little sullen because she was quite indisposed. Miss P. told me that there were more Americans than any other nation; and fifty gentlemen were presented with her father and brothers.

So much for all the news since I last wrote not very interesting, but think not for that my time passes dully away. I never was gayer in my life, my companions are very kind to me and I only need my family, friends and native village to complete my happiness. Two years have flown away so rapidly; six months only and I will commence my preparations for my return. Do persuade Mrs. C. to come quickly and rejoin us with Mrs. John Colhoun. I wish so much to see her, she was kind, very kind to me when here, and when at her house I was always at home.

I hope when Mr. Colhoun arrives he will bring me a large packet of long letters from Home. I wish you would send me by him a lock of Mamma's hair, of yours, sisters' and brother. I wish to have a small picture made of them, don't neglect it I pray you. If you send me Mamma's receipt for Number Six for Mlle Bandin's rheumatism, and several ears of pop corn to show to the girls, there is none here.

Adieu dearest father, give my best love to sisters and brother with a thousand tender kisses for each, my love to Uncles Aunts cousins to my friends both white and black, love to each servant. Remember me particularly to Grandmas Withers, Lewis, and Aunt Spence. Accept

dearest parent for Mamma and yourself my tenderest affection and warm embraces.

Your affectionate and submissive
child

I shall almost be afraid to appear among the showy girls from New York . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother, February 11, 1844)

Sweetest darling Mother,

What a delightful surprise your long, interesting letter afforded me. I really felt as though I had been home again, heard the frightful dream of my darling brother, saw my little Florry conversing with the portrait of Papa, saw you looking over my canvas work and heard your silent reflections on my unfinished embroidery. You say that my Florry talks quite plainly, I will be delighted to listen to her small talk and commence to give her lessons in French.

You may easily imagine my sorrow, my mother, when I learnt that sister Eliza's health was so delicate to send her to New York. Our dear little Ellen I thought you had succeeded in curing her goiter. how negligent to have lost the receipt of the "pommade." I will have a little bottle made happily. I took a copy of it and Mlle. Liot is kind to me that she will not refuse to procure it for me.

Sister Sarah is always in good health. I am sure with her good natured amiable smile and the lady of the family as Papa used to be pleased to call sis Myra shall be my companion while the others are at school, merry times we'll have of it together with our lessons.

Do you really suppose that Mdme. C. will not come to France? (What a pity for her poor little Willie); I went to see him last Monday and found that he had four cotires on his back instead of two.¹⁵⁴ For the first time since the departure of his parents Mons. Guerin [the doctor] came to see his back and pronounced him rapidly improved, and I must acknowledge that he is the only person who finds him better. For all the

benefit Mons. Guerin's remedies produce, I think, he would do as well in America. He never leaves his chamber and having laid so long on his little chair his legs are so weak that after walking across the room twice he was quite exhausted. His nurse Mrs. Blaire is very anxious for Mrs. C. to return and appears as much distressed about the deformity as though Willie were her own child.

You say that Kate and Sophia have much improved from all accounts dear me girls in America can improve rapidly! Why I hardly dare shew my face after two yrs in Paris. don't you think me a real "ninny hammer"? I shall almost be afraid to appear among the showy girls from New York. And the girls in America are so free. How singular it is that they are permitted so much liberty. The young ladies here are quite astounded when I tell them that the grown girls receive company and are paid more attention to than their married ladies. And speak of their wanting confidence and ease in society, faith I think they are quite as easy as they can be.

M.lle Bandin intends asking M.dme Trigant to let me accompany her to the "Jardin des Plantes" and to the Diorama to see the camera obscuras also. One of the young ladies told me that in the Cabinet of Natural History she saw a "half horse and man baby"! preserved in brandy. what would sisters say to this? do you remember the baby about 1/2 foot that I asked for at Dr. Wharton's shop? and the skeleton at Dr. Fearn's about whom Lel was so inquisitive?

So papa has left you for Florida. how lonely you must feel during his absence. he is so affectionate and cheerful that we all miss him when he leaves us. I am sorry that he cannot extend his voyages to Paris. we could see everything then can you persuade him to come with Mons. Colhoun. In what month do you suppose I will arrive in America. I am very anxious to know if in August. I can attend the West Point Military Ball on the 22nd August. My constant topic of conversation is my promised voyage, my tour on the northern lakes, if I don't lose my head before I reach America.

I manage to write to you often. I tell you all I know, see and hear. do the girls from New York write frequently to their friends? And do you suppose that they study really so much as they are paid to do at

Madame Canda's.¹⁵⁵

It is now nine o'clock, the girls have come up stairs to bed, I have spent the evening with one of the girls who has been ill. adieu sweet darling precious mother. I embrace you tenderly and send my love and kisses to sisters, brother, friends and companions with love to the servants and colored friends. Embrace you with all my best. Your submissive and darling, Mary Lewis

. . . and I a simple child . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother, Feb. 25, 1844)

My darling mother

The carnival has just passed and according to custom I must give you an account. Madame Trigant was so kind as to allow us to celebrate with our dialogues for St. Catherine and several charades. A little American whose mother is one of Mrs. C.'s friends and who was with Madame Trigant at 4 years of age was invited to partake of our amusements. Lydia Haight a nice girl about 14 years old.

The evening before Mademoiselle Eliza took me to walk out with her in the champs elysees where I was much amused with a Punchinello theatre around which a number of peasants were collected. The theatre consisted of a kind of square box elevated on a post, the front open so as to represent a stage.

The Sunday following all the girls were absent except two of my little companions and myself. Madame T. was so kind as to take us all to Passy, you would have been amused to have seen us. Madame Trigant and Mlle. Eliza on the back seat of the carriage with the 2 little girls and myself on the front. Mlle Eliza, fearing that the driver would be angry because we were five, remarked I was obliged to take all my children out with me today. It is such fine weather that if I had left one she might have cried all day. The driver appeared to be touched by this simple argument and

giving a sympathetic nod, cracked his whip and off we started.

Willie I found no better but delighted to see me. He always inquires particularly for brother Lindsay and takes much interest in his manly character.

On our return home we passed by the Boulevards to see the masks. The crowd was great but the fancy dresses not very numerous—a little Marquis, a Count, soldiers, sailors, shepherds, and Red Riding Hood now and then passed near us.

But the most ludicrous dress was that of a little vagabond made of yellow paper, Sun bonnet, long dress and drawers in this light material. In a pretty predicament would he have found himself if a shower had moistened his clothing. We were quite surprised to see a woman fighting with a common looking boy in the street but on observing more particularly the combatants discovered that the woman was a man disguised. Anything in the carnival, I remarked as our carriage rolled off.

Madame Trigant read us some very interesting tragedies by Casmir who died lately and is pronounced by my superiors in age and judgment to be an excellent author—*Les Kepres*, *Liciniars*, *Louis XI*, *Les Comediens* and all of which quite enchanted us. The talent, genius and chastity with the fine moral of his works cannot fail to produce as good effect on the mind of the reader.

Now guess what I have seen since I last wrote which surprised and charmed me. “d ye give it up?” why nothing less than a visit to the Italian Opera! Madame T. gave me notice to dress myself in twenty minutes, all was haste. One of the girls was kind enough to plait my hair, another to lace my boots and was just ready to go downstairs when I chanced to glance at my feet and saw one slipper and one boot—a nice dress for the theatre! Quickly I remedied the *oublie* [sic] and hastened to join Mdme. Trigant.

The piece was that of *Orthello*. I heard the divine “Grise” warble *La Blache*, Mario Salvi, Morellit, Nocello and Bellini sing with a band of from fifty to sixty musicians. I was perfectly enchanted. The splendour of the theatre, the magnificence of the “*toilettes*” and costumes all tended to complete the brilliant representation of that fairyland which so much

charmed my infant imagination in the marvelous Arabian Nights and Childs Own book.

The hall though not so large as I expected was most tastefully constructed and ornamented, six ranges of boxes supported by Critons (half man-half fish) painted white and handsomely gilded are placed in a semi circle in front of the stage. A chandelier ten or twelve times as large as that of Mrs. Colhoun, was suspended from the ceiling. So intense, the light the eyes are pained when looking at it. The Royal Boxes are situated on either side of the stages and are distinguished from the others by hangings of purple velvet spangled with gold.

The stage is very extensive and one time I counted more than 60 actors who appeared together besides a large number who were at so great a distance that I could not distinguish them so as to give you their exact number.

Little Ellen has written me. I was astonished to know about Eliza Beth Kavanaugh's clandestine match. I hardly expected it from a member of the Methodist Church. But girls are allowed too much freedom in America and now wonder if they thus repay the indulgence of their parents.

I have been this week to see our dear little Willie, and he happily had received a letter from his mother announcing her arrival in May and even before that epoch. I am delighted that she returns so soon even though she may not return to America. Mother when do you think I will return and where does Papa intend waiting for me, at New York? I am impatient to learn. How our dear little town is changed. Henrietta Eason and Mary Jane Erskine—mistresses of an establishment and I a simple child. I don't envy them I assure you.

I amuse Mlle. Bandin with the tales of marriage and the wedding of Martha Langford with the floral pyramid of Miss Walker's since she regularly asks the Huntsville news with much interest. Dear good soul, she is a constant good friend and supplies my youthful thoughtlessness by her prudence and foresight. She frequently reprimands me for my disorder and I amuse myself by giving my self the title of the queen of disorder.

Tell sister Eliza to write. I will soon answer Lel. Give my love to Sarah and Laura Allan, Mrs. Childs, and the Withers. Another tender embrace darling Father and Mother from your absent

Mary

I have seen ladies on horseback with beaver hats . . .

(Mary Lewis to her mother, April 17, 1844)

Dearly beloved Mother,

Sweet parent how frequently the pain of absence is mitigated by this friendly converse, what moments of pleasure does it not recall to memory! how ever happy we may be away from home, however grateful to those who are so kind to us, still "o'er the blue curling waters our glances will roam," for there is our country. Oh! there is our home.

I was agreeably surprised with a letter from our kind friend Mrs. Colhoun in which she announces her arrival in May. I was half amused and pained on learning from her that Louisa Hopkins had returned from New York "about as accomplished as when she left." Miss Parker a young lady from Boston has left school and intends returning to America in May, and now we are not more than fifteen or sixteen.

I have not seen our dear little Willie lately but have written to him once or twice and have received an answer from Madame Blaire. he is no better, quite debilitated and takes no exercise. the darling little fellow promised to gather a bouquet of violets for me.

Spring has finally declared itself. since the 21st of March we have had charming weather. The leaves are putting forth rapidly and soon our little garden spot will be clothed in green.

The 31st of March was Palm Sunday and I went to the High Mass with the young ladies. the music was very fine and we heard an excellent sermon by the brother of Ratisbonne, quite a famous preacher. During the Holy week we eat no meat and Friday we took bread for breakfast only. Madame Trigant read sermons to us every day. Yesterday was Easter and I have seen some pretty eggs made of sugar candy and containing

little books, different games, sets of cups and saucers to. I love to see these little surprises, it reminds me of the dyed eggs that Papa used to give us from the wonderful speckled hen's nest.

Here I was interrupted by an agreeable surprise viz a visit to Willie and the little girl of whom I had spoken to you. We arrived at the Institution Othopedic of Mr. Bouvier; were shewn in to a very handsome saloon [sic] ornamented with pretty rural baskets and floral saucers and a kind of Mahogany side table containing exotics of various kinds called "la Jardinere." We found our little friend in the garden with about 30 girls some lying on mats under a tent, others exercising in the gymnasium and Emmy sitting on a chair. She was glad to see us and said that she does not suffer from the operation, though she is not allowed to walk. Poor little Willie too was delighted with our visit. he complains of bad fare as usual and has of yet not left his room though the weather is very fine.

Madame Trigant took me to see the first theatre, Theatre Francis' to see Polyenete by Racine. Rachel the most celebrated actress performed and was the only one who played well!

We saw also the curiosities of the Louve. While we were at the Museum we stopped to see the Royal carriages, one pulled by 8 horses and the other by 6 horses, outriders in red livery, postillions in red also. coach painted blue with the royal coat of arms and lines with white satin. I have seen ladies on horse back with beaver hats and riding habits.

One day Madame Trigant allowed us to commence a very promising game. each girl takes a green leaf and is obliged to have it about her always. if one is caught without her leaf she pays one cent. since yesterday we have sixty three cents. the money will be employed to buy refreshments for a party before the vacation.

Madame Trigant is very kind to us; Mademoiselle Eliza is a good friend to me and our dear Mademoiselle Bandin has not been very well, but I thank God she has at last recovered. Adieu darling mother, no friend

can ever replace you to your absent affectionate daughter. embrace my dear father for me and reserve for yourself my tenderest love.

This beautiful Island is destined to be cut up by Yankee inter-prize . . .

(John H. Lewis to Mary from Havana, Cuba, Apr. 19, 1844)

Well here I am nearly four months from home in Havanna, La Habana, "the Harbour" of St. Christophers for such it was baptized by Columbus. How replete with historical recollections—how filled with romance—how prolific of mystery. Its spacious harbor (sufficiently large for the navy of the world) Its Moro Castle, its Cabanos the Punta Santa Maria guarding the harbor. Its Forts Princefe and Atares crowning the heights contiguous to the city all of white coralline rock shining brilliant in the distance exhibits the strong arm of the Government. Its massive walls and gates guarded by soldiers and decorated with massive barbaric ornaments. Its church's dome 100 yards long by 50 yds broad, 4 stories high.

Its Public buildings, its theatre, gardens, fountains, Public monuments. Its tropical plants and fruits. The social relations of its people all creating a panorama dazzling to the eye and dislocating to my brain of ideas that it requires more powers of analysis than my feeble mind can behold—to select the most appropriate matter for a letter?

I arrived here some 2 weeks ago at the heel of Lent and commencement of the Holiday. All business being suspended, no arrangements presented themselves. but Music on the square in front of the Captain Gen.l Palace. Here every night between the hours of 8 and 9, 60 to 80 musicians assemble guarded by soldiers, and regale the Habanese with choice music from the best musical composers of Europe while the elite as well as the refuse of society mingle together and by the dazzling light of their numerous lamps enjoy the dulcet strains and the balmy atmosphere of this tropical climate. Here Counts with black haired and black eyed senioritas traverse the decorated walks of the Plaza commingle

with Plebeians and negroes with cigars in the mouths—all on a footing of perfect equality. No collusions, no rows and every one shifting for himself as best as they can.

Scarce any thing has undergone change in 19 years when I was here before; The same monopoly in trade, the same despotism in government and the same bigotry in religion as it was 100 years ago. The strong arm of a Military government is improper every where. As you enter the harbor a soldier from the Moro Castle runs up a signal to indicate the nation to which the vessel belongs and demands yr. name and country. Then hosts of government officers come on board to examine manifest properly and you cannot land till your passports have been vised by the authorities. this done and security given that you will not leave the Island in debt, you land but not your baggage till it is inspected in the Custom house next day.

If a Theatrical Exhibition is to be had soldiers guard the entrance and every aisle of the theatre and so it is every evening at the Passo when men and women in Volentes and men on foot exercise and take recreation, if there is a Ball or a bull fight. It is so of a race. Soldiers act as policemen. Every where at the churches and the procession of the Host, bands of soldiers with muskets and bayonet join in the celebration.

Then comes their monopolies. If a fish market is to be built, a Patent conveying an exclusive right to sell fish is to be given some favorite and while he gives to the poor fisherman 6 1/4 cts for lbs., he retails them at 25 cts pr. lb and so with ice bot at 5\$ a ton and sold for 100\$. On this principle the famous Tacon Theatre the handsomest (I suppose in the world) was built—and the coffee, the butchery and sale of meat is a monopoly, the lighting of the streets with gas, the casting iron wheel for drays and so it runs through the whole category making every article of consumption exorbitantly high and oppressive and every thing of the worst quality.

I can learn but little of the social relations of the people. they certainly give no dining parties. All the visiting of the ladies is done after night and so also is the shopping. It is wholly inadmissible for a single lady to be seen riding or walking alone.

Certainly it is that a horde of idle servants are seen bashing about the doors of the rich. I am assured that the wives and daughters do little but smoke cigars and visit and ride in their volantes and lead a life of both bodily and mental indolence. Every thing is stamped with the bucolic somnam movement. The public officers, lawyers, doctors, and merchants all move slowly. I could do more work in one day than one of these people will do in a week.

I have spoken of the Volantes. they are both the greatest luxury and nuisance to the Havanes. It is a huge clumsy affair for one horse like in the body of our old double gigs, the wheels are near twice as large as the hind wheels of American carriages. the shafts are 15 feet long and the body of the machine resting on the shaft instead of nearly over the wheels.

I visited the Tacon Theatre. I found it decorated with a splendid facade with a cafe or dram shop below, very much crowded with the devotees of Bacchus. I bought a ticket and was hustled up 2 or 3 flights of stairs until I found myself among the lowest class of People in the 4th Tier. I soon found my malposition, but there was no remedy. I suppose I enjoyed ole Balls performance quite as much as I could. Here I saw for the second time the Captain General of Cuba who being Viceroy was the nearest resemblance to a king I had ever seen. He has a fine face with rather a fine Irish chin, a shaved face. He is of Irish descent about 48 years of age, graceful in manners, plainly dressed and has much the mein of a well placed man.

I will remark that Havana and its environs is in an amphitheatre surrounded on the East south and west by a range of high hills from which a fine perennial stream is brot into the city and environs to such an extent this for a league and a half of farms are irrigated by it and furnishing more water without the art of machinery than supplies any similar population in the world.

I visited the Conde Ste Venice with book in hand. He led me on to his aviary and shew me many curious fowls from the new world. I tendered him my book and intimated I desired his autograph and he took my pencil and wrote—Ex me Sor Conde de Ste Venia—which means the most illustrious Senior Count de Saint Venia. On my second visit

he came up to cordially to shake my hand and welcome me. He seemed most anxious to talk, but it was all pantomime.

This beautiful Island is destined to be cut up by Yankee interprize. Surely no part of Gods Earth presents so much to the curious and scientific. I trust it will be my fortune yet to bring you here at some future time. I have taken my passage home on the steamer Alabama of New Orleans to sail 23rd of this month and hope to find Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun at N. Orleans, where I will arrange for your return home.

I left home for Florida 29 Dec. At St. Augustine I ascertained where your Mother had been cheated out of an estate in Florida worth at least \$250,000. And I learned I could get the proof by coming here. So I determined with my usual perseverance to come before I saw wife. While I have come, and strange to say, have found the irrefutable proof that will enable me with little trouble to recover it. The estate covers 72,400 acres of the finest lands in all Florida. I spent 2 days on it and was delighted as much for perseverance 19 years ago. I came here for the same purpose and got nothing but a written instrument signed by Mr. Betts' partner which with other proof gives it to your mother beyond doubt. I found here an old bosom friend of your grandfather who had taken great pains, and will give me most efficient council and mark full proof.¹⁵⁶ So much for industry and perseverance. May it be a lesson to you my dear child.

How much I long to see you and what pleasure I look to our meeting in Boston this summer. my health is very good with high spirit is as usual. May God bless you my dear child is my constant prayer.

Ever yours

John H. Lewis

I have commenced to build my airy castles . . .

(Mary Lewis to her sister Eliza, May 5, 1844)

My darling beloved Sister,

A thousand thanks to you for your sweet letter of the 13th March.

You cannot be more enchanted with the idea of my return than myself, how I long to embrace you all. I have commenced to build my airy castles already, my lessons to my sisters, my little chamber, my hours of study etc form the materials of my castles.

Since I last wrote to Mamma I have seen something of more consequence. Can't you guess what! No? The Opera Comique! how much preferable to the confectionaries of all Paris.

The theatre is very handsome, ornamented with statues of Cupids painted white and gold. The portraits of the authors who have composed for the Opera Comique are handsomely executed around the ceiling with the names of the Operas. The boxes are placed in three tiers without counting the pit. The royal box is placed on the left hand is distinguished from the others by yellow satin curtains. the other private boxes are the most agreeable I ever saw. behind the box is a small parlour with a looking glass, sofa, and nice table where you are at liberty to retire between the scenes.

The music at last commences, a band of fifty musicians compose the orchestra—what brilliant executions—the violins, violincellos, bugles, horns, flutes, drums, triangles, etc.—all form a splendid collection. I am enchanted with the overture of “La Sirene.” And this is how my evening was delightfully spent.¹⁵⁷

Since then we have been to see little Emmy, the little lame girl who is very well but walks no better. Poor dear. Willie we have seen also. He was delighted to see us and has been permitted to go into the park. He charged me to kiss my little sister Elodie for him. He showed me two letters from his mother in which she promises if possible to meet us in June.

Mademoiselle took one of the girls and myself to Passy to see Madame Thomas (the Minister of Finances's wife), and we were received in a pretty little pavilion in a garden placed on a high hill overlooking Paris and the Champs de Elysees where the races were to be run. From the house in the spy glass we saw distantly four horses running with jockeys. Indeed the sight was quite exciting. I have not been out since the king's fete which was quite brilliant—900 drums accompanied the process.

Adieu darling kind sister. I send a thousand sweet kisses.

P.S. Dear Mother, I have just enough room to caution you not to go out until you are quite well and to tell you of the sickness of the young lady from America who left school late. The typhoid now raging in Paris has nearly reduced her to the last extremity.

Fashion, the tyrant . . .

(John and Mary Lewis to Mary, May 17, 1844)

My dear Child

The arrival last night of our friends Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun has put us all on the alert to write you. You no doubt was much surprised at receiving a letter from me dated at Havana. Indeed I was much astonished myself on reflection on the incident that impelled me there, and much more at its astonishing and fortunate results. I felicitate myself on my energy and perseverance and good luck and now begin to feel that I have in my grasp even a superfluity. I cannot regard the estate thus rescued at less than 250,000\$ and I believe it to be worth nearer \$500,000. I not only got all the evidence I desire but the opinion of a most learned lawyer that my wife's title cannot be disturbed even by perjury or forgery.

I cannot but recount an incident which occurred at the Captains House as I was furnished a certificate of leave or passport. I thought an indolent looking mustachioed fellow told me to take off my hat. (Now we Americans pull off our hats in courts of Justice and churches but never to men in Power.) My blood curdled at what I took for injustice by the serf for I felt, I assure you, as a part of the embodiment of the sovereignty of my country and I would have given all the cash in my pocket to have given him an open palmed slap in the face yet the fear of a strong handed military government restrained me. I told my Spanish friend, Castillo, of it. He assured me of my mistake. Well be it so, he wore a mustache and this was enough.

April 25 at 4 1/2 arrived and I found my self at the wharf among hundreds of stevedores and gondoliers. the latter was busily engaged in taking off passengers, visitors, fruits, etc. to the ship Steamer Alabama anchored not far off in the harbor. In a few minutes I was safe on board. Here I found hundreds of friends mingled, all engaged in talking and arranging berth, baggage, etc. The second bell rang. All took an hurried leave for the quay where they stood waving their handkerchiefs, in token of final benedictions. The steamer under weigh, all waved handkerchiefs and made the water ring with their hurazzahs. A Spanish drummer catching the impulse seized his drum beat, a regular rat-tat-rat-tat accompanying it with many grotesque capers. I felt, I assure you, that I breather more freely and thus I had removed from me the arm of a strong military despotism and looking at the flag of our country streaming from the mast head of our noble steamer while traversing the deck, arm in arm, with a friend. I could not refrain from repeating a stanza from Wilson, the ornethologist, when he first beheld our flag waving from fort Niagara—"Hail happy flag to the sons of freedom, dear is the country's valor reared thy standard here—Eternal honours crown with rich _____ the banner of union and thy stars of Peace."¹⁵⁸

We had a delightful passage of three days over a calm and unruffled sea without nausea of qualm. I have so far conquered my adversity to sea voyages thus I would now be willing to embark for Europe, and I yesterday proposed to Mr. Thomas Kirkman that if he would go to Paris next year and take Ellen and his daughter to Madame Trigant I would go two years after ward and bring them back.

I think it now very probable that Ellen, Myra Knox, and several others will be sent next Spring. Doct. Fearn too wants to send one. From the seclusion of Mrs. C., Mr. Colhoun cannot return before October. I shall then meet you in Boston.

Col. King [William Rufus King] of this State is chosen Minister to France. He takes with him his niece Mrs. Ellis who lost her husband last year. Through them you may perchance be introduced to court.

Mr. C. promises me that he would afford you every opportunity of visiting places of note in Paris and London. Your ward robe can be

selected by you or aided by Madame Trigant. Lay in a plenty of shoes, gloves, and silk stockings. Silks are dear in America and they should be selected in Paris. You must get you a good Guitar and plenty of strings and music. Your hair should be dressed often by a French barber at least until you learn to dress it your self.

[Written by mother] How quickly do we detect the impress of Parisian taste and finish. when Mr. C. saw the little perfumed "boquet" which Myra sent Mrs. C. he immediately observed, "oh that must have been sent by Miss Mary, it came from Paris." I said nothing of your purchasing thread lace. It is always fashionable, high priced here and used for many different purposes. Everything can be made of cotton, but nothing is equal to the reality of silk for me. Fashion, the tyrant demands a passing respect to this plebeian article.

The old gentleman gave me leave to "add a few lines" to his letter. I told you the children had gone to the Mt. with Mrs. C. and girls (but Lel and F) and all hands turned in to gather strawberries and raspberries and making cake and getting a nice supper, to greet them on their return. I ran up stairs with my little "rose bud" in my arms, put her in the cradle and by the light, sole, of my own eyes, began to arrange my toilet to receive them, in a few minutes, Pa called to me and on entering the Parlour, presented me (not as I expected Mrs. C.). Mrs. Brown, a lady of an Episcopal Minister, they having just arrived and who had treated him with much cordiality in Florida. Upon comparing notes, she proved to be an old school mate of mine 26 years ago. A Miss Morelle of Savannah and school at the Sandhills near Augusta Geo. She had a sweet little girl of 5 yrs with her. So we ate fruit, cream and cakes and listened to Miss Wilson's silvery laugh and Mrs. C. and B.'s agreeable conversation and after tea to Rev. Mr. B's privileged old gentleman's way of talking and jesting. They came to fill a vacancy in Columbia Tenn.¹⁵⁹

Your cousin McNeal, Mary, is no more, and the Dr. remained but a few months behind, your letter, we hear was received by W. Hardin after their death.¹⁶⁰ Do you recollect the young James Brown who was sick on the mt. next door to us and how we pitied him and sent him good

things? 3 or 4 yrs ago he married Miss Camel [Campbell] of Nashville, it seems their married life, from his dissipation, was unhappy, and a few weeks ago he committed suicide. you know there is constitutional insanity in his family (Col. Percy's nephew). C[ampbell]'s father was once a minister to Russia and she had the Russian name for Elizabeth, "Zelinka."¹⁶¹ [written by Pa] I send you by Mr. Colhoun seven hundred dollars, I expect it to pay your way to America. Now make your calculations and let every dollar tell properly. I had a conversation with Mrs. Colhoun relative to your purchases.

[One last set of instructions from Ma] I wish you very much to have a neat watch and chain, and some pretty lace edging. Could you contrive to bring a box of rare candies kisses, etc. Your company might at little expense thus share your Parisian presents and rarities at little parties, etc. never mind silk dresses for me. God bless you my dear child and bring you safe home.

affy

M. Lewis

I will at least try to make [my daughters] "a fortune in themselves...."

(Ellen Lewis and Ma to Mary, May 21, 1844)

Dear Sister

I reckon you expected to receive a letter from me long ago. But you were quite mistake I assure you. I don't thank you for it—writing me that old french letter. I hope you didn't expect me to read it when I have only taken two months and a little over. I can't quite *parlez franeais*, but I reckon I can jabber with you when you return.

Pa has been here a week. he has enjoyed excellent health while absent. He bought me a book of Spanish dances. I am still taking music lessons from Mrs. Bode and learn duets with Mary Coleman. I must tell you what Pa brought Ma and the children—Ma a bottle of cologne and nice cream candy. Myra a large doll dressed in the height of fashion. Sarah a

game and shuttlecocks. Eliza 2 books written entirely in French. Brother a large trunk with which he is very much pleased and all of us some pine apples. they were very nice, but would have more in them if they had been entirely ripe, but would not have kept if brought so.

There is a great deal of sickness in our town. the measles are raging but are of a very light kind. We have them in our family. Sarah has nearly recovered, but Eliza is now sick with them. Ma has not yet named the baby. I think Josephine is a sweet name. what do you think of it, our list of names have run out. you did not send us word what to name it. We are at a great loss to know.

Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun have arrived. Ma and all the children except E. and S. went to see her even the baby not yet 3 months old. Mr. C. took supper with us. We had raspberries and Ma sent several dishes full to Mrs. C. as she was not able to come. I must not forget to tell you that I am going home with Mary Simpson in the vacation. She resides in Florence. I am so tired of Huntsville, I think it is high time that I was getting out of it.

I didn't try to write this letter nicely at all for that french letter you sent me. You must make haste and come home and impart to me your knowledge of music. I am almost crazy to hear you play. good bys, school's broke, I remain

your affection sister
Ellen

[This letter had no closing, one wonders what other feelings Ma shared with her daughter that day.]

Dear Mary

I have so lately written to you that I have scarcely anything to say and am only induced to write from the belief that you very naturally expect letters from all of us. [Ma then proceeds to write almost 2000 more words, much about purchasing clothes and fashions.]

Your uncle Knox has given up the idea of going to Paris. You are sorry I know. he has taken Myra to N. Jersey to school.

We have the measles with us now, but very lightly, Eliza and Sarah

are well of them and you had them and I think E.'s health will be improved. They have all walked to the mountain to-day with Mrs. C.'s and girls. Mrs. C. predicts you'll soon be tired and lonely in H. What a thought!! I own I felt mortified at the idea of your being so slandered even in thought. so far from believing it, I only feel how happy we will be. I need a companion and am lost without you. Pa is so taken up with other things. he seems to think very little of how I long for some change. every things is so monotonous to me. but would not be to you. it is only to the confined housekeeper who knows no changes and of course all is dull to her.

I see Ellen does not tell you of a little concert we had a few weeks ago, all school children but prettily conducted. Ellen and M.C. Fearn principle performers. an innocent recreation and becoming fashionable. You knew N. Patterson and W. Scruggs were married I suppose. poor Maria Scruggs is no better. Martha Echols and our Baptist Preacher W. Meuse, also a teacher of latin in Mrs. C's school, eloped and were married. (Father and mother almost deranged in consequence.) They are boarding at an Elegant Tavern put up by Caldwell and called "Caldwell House." she has left school and the Father would not consent when asked but in these cases "tis difficult to act." He was unreasonable. Mr. M. is a good man. she an ill tempered little imp and he well punished, I fear. Mrs. C. discarded her from school, in all kindness. but popular opinion required it of her.¹⁶²

Oh! I was near forgetting to tell you of the fulfillment of my prophecy related to Sarah Spotswood who last week married the Stutter, Mr. Matthews, but declared he never stuttered when addressing her and no one heard him speak the evening of their marriage.¹⁶³ has not the old lady done well, according to the way of the world's thinking? 'tis bad enough to accuse men of mercenary motive in matrimony, but alas: what do we feel when we hear of a young lady sacrificing herself to an hundred thousand dollars but I hope neither will be the case with our daughters. I will at least try to make them "a fortune in themselves," a common term used, you know. towards our sex, so that should any of my girls be so unfortunate as to have a fortune, for which they may

marry one, who does not begin by really loving, he can but fall in love after knowing her better.

While I write to you in a neat little office I had fitted up for Pa in the new outbuilding which also serves as a dressing room adjoining and entering into a neat little bathing room which you will like, our sweet little babe whom we call "the little white lady" for she is as snow or Pearls rather is lying near me on a lounge with which, I have indulged your luxurious Papa. she is but a real little laughing Hebe. I still nurse her myself, but often am weary and feel too much confined by it.

I only wish I had strength and was equal to the task. I am more and more averse every hour of my life to the nursing of children by slaves. my eyes are opening still more to the unhappy influence exercised by them over the minds of our children and I am trying still more to withdraw them from it. I succeed partially. Sally has two children. they stay a good deal with their mother (who sews) in a house in the wood yard, beyond the enclosure of my yard. they never are allowed to come in my yard until night, or Florry and Lindsay to go into "their yard" at all. in consequence all behave better. for in association, neither are bettered but mine certainly injured.

Susan has behaved so badly for some time that I am docking her of the privilege of influencing the children, she is more corrupting in her influence in her kindness than in her ill humours and this answers a better purpose too. You see my dear Mary how watchful a mother must be, to preserve the purity of mind as well as the morals of her children. S. never bore a good moral character you know and I have never been able to reform her in any degree. Sally, with all her quick temper, is now an honest married woman. her impulses, consequently are better than were she otherwise. and she is much improved but cannot succeed teaching them their book and God only knows whether they are made happier or better by it.

I almost think that in their position, "ignorance is bliss." I no longer attempt it. I see them improving tho' from external circumstances. Sally is careful with her children and as neat in the making their clothes and dressing them every day as I am, and they are as well behaved as neces-

sary for any young children. they all have much finer and better built rooms then we have. Pa has taken down the old buildings and put up a very handsome two story row of rooms numbering 12 and they occupy 6 of them. but my child this only proves to me the utter impracticability of making them contented with their condition as slaves, for the more improved they are, (as Dr. Channing said) the more glaringly laborious and wrong does slavery seem to them and had I a thousand. I would never wish to hand down one to my children for you (while living with them) feel a wish to treat them as you would white servants, when their ignorance and often their bad dispositions prevent them from appreciating your motives, you discard the rod as I have strove and not one in a thousand but becomes lazy, disobedient and turbulent if lectured or even reproved and yet I prefer the latter to the loss of my own self respect and self esteem, as I certainly should in the former case.¹⁶⁴ There is but one course and that is an undeviating, firm manner even when you would be lenient and softened. I fired two from having so many to manage and using the rod with none. to keep from spoiling them, scolding more than I admire. I have very strict rules as regards association however. for we found so much gambling, drinking, and going on after night on our premises we had recourse to strict rules to avoid a worse evil and I am satisfied with fewer to save more trouble and saving the confining me at home a good deal, I have more contentment in my lot and cannot but see and feel a state of improvement.

He was your father's best friend . . .

(Mary Lewis to her daughter, after May 26, 1844)

Dear Mary

Have the card case repaired substantially, it cost \$8 and is a present of by-gone days to you by Ma. Here are little remnants of jewelry have repaired to suit yourself. What a pretty ring Mrs. McClung's buttons would make and Ellen longs for a ring. I send you my coral B. Pin. (The set slips out.) Poor Louisa (who gave you the other B.P.) is dead, a

noble heart she had. I send Uncle Hickman's medal with yr. Br. John's hair in it and Helen's which I had and would not have omitted sending for anything. Have J's hair taken out and put with the others if you think proper.¹⁶⁵

Four gold pencils are not very dear with you. They would be highly appreciated as presents by your sisters. Have Col. L's [William Lindsay] hair put in some little plain affair suitable to a boy for yr brother who is named for him. He was your father's best friend and no other ever loved him more or would allow a word disparaging said of him. How would a neat watch key do? This would be appreciated when a man, if he lives.¹⁶⁶ Poor Mrs. Tom Brandon's only son died yesterday after 15 or 20 hours sickness.¹⁶⁷ How we who have but one son fear their loss. Two more cases of measles. Myra is abed. Ellen and Florry contaminating other convalescents.

Mrs. Browne says she saw an old lady 80 yrs. old in Florida (and so did Pa) who knew my Father and Mother. She says "they were a beautiful couple." My mother very handsome and accomplished, like you Mary, she had blue eyes, dark hair and a cheerful contented spirit, how we would have loved her and will revere her memory. A gentleman told Pa she was the first who taught him his letters and he loved her dearly. Aunt F. [Fenwick] used to say she sang hundreds of songs and most melodiously.

Mary the thought has just struck me you would like to see Ma and Pa and you'll open the box very carefully and you'll see us. Mine is said to be a good likeness of me and I think so except the hair which ought to be the color of the locket sent you. Pa is a little darker and not red as this complexion, otherwise it is a good likeness, but not as good as his Portrait. Now good bye my child and God be with you.

Mary Lewis

How bright were her prospects...

(Mary Lewis to her father, June 2, 1844)

Dearest Father

By this time no doubt you have left off roving and perhaps may be "at Home" to the letters of your troublesome little absentee. You wrote so frequently to me while Mamma was indisposed that I am now a thoroughly spoiled child really imagine that I have a right to require long missives from you.

Allow me to thank you for the large sum you have given me for the purchase of my toilet before leaving Paris, and still more so for the permission to exercise my own judgment relative to presents for Madame Trigant and her kind sister. ah! if I repaid them as they deserve, I would never know how to do so. Mademoiselle Bandin too, I wish you were acquainted with her, she often says in speaking of our family, "I love your parents, though I do not know them."

I am now daily expecting Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun, how dilatory they are. poor little Willie awaits their arrival with impatience. My Uncle Knox too never will come. It appears that neither steamships nor railways accelerate the movement of our sedentary Americans. I need not repeat my joy to meet you again in my Native Land and how much more so when those we love as are there.

Indeed I dare not now anticipate so much enjoyment since the death of poor Elisabeth Parker the American young lady who left school about six weeks past to prepare for her return to America. Poor girl, she spent her whole winter at school instead of going into society in order to prepare herself to shine in our western land and so well had she succeeded had she lived she would have been a star of no ordinary brightness. She had a very fine voice, played on the piano, and spoke french tolerably well for the short time she had devoted to this language. The fever, called Typhios, so dangerous now in Paris seized her a month before her intended departure

with her family. Her poor sister who had been travelling in Spain with her husband arrived just in time for the interment and hardly knew that she had been ill. How bright were her prospects in life and how suddenly, how awfully blighted Madame Trigant composed some lovely lines on her death for Mrs. Parker who is very much distressed.

The weather has been extremely unfavorable for health during the last month, the temperature appears to vary daily—cold, heat, rain, hail, snow and fine weather often visit us on the same fortnight.

But here I am at the bottom of my page and unhappily have no colored ink to cross my hastily written sheet. Do give my best love to all my uncles, aunts and cousins, remember me affectionately to my friends individually and collectively, my love to each of our good servants and colored friends and my tenderest kisses for my beloved sisters and dear little Lindsay. Reserve for mamma and yourself my heart's warmest affection and my sweetest embraces. Adieu darling Parents I embrace you as tenderly as I love you

Your obedient and affectionate

I never wish to be a bluestocking . . .

(Mary F. Lewis to her father, June 9, 1844)

My dearest best of Fathers

How grateful I am to you for your long interesting letter from Havanna. Our kind friend Madame Trigant and her sister took one or two of the young ladies and myself to Passy, where we first paid a visit to Mdme Thomas. The weather was charming though the heat rather oppressive and just as we left Madme. T's a tremendous hail and thunder storm pelted our little carriage. Happily we were quite tranquil having provided ourselves with—guess what? A nonconductor or preserver from lightening, think you? A quart of black heart cherries and some fresh light bread the best preserver is our whole Philosophy.

The storm appeased, we arrived where I found our dear little Willie with his nurse and Dr. Higgins, his English Physician; an excellent warm

hearted man, and the most friendly Englishman I ever saw. He comes to see our darling Willie twice a week. Willie has an excellent appetite, sleeps soundly, takes some little exercise and is the most amiable interesting boy you ever saw. Madame Bleis writes to me now and then, but Willie pretends that he does not write well enough to send a letter. He promised me to try next when I told him that I would buy some pretty story books for him. He is a very grateful child and has noble principles.

He told me of the expectation of a new comer in his family and finds that they are becoming too numerous. I had never suspected that Mrs. C. had been detained on this account and though I was a little impatient at her tardiness I now readily excuse her. Poor woman how much she must wish to embrace her invalid boy. I hope his life may be preserved though I have no faith in the charlatan operations.

You remember little Emmy the poor child who had her tendon of Achilles cut to remedy her lameness. the experiment has been performed and the poor little girl's health has been injured an she limps more than ever. Madame Trigant fears that she may not reach her twentieth year. So much for the ability of the scientific quacks of Paris. I assure you Nature is the best cure after all.

You speak to me of my reading, I have but little time to devote to reading, having to study my piano from four to five hours per day with an hour of singing and guitar, dancing and lessons to learn verbatim, you know I will make more improvement in French by thus learning. Madame Trigant is pleased with me, and thinks that her good advice has fallen in good ground. I caught hold of an Encyclopedia and have been pouring over the different sciences, particularly, my favorite Philosophy, chemistry and geometry with some very amusing tricks and jugglery which I will take note of to please my sisters and young friends.

I anticipate a great deal of pleasure in reading our valuable little collection of scientific works, I never wish to be a blue stocking and have not enough learning to pretend to make a character, but I do consider books, well written and instructive ones, I mean, as the greatest source of delight.

I am very anxious to become familiar with housewifery and ardently

desire to be as good a manager as Mamma. Madame T. says that the most brilliant education without this activity and household diligence is a nuisance more than a necessary in life. So you see that two years in Paris has not altered my opinions at least on this point.

No danger of your letters being too long, I always pursue their contents with greatest interest. Write as much as you please. Your reader is one of the most attentive. give my love to Uncles, Aunts, Cousins, my love to each servant and a fond kiss to dear little sisters and brother with my best love for mamma and yourself my warmest and most grateful embraces. Adieu my darling Parent.

Your little wanderer

Sister Lel, you'd have been frightened in to a duck fit....

(Mary Lewis to Mary & John Lewis, July 14, 1844)

Dearest Parents

How can I ever thank you for your dear letters given me by our kind friends Mrs. and Mr. Colhoun! You complain of a dearth of novelty in our dear native village. Your interesting beautifully written pages contradict you. How eagerly were they read over and over again by your absent Mary.

Mr. DeVendel has been so kind as to come to see me. I was overjoyed as you may easily imagine and recognised him immediately. He is a very cordial friend, spoke very highly of you and inquired particularly for each member of our family. He asked if I would wish to see the curiosities of Paris, but Madame Trigant, though finding him much of a gentleman, could not infringe the rules of the school. He finds that I converse with facility in French and cannot well judge of my English as I have not spoken a word to him in that language.

Now the first visit of Mr. Colhoun, he arrived the 3rd of this month at night and came down the next day to see me. I commenced to inquire for Mrs. C., my darling Parents and family with precipitation when to my surprise, I discovered that I had completely forgotten my English.

I found the greatest difficulty in arranging my phrases!! Mr. Colhoun invited me to spend the following day with Mrs. C.

Mrs. C. is much fatigued from her long journey and was confined to her bed. She received me very cordially, poor little Many [Meredith, Jr.] I am sure was heartily tired of me for I nearly devoured him with kisses. He did not recognize me immediately, but he became so accustomed to me that he turned around to Maria and said, "I love that young lady don't you?"

Mrs. Colhoun was a little low spirited but I soon cheered her by relating all the amusing anecdotes I could remember. That evening she rewarded me with as many about our American friends. Mr. Colhoun as the night came on invited me to pass the evening and had a very nice bed arranged for me on the couch in the parlor. I spent the day Saturday in reading with Willie, sewing a little and playing a good deal.

Thomas Kirkman having received his letters the day before called on Mr. Colhoun. He is as well as ever, though quite a gentlemanly young man. He has the same repugnances for the French and has left successively two schools and a college. He now receives lessons in his room. Mr. Colhoun thinks it a great pity that a boy with as much mind should thus be left to himself.

Mr. Colhoun called to see our minister, Mr. King, who on being apprised of my residing at Paris expressed a wish to see me. Mr. C. will come with him. Mrs. C. made us laugh about him. When a young man, he was one of her old beaux. Just to think, she remarked pleasantly, "I might have been the wife of an ambassador if I had not refused Mr. King. But he was nearly as old as my father. I could not in conscience think of marrying him."¹⁶⁸

Mrs. Colhoun gave me a long account of you all, how you looked, how tall each child was etc. Mr. C. says that Ellen has a more agreeable touch on the piano than I. I am much delighted to hear it. I do hope that she may make more improvement than her sister Mary. I desire more to see her shine than to shine myself. I will endeavor to prepare her as well as I can for her entry in school next spring. I have secured her many friends among my kind companions who, I have no doubt

will welcome her to their little retreat. Sister Eliza can't come on account of her health, never mind, sweet sister, we'll study and amuse ourselves together whilst Lel will be in school. You'll teach me painting and I will teach you all that I have learned.

Aunt Margaret and Maria I did not expect to see both, were well, teased me.¹⁶⁹ "Tell me something about home" was my monotonous constant cry. Maria is more talkative and not only answered all my questions, but told me about each person in Huntsville, the fashions, even the manner of dressing of each one of the young ladies and finished by say, "Miss Mary when you go home they all expect to see a real queen, you ought to dress mighty fine. But now that I have seen you are less affected than any of them and much more simple in your dress." I have bought but one winter dress since Mrs. C. left and since I have been at Paris have purchased but one summer dress which I forgot to have made up last season and found it quite a'propos this summer.

I have spent a day at the zoological gardens with Mlle. Bandin and my singing mistress. We had tickets for admission in the mineral cabinet, in the botanical department, the cabinet of Natural history and the Geological cabinet. The galleries are immense and occupying with the library the building which is 540 feet in length by 40 feet in width and 30 feet in height and two storeys high. We could not succeed in discovering the botanical galleries and after much trouble we left off looking for it.

In the cabinet of Natural history an enormous serpent wound round a pronged pole in the center of the gallery about as large as the upper part of a man's leg, a real live serpent. Sister Lel you'd have been frightened into a duck fit. Don't be afraid little sis, the dreadful monster is in wood!

I had nearly forgotten to thank you for those villainous portraits you were so kind and thoughtful as to send me. Mr. Devendel was astonished at it and thinks with myself that my own beautiful mamma should never be thus treated. I expected a new miniature of Papa and yourself by Dodge. The hair I prize very highly and will have prettily arranged. Sarah's and Myra's hair is quite pretty.

It has been just a week since I have heard from Mrs. C. The Duchess de Nemours had a fine boy the 12 of July. The Princesse de Tonville and

the Princesse Clementine are to be confined next month.

Poor Aunt Louisa Manning, how much I regret her loss. Do remember me kindly to Uncle Daniel. The jewels you were so kind to think of I will have arranged. I must thank you for your pretty sum for my wardrobe. I must try to dress like a fine lady or as a neat little girl as we do in France. I beg you to give my love to all. I will prepare some letters to send by Mr. D. Your little darling embraces you tenderly.

Mary Lewis

But like all French she charges dear . . .

(Mary Lewis to her father, July 28, 1844)

Dearest Father,

Here I am with our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Colhoun to spend the July holidays. Madame Trigant had given me permission to remain eight or ten days. I have just become so much attached to the dear little babe, one of the sweetest creatures you ever saw and to Mrs. Colhoun, whose soft mild character would gain the affection of the most phlegmatically disposed person in the world.

Since my last visit about a week since Mr. Kirkman was so kind as to call to see me at the pension but notwithstanding his assertion of getting your permission to see me and of his being my "cousin," Madame Trigant, as firm as usual, refused to admit him. He thinks of embarking with Mr. Fitzpatrick, I believe.

Madame T. is stating her objections to receiving him remarked, "it might prevent you from making a good match." fal la! the visits of a boy of sixteen. If such a thing would ever prevent a suitable match, I would choose to be an old maid all my days.

I am at last at home with my little friends Willy and Merry and have spent my Sunday morning in reading the morning service with Willie and in relating stories to each child. Poor baby I have not teased as much as last week and have not yet awoken her to nurse her, how lively she has made us all. I am never so delighted as when I am near her. Mrs. C.

has plenty of milk for the little lady and is as well as she can be in her situation. She was up three days after the birth of her infant. They have named her Mary Margaret Ada and we call her Marie.¹⁷⁰

So much for our family at Paris. Now to business affairs. Mr. Colhoun begs me to remit this account hastily made out to you. I must first let you know that on account of my remaining another quarter my bill is somewhat larger, notwithstanding your liberal gift of 525 francs for pocket money and with which I had been most economical. Madame has so arranged it that, my little sum included. A pretty debt has been contracted.

And heaven knows how much she may yet ask. Poor Mr. C. was not aware of her having made me take more music, guitar and singing lessons that he had expected. She has always been very kind to me, but like all French she charges dear for each attention and every kindness.

Embrace tenderly for me my dear friends and family. I would write a longer letter at school if I had a better pen. Margaret and Maria send their love to all at home and I send my best love and kisses to sisters, brother, Mamma and yourself. Your affectionate and submissive daughter.

Mary Lewis

The illuminations were magnificent....

(Mary Lewis to her mother, Aug. 4, 1844)

My dearest Mother,

Last Sunday while at Mrs. Colhouns I wrote a few lines to Papa merely to let you know that I was in the land of the living, now I must prepare a respectable package to send either by Thomas Kirkman or Mr. DeVendel not because I have anything "new or interesting to tell you, but I know that you will expect letters."

Well let me commence. The Saturday evening's sun saw me safely lodged at one kind friends hotel, and I defy you all at home to make as much fuss as I did with my little companions playing at ball with Manny, draying his carriage, nursing little Marie and relating stories to our darling

Willie. "Voila mon occupation" and the most delightful in the world.

Sunday Mrs. Warner, a nice American lady, wife of an Episcopal minister called to see Mrs. Colhoun. Dr. Higgins came too and much amused us with his lively conversation. Willie and my self read the Episcopal service and several chapters, thus my day passed away so pleasantly that I had entirely forgotten the fete.

After dinner Mr. Blaire reminded me of the celebration and Mrs. Colhoun permitted me to take Mrs. Blaire and Maria to see shops in the Champs Elysiens. I have spoken to you of these boutiques before I think. They consist of tents of various colors ornamented with flags and colored tapestry filled with cakes, candies, little showy bones [yes, bones], dolls, Jacks, flowered china, etc. There were games of chance for macaronis and all sorts of experiments in Philosophy and chemistry.

An electrical battery was in play. A little boy was placed on an isolated stool and held in his hand the chain. He was touched on the nose and a succession of sparks issued from this prominent feature. A powder horn was presented him, and this powder flashed. Immediately, the crowd ignorant of the cause considered this wandering chemist a kind of wizard.

We passed near several pretty large tents where the grisettes, common people and first class young gentlemen were engaged in dancing the Polka, the galopade and contradance—"ten sous for you and your woman" and you enter, Thomas Kirkland tells us.

We saw too the sign of the "living skeleton" and a "woman weighing near 300 pounds," dwarfs, animals of various kinds, a circus and now and then music really quite pretty. I entered none of these shows, I was once caught in one of these tents and found myself surrounded by all sorts of common people and had no inclination to mingle with such a set again.

Monday night the illuminations were magnificent. Even the Parisians accustomed to every thing that is beautiful found them superb. How much more then a simple American must have found the view charming and fairy like. The illuminations of Martin Miller's candles on the birthday of our great Washington gave me but an imperfect idea of the

lights of the sights of the fetes of Paris.

At given distance of either side of the Avenue of the Champs Elyses had been raised poles of about 30 ft. in height surrounded by a kind of light trellis work in a long pyramidal form covered with glasses of different colors. In each glass was a kind of oil with a small night lamp thus shedding lights of blue, green, yellow, red, and white shades. At the point in the centre of which is a pretty fountain were trellises ornamented with the colored lamps in form of garlands and wreaths, of flowers. A little lower down the avenue was adorned with the same kind of lights though in more completed forms in centre of which were the same kinds of lamps so as to resemble the most magnificent candelabras. The effect was truly magic.

We feared at first the crowd, but Mrs. Warner was so kind as to take charge of me and Mrs. Colhoun consented to allow me to go out. The press was truly fearful. Every moment we expected to hear of some one being crushed. All appeared to have received a common impulse towards the obelisk, the more advantageous position for a full view of the fire works. Thomas Kirkman who was placed near one of the statues on the "Palace de la Concord" came very near being converted into mince meat. Fourteen persons were wounded and carried in the houses, elevated for the purpose in the Champs Elysies, several were conveyed to the hospital. A man and his daughter died. A poor woman fainted in the crowd and was taken out in convulsions by Dr. Hunt and Mr. Holiday, Thomas K. fraying the way for them.

I had nearly forgotten to speak of the fire works. At dinner Mr. Colhoun took me to pay a visit to Mrs. Warner, whom we found on the terrace in front of the hotel with several English ladies and two sweet English girls, the Misses Conally, daughters of a distinguished physician for the insane asylum in London. The fires commenced by the occasional ascent of a rocket, then streams of serpentine flames—Bursting with a loud noise, bright colored stars, balls of fire running with the greatest velocity from one side of the firmament to the other thus until the finishing piece called the bouquet consisting of all kinds of flowers, leaves and sheaves of yellow wheat in the most brilliant colors. What a lovely

vista, what a charming prospect! You would have been in exticies in spite of your sobriety and with myself would have exclaimed truly we were surrounded by fairy palaces.

The light from all the prominent monuments the triumphal arch lighted with gas, the turrets of Notre Dame, the Pantheon, etc., all gave a blaze like that of the mid day sun!!! The whole cost was estimated at about 200,000 francs equal to \$40,000. Paid by the government of France and seen only by the Parisians. Indeed the King, convinced of the extravagance of the fetes, intends to have them celebrated only once in five years and as the Exhibition of Industry is also quinquensvial both will take place at the same period, so Lel will have an opportunity of seeing them. I only wish that you were all here to see every thing with me. Mlle. B. thinks that you may come with Papa to take Sister Lel home, and as I will be then be of age 21 I will stay at home to take care of dear Sisters, brother.

By the by I must not be thoughtless as I have continued to be, for really sometimes Mlle. B. tells that if my ears were not "glued" to my head I would lose them. I hope that as I will have to take pretty good care of myself in my journey with Mr. C. I will learn to be more prudent than I have been hitherto been.

Pardon me for my digression, the next day Tuesday Thomas Kirkman came to spend the day with us. The morning I spent in telling tales to Willie and Merry. If I related them in English, Willie could not understand me, and if in French little Merry would be impatient to know what I was talking about. They had just become interested in my anecdote when Thomas made his appearance and commenced as usual by amusing us with his wild freaks when Willie's politeness and impatience were quite exhausted. The poor little fellow exclaimed, "Oh! Mr. K. hold your tongue and let Miss Mary tell me about "Gaston" (a conspirator in the time of Louis XV)." Now tell about the old sow and her three little pigs, said Mr. Manny. It was a little difficult to silence them and Thomas's conclusion was that I would make an admirable governess or nurse, quite a necessary accomplishment for American ladies, you know.

He told us some laughable stories about a poor American who had

been severely harassed by some "Merry Andrews." He was unacquainted with Paris and one of his gay companions engaged him to write to a celebrated Physician (Mr. Hunt) who would take him to see all the curiosities of Paris. The letter dictated by his friends, begged Mr. Hunt to show him the Artesian well under the Arch of Triumph, the interior of the Obelisk, and the third story of the Catacombs. Mr. H. wrote him that he had been hoodwinked and that he must think thrice before following everyone's advice.

He told me a number of his tricks which I will tell you of when we are together and that I could not well relate in a letter. T.K. says he will go to Huntsville to see you and to tell you a parcel of wicked stories on me. You'll not credit them will you? He danced the Polka for us and Mr. C. wrote to Mrs. T. to allow me to take lessons and next Tuesday we will commence. Thomas says that he will teach a free dancing school for the Polka when he returns home.

Wednesday Mrs. Colhoun left for Drippe with our dear little friends. Mr. C. preaches economy to me, most conscientiously and our dear Mrs. C. brings me out of difficulty by telling me what is best for me to purchase. You can't imagine how sorry I am that they leave Paris. Mrs. Colhoun reminds me so much of you. And she so encourages me to confide all my little troubles to her and consoles me accordingly.

Here I was interrupted and as usual my letter is a kind of patched scribble. No matter this is one of the last and you no doubt forgive. Mr. DeVendel came yesterday to pay me a visit and offered to take letters for me. He intends leaving in September and will take Madame West and Louisa home with him. I begged him to leave Louisa and allow her to come to Huntsville with Papa and myself, but though he knew that she would have much wished to pay us a visit as she had been absent some time from her mother, she would return to Mobile. I hope she will pay me a visit.

Mrs. Colhoun speaks of a letter in which Papa says that Sister Eliza is at Blount Springs and Lel is away. Thomas Kirkman wishes that she were here because I remarked that she was gayer than myself and says he will go to see you to see if you are not merrier than his friend at Paris.

We have all learned a Polish dance much resembling the negroes—heel tap and then turn the toe. Every time I turn around I jump—turn with more affected airs and grace than you can well imagine. Mons. Alerrice the dancing master says I succeeded nimbly. The step is easy and Papa will dance it with Sisters and myself.

Sophia Lowe and Kate Fearn have returned much improved. You will say to them for me “*bonjour avce mille laisen.*”—hello and 1000 kisses. I am much more at ease when I converse in French than in English, for if I make any blunders in the former I am laughed at if I am mistaken. In the latter as a stranger any pronunciation is regarded with indulgence. For three weeks adieu to school though I do not in the least regret staying until nineteen years of age. I rejoice to see my dear family. If the visit is not ship wrecked, I hope to see you next December. I hardly know what I write of am so much delighted at the idea of seeing my dear home, that I cannot contain myself and no wonder you complain of my bad hand, blame my pen not me. Adeiu dearest, I embrace you all as affectionately as I love you.

your submissive daughter
M L

The French have the best taste in the fashionable world....

(Mary Lewis to her sister, Aug. 11, 1844)

My dearest little Sister,

I must thank you, my sweet correspondent for your naive little letter and much pleased that you anticipate my arrival with as much joy as myself. Yesterday I took a long lesson in dancing the Polka, a very amusing Polish Dance similar to Jim Crow!! Thomas Kirkman dances it.

So mamma shaved little sister's head to send me a lock, I was quite diverted at the notion. The young ladies all begged to see the hair that Mrs. C. gave me and pronounced your little curl the prettiest. There is consolation for you if you were dissatisfied with the color of your hair, for the French have the best taste in the fashionable world.

I beg you to embrace each of my friends for me and for sweet self
here's a tender kiss and warm hug from your darling Sister

Mary Lewis

You must not forget yourself . . .

(Mary Lewis to Mrs. Colhoun in Drippe, Aug. 11, 1844)

Dear Madam,

How grateful I am to you for your good letter. Mr. DeVendel has come to visit me. He regretted very much that you had left. He was at the hotel de Europe. He was kind enough to offer to take some letters to my mother and I am busy enough to prepare a packet.

Mr. Kirkman has not come yet. Maybe he will not leave before September. You say that my dear Willie is strong. Each bad weather day, I say with chagrin, "poor little Willie will not bathe again today." But the sea is always so healthy. And I am happy that he has even been able to take 3 baths.

Mr. Merry our little rascal has always the best complexion. How I would like to kiss his big cheeks. Miss Ada is good and pretty. She must be very happy that I am not in Drippe. Her sweet slumbers were so often interrupted by my games with her brothers.

And you dear Madam, have you found your strength? Dear Madam T. thinks you are very unwise. You must not forget yourself in your desire to be helpful to your children. Be a little selfish and you will preserve your health which is so necessary for them.

Embrace tenderly your dear children for me. Please convey my best to Mr. C. and accept for yourself my friendship and most sincere gratitude.

Your affectionate and respectful
friend.

Mary Lewis

P.S. These ladies have been so kind to teach me the polka. Say hello to

Madame Blaine and your good Negro.

MFL

Everyone tells me that I will be discontented in Huntsville . . .

(Mary Lewis to her sister, Aug. 11, 1844)

My dear Sister,

Mamma's letter is not yet finished but I am just in humor to answer your dear letter. Nothing gives me more pleasure than to think of our reunion next winter. Everyone tells me that I will be discontented to remain in Huntsville after a sojourn of two years in Paris! What nonsense; it is my family alone capable of rendering me perfectly happy and Paris with all its beauties could never procure for me half the happiness of one short hour with the beloved inmates of our dear dwelling.

I have never been accustomed to the fashionable world and will never be worse for being ignorant of its usages. Then too I have many things to learn at home a good housekeeper and seamstress is necessary in our family.

It is not enough to know how to play a few tunes on the piano to sing one or two french or Italian melodies as Mlle. Bandin frequently remarks to me, an American lady has other accomplishments more necessary to a polished and finished education.

I long to see my dear friends, my native woods and then I will be able to judge whether I am not more contented in our American forests than in this civilised Paris with which everyone pretends to be enchanted.

I have been making the most eager inquiries about your improvements and appearance and aunt Margaret and Maria both tell me that now you are quite a nice young lady more sedate than I am and much taller! I never could be sober and must laugh and be merry in spite of wind and weather. I was in the midst of my compliments to you when I discovered my other sisters reclaimed my attention. About half a dozen girls are talking and two playing on pianos near me. This is perfect Bedlam.

As Madame T. often says, no matter how contented we are from

home the family circle is always to be desired.

Mr. Colhoun has at last taken places on board the Great Western, for the 12 of October and if I am in health and "all is well and nothing happens" I expect to leave school about the middle of September to purchase my little wardrobe.

I am extremely anxious to you dearest sister and until next December I must embrace you in my letters only. Your dear absent sister

Mary Lewis

. . . He called me a prude and promised to tell mother of it.

(Mary Lewis to her Sister Ellen, Aug. 11, 1844)

My dear Sister Ellen,

I have received a letter from Mrs. Colhoun to day in which she tells me that you are now with Miss Simpson at Florence in vacation. Did you see Thomas Kirkman's sister? Thomas K. wished you were here instead of myself when I observed that you were gay and mild. He wished me to pretend that it was customary in America for the young gentlemen to greet the lasses with a friendly kiss. On my not agreeing to enter into his tricks he called me a prude and promised to tell mamma of it.

And you love music as much as ever. Mrs. Colhoun prefers your touch to my heavy one. So you need fear no rivaling between us. The other day I had a hearty cry over a difficult piece of twenty pages that I had studied each passage separately more than 100 times and did not succeed!!!!!! I will be persevering enough to learn it and practise until I know it at home.

I have much to tell you but have no more time and will reserve all for a pleasant fireside chat next winter. Give my love to your kind friends. Mary Simpson, Sue Withers and Charlie McClung.

My tender embraces for my sweet Lel

Your affectionate sister

Mary Lewis

. . . a certainty of electing Mr. Clay

(John H. Lewis to Mary, Sept. 3, 1844)

My dear child

I have come to the conclusion that my last letter to you in Europe has been already written, but the receipt of yours of the 28th July induces me to write this altho I entertain but slight hope that it will reach you before your departure from Europe. It was my wish that after your expenses were all paid there you should have the sum of \$500 to lay out as you desire. I now wish you to shew this to my friend Mr. Colhoun and if he is not too much curtailed in his funds, he will advance it relying on my meeting his engagement here.

We were all much gratified at hearing of the addition of an heiress to Mr. C.s family circle. May she prove a blessing to her parents. I announced the fact to their servants. They seemed much gratified but more especially Priam whose laugh resembled the sound made at the escape of pipe of a steam boat. You may say they are all well and doing well.

Tell Mr. Colhoun this from every quarter I hear nothing but complaints about the long drought and the ravages of the cut-worm. I saw a boy from the Delta 10 days ago—no complaint about cotton crops there, but a good deal of sickness and short of bacon. I have 1000lbs (all they wanted) sent from this place by the wagon the boy brought. all other matters of this kind, have been duly attended to.

We are now preparing to set out for the North. I mean Eliza and myself and am in hopes of meeting in October in Boston. If her health (which is delicate) sufficiently improves, it is my intention to leave her at school.

We have no domestic news except the death of Mr. Wallace's daughter.¹⁷¹ We are in the midst of a great campaign for the Presidency with a moral certainty of electing Mr. [Henry] Clay. At this place we are comparatively quiet, as Alabama is not debatable from being decidedly Democratic. The Demo.s have a great mass meeting in Nashville on the 15th, followed on the 21st by a most tremendous meeting of the Whigs. It is doubtful if a greater array of people or talents were ever convened

on any political meetings. Speakers from all quarters entertained the attention of the 1000s present while every Whig door was open for the reception of guests.¹⁷²

Flags, banners and songs with processions by day and fire works by night signaled the occasion. Your fetes of 29,30,and 31 July have been nothing to it. It is true you may have excelled by numbers, but you have not the 2500 to 3000 wagons all loaded with creature comforts as was said "sticking out," all went off peacefully and harmoniously, nothing in the shape of violence or accident occurred to mar the enjoyment of the meeting. Like your festival it continued three days all have returned home full of whiggery. The Demo.s are under check and shew no confidence in the election of their candidate.¹⁷³ I did not go. Those in the county sent their delegation numbering 100. I have to leave some space for your dear mother to fill up, praying you to remember us all, affectionately to Mr. and Mrs. C.

I am yr devoted father

John H. Lewis

My dear Mary

I merely add a line to tell you we look forward with hopes for your safety and health relative to your return home. We celebrated your birth month—a party of about 30 or 40 young ladies and gentlemen and some interesting strangers. Pa thoughtfully drank your health from your little cut glass decanters. Our babe is sweet and pretty and her name is Elodie. All like the name.

A thousand congratulations from me to Mrs. and Mr. C. and as many kisses to the sweet little creature that has already commenced fulfilling her mission on Earth, giving gladness of heart and goodness to those around her. James sends many compliments also and love to M. and M. "My Lord Bryon" I saw yesterday, he showed much joy and sends much love to M and M.

Were I not fatigued and so short of time after dinner, I could write more. How I hope you will get this satisfactory letter of your Pa's. Your bills are justly incurred and willingly paid. Provide yourself with useful and pretty things. Ellen brought presents from Florence (and Mr. S. says

stole hearts). Mine was a silver blade knife for the nails so long. goodbye and God bless you my child.

M. Lewis

How the happy moment of our reunion is fast approaching!

(Mary Lewis to her father, Sept. 29, 1844)

My dearest Father,

Since the seventh of this month I have been with Mrs. Colhoun, who is the best woman, next to Mamma, I ever saw. She has been busily occupied with my little affairs, and troubles herself twenty times more than I do about my simple "toilette." Mr. Colhoun himself often goes out with me and has selected both my hats for me.

Mr. C. has nearly frightened my wits out of me lately by making me play on the piano for a New Orleans friend of his, Mr. McLane, who was very kind overlooking my embarrassments. Mr. C. begs me to tell you that several of your friends are to leave in the Great Western with us and many of whom are Mr. Haiggin of N.O., and Mr. Montgomery, and really I have forgotten all of them, forgive me.¹⁷⁴

Oh! Mr. C. just recalls to mind the Russian Ambassador and Mr. Schiff. The former is going to America with his beautiful wife, Madame Bodisco, who is about to be confined and will have a sad time of it poor woman, on board ship in stormy wintry weather.¹⁷⁵

Poor Aunt Margaret wishes very much to go to America in my place and I offer to take lessons from her in nursing and stay to take care of little Ada through the winter. We received your letter to Mr. Colhoun with much pleasure last week which announced Sisters Eliza and Lel's arrival from their little trip. Our little Willie thanks them for their gift. He is a smart mischievous little rouge and has commenced studying grammar, geography, history and Latin with a private tutor. Dr. Guirin is no longer employed, he having neglected him during Mrs. C.'s absence to America. Mr. Brin Airmie [?] has invented an elastic corset for him which obliges him to hold himself much straighter.

Little Merry is as hale and hearty as can be, jabbering and murdering both French and English in the most laughable manner. The babe [Ada] is a saucy girl, fair complexion, dark hair, sweet expressive blue eyes and the best natured child in the world, you would scarcely take her for a *petite francaise* from her patience.

How the happy moment of our reunion is rapidly approaching! one vessel only is to leave before us if God is willing we hope to set sail from Liverpool the 12th of October, and our arrival you may expect about the 29th.

Both Mr. and Mrs. C. with children and servants join their compliments and friendly regards to the affectionate love and gratitude of your submissive and obedient darling. Give my best love to Mamma and my best love and sweetest kisses to all and here are thousands for yourself until my arrival.

Molly

VI

The Lewis Family after the Letters 1844—1860

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

Mary Lewis must have been overjoyed to return to Huntsville and her family. After almost two and a half years so many changes had occurred. Ma and Pa, of course, looked older, two of her sisters had grown taller than she, the other children, with the exception of Florrie, were quite along in their schooling. And there was the new baby, Elodie, to see for the first time. Old friends and neighbors had married and some had left town; a few had passed away. Mary also had changed. She had an all new “Frenchified” wardrobe and manners. Certainly her speech had a French accent. She admitted that she hardly remembered how to speak English smoothly with guests at the boarding school.

Mary settled in at home, helping her mother sew the latest fashions for her sisters and teaching French and music to the younger children. No doubt she visited the husband and children of the Calhoun slave, Margaret, perhaps bringing gifts for them. While Mrs. Childs was out of town for a while Mary taught 40 or 50 students at the school.¹⁷⁶ She and her teen-aged friends had news and stories to exchange. Mrs. Lewis probably invited acceptable friends and neighbors for afternoon tea, those more acceptable for supper, and those really acceptable for evening parties. Any hostess worthy of ambition eagerly welcomed sharing Mary with her guests. In the midst of all the social occasions the eligible men in town, perhaps not all the ladies, wanted to greet the belle. Young people

are always eager to learn the latest dance steps and Mary had learned the polka, currently the fad, in France even before it had been danced in New York City.

Hugh Lawson Clay in a letter to his mother mentioned that two young swains, Pike and Sam Harrington, sang endless praises of Mary Lewis. "After seeing and conversing with her, their admiration was unbounded and they gave free rein to the ecstasy of the moment and shouted praise to herself and family and if a pyramid was formed of girls names, hers would constitute the apex."¹⁷⁷

Before long a son of that very distinguished Alabama family, the Clays, courted her. John Withers Clay, her beau, was the second son of former Governor Clement Comer Clay. The senior Clay arrived in the area in 1811 with not much more than his law books to begin a family dynasty. Clement Clay married Susannah Claiborne Withers, joining two families overflowing with proud ancestors of old Virginia. If anything, in the midst of the frontier of the old Southwest, their feeling of family superiority was more accentuated than many of their fine neighbors. Clay's political career included a name for service to the state and a name for feistiness that his three sons inherited and emulated. They all shared with their father a quick temper and an eagerness to enter into a justified ruckus. To them all their fights were seemingly justified.

The Clay family valued family honor and principles. Mrs. Clay often wrote letters with admonitions for correct behavior. She wrote once to young Clement, Jr., "Never permit the idle laugh of profanity or infidelity to swerve you from a duty. Sacrifice principle at no shrine."¹⁷⁸ These were hard rules to live by, and certainly these boys had high standards to achieve.

Clay's political power within the state was unrivaled for many years. He became the only man within the state of Alabama to be the head of all three branches of state government. Although Governor Clay never attained the national political prominence of Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, he was no less deserving. His daughter-in-law, Virginia Clay, expressed this well when she wrote proudly in her diary, "Henry Clay's father was a dancing master, Clement C. Clay's a tiller of the soil and a

lover of letters.”¹⁷⁹

All of Governor Clay’s sons were frail and slight of build, often sick or recovering from sickness. The eldest, Clement, Jr., truly had the heart of a scholar. John Withers, a founder of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Huntsville, was devoutly religious. The youngest boy, Hugh Lawson, had many interests, none of them serious, although for a while he thought of entering the field of medicine. After college he considered relocating in Arkansas or Texas. But their mother felt that no occupation other than law was noble enough, and all three followed their father into that honorable profession.¹⁸⁰

John Withers Clay was born January 11, 1820. He was educated first, as were his brothers, at home and then as a day student at Greene Academy. Withers then spent four years at the University of Virginia, earning a Master of Arts degree and a law degree in 1841. He visited Washington, but the social and political life of the city did not suit his nature. Returning to Huntsville he practiced law with his father and brothers and often contributed articles to the Huntsville *Democrat*.

Withers and Mary Lewis renewed their friendship, courted, and became engaged. There can be no doubt that for Withers Clay this was a love match. He wrote to his dear friend, Rev. Henry Lay, that his heart was held captive. Their families were close and “she was the playmate of his youth.” Withers said he, “considered the matter calmly, deliberately, and prayerfully,” and he asked her to marry him. Of course she asked her parents. There being no objections, he was “beatified.”

This description by Withers is the only picture we have of young Mary: “She is nearly 21 years old, about 5 ft. 4 or 5 in high, weights not less than 125 lbs., is of robust appearance and perfectly embonpoint. She is not a beauty...yet, I think...she would not fail to attract the attention of a stranger. Her hair is dark brown, approaching black, her forehead smooth, high, expansive—her brow is delicately arched—her eye of no decided color, but partaking of the blue, gray and hazel . . . Its ordinary expression is soft, gentle, pure, never dull, but when amused speakingly expressive. The nose I never could describe.” He continued, “Her manners are gentle, winning and graceful, a compound of French politeness and

English or American discretion.” This was a man clearly in love.

He hoped that she would follow him as a member of the Episcopal Church, for she combined “...the artless simplicity and transparent purity of a sinless child with the elevated, dignified demeanor of the chaste, cultivated Christian woman.” He was reminded of his description when this letter was read out aloud before the family and friends gathered to celebrate Withers and Mary’s forty-ninth wedding anniversary at the Old Home Place.¹⁸¹

Mary wrote no description of Withers before their marriage or afterwards, but she left a few clues about how she felt towards him. Although her later letters were usually full of day-to-day events, there was an occasional hint. She often began her letters to him, “My precious husband.” She wrote on one occasion, “I am always happier with you than without you,” and in 1857, after 11 years of marriage she wrote, “My darling...I never know how necessary you are to my happiness until I have to make an exertion to be happy without you.”¹⁸²

Their engagement was announced in September and their wedding vows were exchanged on November 11, 1846. There are no accounts of the event, but considering the social standing of the two families involved and that she was the first Lewis daughter to marry, probably no expense was spared. Except for time away for schooling Mary and Withers spent their lives in Huntsville with family and friends, and Huntsville was where they would stay.

The young couple settled into married life at the Clay home. Living with the Clays could not have been comfortable for Mary or Withers. If the senior Clays were never really quite on a level with the aristocracy of the extremely wealthy families of Huntsville, for instance the Popes and Walkers, the Lewis family was probably still one level down on that same scale. Withers’s brother, Clement Clay, Jr., a United States Senator from Alabama married Virginia Tunstall after which they entered the social life of state and national politics. Virginia, especially, took Washington by storm, and later as the wife of a Confederate Senator she reigned in Montgomery and Richmond. Virginia and Clement, Jr., had no children. Withers’s younger brother, Hugh Lawson Clay, later married a

second cousin, Harriet Celestia Comer, who was related by marriage to the renowned Hammonds of Redcliffe. They had only one child, Felix Comer Clay, who died of scarlet fever at the age of four.

Over the years little was noted aloud about her position in the Clay family, but Mary must have noticed that no one in the family was ever asked to say extra prayers on her behalf. Governor Clay called for a special blessing at meal times to restore Virginia's poor health in January of 1846. Later when Senator Clay was so dreadfully ill everyone at church was asked to pray for him. Local church bells rang out at word of his recovery in 1861.

Mary's superior education, which none of the other Clay women had aspired to, much less attained, made her appear a bluestocking. One gets the impression that the other Clays always looked down on Mary. The Lewis family appeared to have unlimited money readily available; to add to the insult, the Clays were always short of cash. The delicate French accent may have clung to her for a while and the fancy French clothes which were to last many years were perhaps too splendid for her in-laws. Her superior education abroad, her intellectual bent, her letters and notes reflect that she often lost sight of the trivial things the other Clays found necessary. Her mind was often somewhere else—probably on all her familial responsibilities. For perhaps worst of all to the other Clay women, Mary kept having children.

It is not surprising that after two months of living with the Clays, Mary and Withers made their home with her parents on Eustis Street. At this time all of the other Lewis children were still at home with Ma and Pa Lewis and still another Lewis baby, Lucy, was yet to come. Withers at first practiced law with his brothers and father, but never happily or satisfactorily. Eventually in 1856, he purchased the Huntsville *Democrat* from his distant relative, Philip Woodson, and took control of the newspaper in October of that year. The newspaper, vigorous and vocal in community life, was to be a mainstay in the family, as a burden or a blessing, for many years to come.

In the meanwhile Mary's siblings continued their education and en-

tered into adulthood. Ellen, the next oldest girl, who often slumped and wrote her letters during school hours, married Gabriel Jordan, Jr., September 29, 1852, at the Church of the Nativity.¹⁸³ Jordan, of Luray, Virginia, came to Huntsville in 1851 with the Memphis and Charleston Railroad as a civil engineer. Among other projects he designed and built the railroad bridge at Decatur and the very handsome railroad depot in Huntsville.¹⁸⁴ The Jordans were a beloved and caring part of the family and community for many years.

The Rev. Henry Lay was particularly fond of Jordan and admired his commitment to the growing Church of the Nativity. Jordan acted quickly to organize a fire-fighting team when a building, used for schooling, beside the church caught fire in 1856. Jordan was on the rooftop to help and lead others. He "stripped the church of books, cushions, candelabra and carefully [had them] carried to Mr. Colhoun's yard. Jordan tore up the carpets, had them rolled over in puddles of water and carried on the roof of the church." He led and directed 30 Negroes, including Fred Colhoun who was formerly the servant of the crippled youth Willie. Slaves and leader were all soaked, but the fire was put out and the building and the church were saved.¹⁸⁵

Jordan later became the chief engineer for the old Tennessee and Coosa Rivers Railroad. He and Ellen for a time lived in Montgomery where he was Superintendent of the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad.¹⁸⁶ Eventually they settled in Waco, Texas. The Jordan family children were Rose, Frank and Ellen called Nelly. Ellen Lewis Jordan died in Waco, Texas, April 6, 1904.¹⁸⁷

In 1856 the next younger daughter, Eliza Lea Lewis, married her first cousin William Wilson Lea, Jr., son of Dr. W. W. Lea and Eliza Augusta Lewis Lea of Grainger County, Tennessee.¹⁸⁸ There were no children of this marriage and by 1858 Eliza was a widow living again with her mother in Huntsville.¹⁸⁹ She was mentioned as a teacher in 1882.¹⁹⁰ Fourteen years later her death in St. Louis was noted in the family newspaper.¹⁹¹

One might expect that with the prospects of enormous amounts of money from the Florida and Cuba inheritance that all the Lewis children should have been comfortable the rest of their lives. Their schooling had

been a bonus because education was a "...privilege of the prosperous. Those women who received academy training had no expectations of using it to earn a living."¹⁹² At this period it was considered unusual for a woman to leave the protection of a brother, father, or home to go out into the world and seek employment. "Educated southern women did not work outside the home unless forced by necessity to do so."¹⁹³ The expected amounts of money from Florida did not materialize. Lewis, retired and enjoying a leisurely life, had no other current income. The law suits and counter-suits that developed in Florida and Connecticut became a continuous drain on the family finances. Court cases were being resolved for many years. As a result, when they reached adulthood, the unmarried Lewis girls entered the teaching profession.

Mary's father, John H. Lewis, died June 7, 1858.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps it was an oversight, but no stone was erected at his gravesite at Maple Hill Cemetery. Moreover there are no markers for any of the Lewis family members who died later. Most likely there was no money available. Lewis bequeathed everything to his widow, Mary Betts Lewis. By this time, however, there was little to leave her financially. There was the house, but soon even that was in doubt. Ma Lewis, according to the 1860 census, had also gone to work as a teacher at her home. She had the burden of four unmarried daughters and two widowed daughters now at home with her. A new chapter in the Lewis family history had begun.

We Must Have our Day of Adversity, 1860-1869

Fortunately the Lewis women were not reduced to taking in boarders or performing menial jobs in the community. But it was now necessary for the daughters to find positions in the only kind of occupation acceptable to women of their class. At one time or another, all the girls worked as teachers. Besides the need to earn a living and support themselves, they may have been relieved to get out of the house. After all, their old home place was rapidly filling with the children of Withers and Mary Lewis Clay.

Sarah Lewis, the redhead in the family, who was enthralled by Mary's life on the ocean waves, lived quietly within the family group, single, a teacher, "well educated and accomplished."¹⁹⁵ If she enjoyed an adventure of her own it is not known. Sarah died in September of 1878 in Houston and was buried in Huntsville.¹⁹⁶

Myra, whose letter writing was always so troublesome, married B. W. Fauver of Clinton, Louisiana. She was in Fayette, Mississippi, in April of 1868.¹⁹⁷ In 1876 there was a mention in a family letter about her being perfectly content, the "little chap" a comfort to her.¹⁹⁸ Myra came from Florida to visit with her sister's family in 1891.¹⁹⁹ She was still living in 1895 when her youngest sister, Lucy, bequeathed to her property on Pulaski Road then just outside the city limits in Madison County.²⁰⁰

William Lindsay Lewis, the brother with poor eyesight but a stalwart heart, continued his further education with one of his sisters at the school of Mr. and Mrs. Esperandieu in Knoxville.²⁰¹ Attended lovingly by his family, this only son of John and Mary Betts Lewis died in Huntsville at the home place on June 17, 1859. Lindsay was only 23. His obituary notice remarked he was a, "dutiful, devoted son, a kind affectionate brother, a true and faithful friend, a humble and trusting Christian."²⁰² Religion offered such a comfort and sense of solace particularly during times of dreadful illness or death. Mary's brother-in-law, Senator Clay, was among those who visited the young man in his final illness. Mary wrote affectionately to Virginia later, "My Mother and family remember with gratitude his kind visits to my dear sick brother and his comforting words to him when life was surely passing from his young heart."²⁰³

Florida Lewis, who missed her "Sis Ma" during the letters, also remained unmarried. During the war she lived and taught with a private family in Monroe County, Alabama. Florrie died in January of 1878 in Montgomery at the home of John Gano Winter.²⁰⁴ She was thirty-seven years old.

The child born while Mary was in Paris and named for Mary's French schoolmate, was Elodie Lewis. This young lady with the unusual name was truly an extraordinary personality. She attended Brinkley College in Mobile where her schoolmates signed their autographs in her combined

receipt and signature book along with other notes. Among the many names and ditties was this scholarly verse:

“Latinity”

Latin! Latin! is my trouble.

All my brains are in a bubble.

Congugating and declining

Now I’m sick and then repining . . .

Unfortunately, in 1860, the timing was wrong for education or for any future plans. Elodie’s little memo book, so hopeful of youth, contains on the back page a hastily scribbled note identifying the unit of the Yankee soldier who ran off with the family silver during the war.²⁰⁵

The resolute and willful spirits of the family seemingly collected in this young miss. During the Civil War Elodie Lewis received a pass from the Huntsville Provost Marshall’s Office to go to Athens on the railroad on the condition that she not come back to Huntsville. If she returned, she would be arrested. Elodie violated the order and she was returned to Athens under arrest and guard! Moreover, if she were found in Huntsville again she would be confined to the Post Prison.²⁰⁶ Family stories do not reveal whether she tested the Federal authorities twice.

Perhaps the reasons for her trips to Athens were evident to her friends and family. Elodie married Samuel Tanner, Jr., from Athens, many years after the war ended. The prominent Tanner family had settled in 1818 in Limestone County. Successful in the mercantile business, Mr. Tanner, Sr. was also the first mayor of Athens. Their family founded the near-by town of Tanner.²⁰⁷

Elodie and Samuel married in Huntsville at the Lewis/Clay home in more settled times, March 16, 1876. She was 32 years old by then. Reverend Banister of the Church of Nativity performed the ceremony, but eleven months later he was called on again. This time the minister performed the last rites. Elodie Lewis Tanner died February 2, 1877, and was buried at Maple Hill Cemetery. The modest but heartfelt notice in the newspaper read, “Her voice was the soul of melody, joyous in spirit... no bird in the wild wood carolled with more rollicking freedom.”²⁰⁸

Lucy Bride the last Lewis baby was born sometime in 1847 after Mary's return from Paris. (Ma Lewis gave birth to her last daughter the same year Mary Lewis Clay gave birth to her first daughter.) Lucy's middle name was in honor of Ma's grandmother Bride. Lucy remained single, taught at Brinkley College in 1870, and died November 6, 1895, at the Clay home in Huntsville. She would be remembered by deeds of kindness.²⁰⁹

These unmarried and widowed Lewis sisters continued to remain an integral part of the family grouping at the Old Home Place as the years passed. In the usual warm southern manner, relatives of any degree, even friends of relatives, were welcome to visit. On a few occasions Ma Lewis stayed with her daughter Ellen, as mothers often do, to help with her young family. In later years she enjoyed extended visits with the Jordans. The Lewis girls were also away for periods of time while they taught school. The Old Home Place, however, was always considered home. Perhaps if for no other reason than they couldn't afford to stay anywhere else.

Unfortunately for the family the Florida assets were gone, even before the War Between the States. In a letter to the newly widowed wife of the former governor of Florida, Mrs. Martha P. Perry, Mrs. Lewis mentioned her own difficulties. She asked for time and understanding about old debts. Ma had no source of income; there was nothing left of value to sell; she and her six unmarried girls were struggling to survive at home.²¹⁰ For the widow and her family the situation became even worse. In 1867 the Lewis house was put up for Sheriff's Sale for debts against Mrs. Lewis.²¹¹

In one of the few things he was ever able to do to really help his brother's family, other than offer emotional support, Clement Clay, Jr., bought the house for \$500 at the Sheriff's auction in 1869, and deeded it to John Withers and Mary Lewis Clay.²¹² Heaven only knows how he was able to scrape together that much cash. This incident became a part of local history and was often related to reflect the generosity of Senator Clay. However, it was not common knowledge that Withers, in exchange, signed away his share of 2069 acres at the Clay family planta-

tion at Gurley, Alabama.²¹³ The Lewis sense of humor showed itself in spite of the calamity. Ma jokingly said to her son-in-law that Clement Clay, Jr., “now was the owner of the Orphan Asylum.”²¹⁴

Abruptly the Old Home Place became all the more important. For some years Withers, Mary, and the children had been living at their own house at the corner of Henry and Gates Avenue near the center of town. But as a debt became overdue to his Uncle Augustine Withers, Mary and Withers were forced sell their own home and move into the Eustis Street residence.²¹⁵ The two families of Ma Lewis and her six grown daughters and Mary and Withers and their children would live as one. Not surprisingly, according to the family stories, everyone made the most of their “togetherness.”

VII

The Calhoun Family after the Letters

WEALTH IS TO EAT EVERYTHING OUT OF SEASON

Although the letters are really of the Lewis family, the Calhouns for many years would play unexpected and fascinating roles in events at the Louisiana plantations and in Huntsville. The Calhoun family remained abroad for many years living off the income from their vast holdings. Their wealth enabled them, during their travels in Europe, to return with art works collected for the Calhoun House in Huntsville. At the time of the turmoil in France, before and after the February Revolution of 1848, they arranged to be in the United States.

Wealth, however, never isolated any family from the tragically high death rates for children of those years. On one of the trips back to America, Meredith Calhoun, Jr., child of the cheerful name and only five years old, died in March of 1846, at the plantation in Rapides Parish.²¹⁶ On August 2, 1848, while the family was in Huntsville, another baby, Emma Caroline Blance Calhoun, was born. She lived just 20 days.²¹⁷ Of the five known Calhoun children, only two, Willie and his sister Ada, grew to adulthood.

Visiting between America and the continent, the Calhoun family had many choices of places to visit or even settle. New Orleans was always an attractive stopping place. It is likely that during these years Meredith Calhoun's brother, John, was living there. Several other relatives and family acquaintances could have welcomed the Calhouns. Through the Lewis letters it is known that the family of Meredith Calhoun lived in Philadelphia. In South Carolina the taste of sour political grapes may

have lingered with the Smith kinfolk to discourage visiting there for any length of time. Judge Smith's wife had a brother, Col. James Duff, living near Fayetteville, Tennessee, just north of Huntsville. There was a brother of Judge Smith's, Bennett Smith, in middle Tennessee.²¹⁸ Mrs. Calhoun had even closer relatives in south Alabama. Mary Calhoun's father and her uncles had extensive land holdings in the flourishing Black Belt of southern Alabama near Cahaba. Although John Taylor died in 1821 it is conceivable that Mrs. Calhoun had half-brothers and sisters living there.²¹⁹

The Calhouns welcomed the growing family of Reverend Lay to live in their house while they were away from Huntsville.²²⁰ However by the 1850's the Calhouns were again in Huntsville and played an active role in their community and church. Mary Calhoun was a communicant, as was her husband, in 1850 at the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville.²²¹ In the fall of that year a subscription was raised for a parsonage. Reverend Lay, in a letter to his wife, suggested he would get all other contributions first and then take the list to Mrs. Calhoun, implying that she would complete the subscription amount.²²²

Being an absentee landowner and among the wealthiest families in town did have some disadvantages. Responsibilities were sometimes neglected, and sometimes authority was asserted when none was looked for, particularly in affairs of the church. In his letters to his wife during this decade, Reverend Lay gradually showed less deference to Meredith Calhoun. The split, at first, may have arisen over trivial differences of perspective between the two men, one very worldly and one very godly. "Mr. Calhoun says it is a most intolerable thing that I should undertake to put down dancing and that he has a great mind to build a handsome opposition church on his lot opposite."²²³

A widening split could have arisen over larger concerns such as management of the church. Reverend Lay wrote to his wife, "Mr. Calhoun met me and to me he had an application for the study, proposing I would give him immediate possession, to pay therefore—what a poor little creature he is! He has not put his foot inside the Church. I called on them when they first arrived, and for the rest, when they want me,

they may send for me.”²²⁴

Meredith Calhoun continued to have objections when he was not allowed to have control. In 1856, Reverend Lay wrote his wife, “Friend Calhoun has a great deal to say to me about the church. It does not suit him to see us go without his co-operation, and he remonstrates [sic] accordingly. He says we are in too much of a hurry for in a few years he would not mind paying for half of the church; that if the Church were well situated he might give us \$3 or \$4000, but if we put it on the present lot he will not give 1 cent.”²²⁵

In the 1850s Calhoun raised money in Huntsville by planning a partition of a few blocks on newly developed avenues which became Smith and Calhoun Streets. Perhaps the Calhouns were already living extensively over their means. In a letter of 1859 Reverend Lay mentioned Mrs. Calhoun planned to remain some years in Huntsville. The Calhoun’s financial liabilities were perhaps common knowledge since Calhoun shared with Reverend Lay that he had “paid off all his debts to the last and that his income this year will be from \$230 to \$250.”²²⁶

Most likely Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun changed their minds about remaining in Huntsville because of the growing tensions of north-south politics. They returned to Europe. Their real life now was in Paris and traveling abroad. The Calhouns outwardly had all the qualifications to fit into the glittering Parisian society of the times. Paris approved of the “new transatlantic aristocracy, the Noblesse of the Dollar” often provided by Americans.²²⁷ Although it seems only a mere affectation, two different accounts suggest that Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun became Count and Countess after a financial consideration of \$100,000 was paid in Paris.²²⁸

As the wife of Napoleon III, Eugenie became Empress of France in 1853, soon after the Second Empire was proclaimed. Ada Sterling, writing with Virginia Clay, suggested Mary and Meredith Calhoun “played a brilliant part in Paris society when Eugenie’s triumphs were at their height.”²²⁹ In 1867, Winterhalter painted twenty-three year old Ada Calhoun’s portrait in Paris. The similarities between his portrait of Empress Eugenie and Ada’s features are remarkable. What family would

not have been quite flattered by the likeness?

In Paris Mary Calhoun and the family were visited several times in the late 1860's by a Huntsville widow, Mary P. Rice. Mrs. Rice, an influential supporter of the Huntsville Episcopal Church, escorted Rev. Henry Lay's son abroad to supervise the young man's education. On their second day in Paris, Mary Rice called on Mrs. Calhoun and Ada. Apparently others from northern Alabama were there because she mentioned Walkers, Latham, and Dr. Charles Pope among the social scene. In the unsettled times of the American South, Paris certainly was a lovely place to be staying. Mrs. Rice and young Henry visited with Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun through 1866-1868, and in her diary she commented about Mary Calhoun's rheumatism and his gout.²³⁰ Seemingly there was no shortage of income for the Calhoun family. Meredith Calhoun inherited, by right of wife, part of the estate due Mrs. William Smith. Previously a brother of Margaret Duff Smith's had settled on 651 acres on Mulberry Creek near Fayetteville, Tennessee, just north of Huntsville.²³¹

The estates in America continued to provide ample money to allow the Calhouns to live so well in Paris. Beyond the prices realized from the sale of crops each year, there was always more money available from the sale of land. Through their years on the continent, small parcels of property in Huntsville continued to be sold to meet their debts. But the Calhouns, as did many of the time, often lived far beyond their current cash and in effect charged against the future.

As the American Civil War drew to a close the Calhouns had many options to consider about returning home. Two locations offered the best choices. There was Huntsville and the smaller plantation, and there were vast holdings in Louisiana that had seen less destruction during the war. This time the family decision was made to settle in Louisiana.

If They are Prudent —Calhouns in Louisiana

Judge Smith committed a great deal of his plantation efforts in 1835-1836 to the Red River site. Smith was never a land speculator; this location combined a prosperous farming area with river transportation and was intended to be productive. At Easter time the facilities, equipment and slaves from the Huntsville plantation were moved down the Natchez Trace and across the river. The crossing of 500 to 1000 slaves, 1000 mules and 100 wagons was considered to be the largest migration of slaves up to that time.²³² In 1841 the inventory of the estate of William Smith, deceased, Rapides Parish itemized his possessions. The names, ages, martial status, and children of almost five hundred slaves, valued at over \$630,000 were listed.²³³ Count Meredith Calhoun now held, through his wife, the titles for the Smith property in Louisiana, which amounted to 13,000 acres with seven miles of frontage on the river. There were four plantations—Mirabeau, Farenzi, Meredith, and Smithfield. The latter site contained the village known as Calhoun Landing. Although this was fertile cotton growing land, other desirable crops could be grown on it with success. Judge Smith had ventured into sugar production. He refined the sugar at a mill on the Ferenzi site, the second largest in the United States at that time, costing between \$100,000 and \$190,000 to equip and build.²³⁴ The plantation remained a leader in sugar production within the state for many years

In the 1860 Census the Calhoun property was valued at over \$1,000,000 with 709 slaves, and personal worth of \$50,000.²³⁵ That year, adding to his business interests, Meredith Calhoun purchased the Red River *Democrat* and renamed it the *National Democrat*. His newspaper supported the Douglas-Johnson ticket in the election.²³⁶ Young William Calhoun intended to make his future in Louisiana even before the Civil War. There were certainly enough business enterprises available to keep several men busy. He joined the Masonic Order, Oliver Lodge #84 in 1860.²³⁷ Calhoun's immediate plans, like those of everyone else, would

have to wait. The War between the States would not wait any longer.

Meredith Calhoun was in America at the outbreak of the War. In January of 1861 his wife wrote to him at several different addresses because she was not sure the letter would find him through the blockade. The letter was filled with the trivia of a married couple of many years. She noted that Willie, typical of sons everywhere, had not written since the previous May. In the same letter she mentioned that "Lucia de Lammermoor" was the opera on Saturday, and the Empresses had inquired about their health.²³⁸

By September Meredith Calhoun daringly found his way to Huntsville. An article in the Huntsville *Democrat* informed readers: "The friends of Mr. Meredith Calhoun were agreeably surprised by his arrival here, one day last week, in good health and spirits, after an absence of over 12 months in Paris. He evaded espionage and ran the gauntlet of Northern rebel-hunters, by studiously ignoring the English language, after his arrival in Canada, and communicating with persons of the English tongue, through his French attendant, who speaks English pretty well and acted as his interpreter."²³⁹

Most likely the Calhouns all remained safely in Paris for the duration of the war. At the end of the war, thirty-year-old William Calhoun came to a decision about his future chances to make a fortune in his own right. As a preliminary step, in December of 1866, at the office of the United States Consulate in Paris, Meredith and Mary Calhoun gave their son a true and lawful power of attorney with full power and authority for their estate.²⁴⁰ This was the opportunity to come into the rightful inheritance left to him by his great-grandfather over twenty-five years before.

Perhaps they all planned to return to Louisiana together, but on May 14th of 1869, Meredith Calhoun died at his home at 49 Rue de Luxembourg in Paris.²⁴¹ Now in full control, Willie Calhoun made decisions for the family and himself in Louisiana. His mother and sister joined him there. In this period of disarray after the war, perhaps only an outsider was at first able to quickly take advantage of the times. William

Smith Calhoun was ready. He had the initiative to begin building and apparently the cash to maintain and expand growth. In 1867, Meredith Calhoun had already opened the first store at Calhoun Landing, and Willie renewed his social contacts by transferring his Masonic membership to the nearby Cloutierville Lodge.²⁴²

Willie next entered the local political scene. In 1869 a petition was formed to be presented before the legislature for the formation of a new parish from the existing parishes of Winn and Rapides to be called Red River Parish. The seat for the new parish would be the town of Montgomery. However a Republican representative, newly elected, changed the petition, altered the dimensions, and molded the petition to his advantage. The altered petition was approved by the Reconstruction Legislature as presented. This new parish of 14,000 acres was to be called Grant and the new parish seat would be known as Colfax, in honor of Schuyler Colfax, Grant's Vice President during the first term. The newly formed town of Colfax was previously known as Calhoun Landing and consisted of four or five houses, stores and a brick building that housed a stable. The stable became the new courthouse.²⁴³ William Smith Calhoun had created for himself a parish. Almost the entire area of the new parish was derived from the plantations of Judge William Smith, Meredith Calhoun, and now William Smith Calhoun.

Legally, the succession of Meredith Calhoun needed to be established in order for William and Ada Calhoun to inherit their shares of their father's estate. Like any other typical brother-sister arrangement, episodes were not always peaceful. In one incident Ada gave a parcel of land for the parsonage in Colfax, and Willie filed a lawsuit to the effect it was not hers to give. The Judge agreed and awarded the property to him. He then gave it to the St. Luke Episcopal Church.²⁴⁴ Minor spats soon become larger battles with the neighbors over schemes for growth and power. The resulting court cases drained time, money, and energy from all the participants. Eventually the family was involved in cases and appeals before the Supreme Courts of Tennessee, Alabama, and in nineteen cases in Louisiana.

Willie Calhoun held the authority to make all decisions according

to the previously signed power-of-attorney. Whether Willie felt he had never received the cash inheritance bequeathed to him from his great-grandfather's estate or whether he simply could wait no longer to succeed, he tried for larger financial gains. In May of 1870 he signed three promissory notes for \$5000 each with James N. Nevin, mortgaging all four of the Louisiana plantations. Allegedly this was for cash for supplies for next year's crops. However Mr. Nevin later testified in court there was more than adequate cash already available. With this cash William would be considered a partner in the commercial firm of Shackelford and Co., adding still another possible climb in local power structure.²⁴⁵

The squabbling and indebtedness would not concern Mary Smith Taylor Calhoun any longer, and hopefully she never had any premonition about what was ahead for the estate so vigorously gathered by her grandfather. Mary Calhoun, the dear motherly friend of Mary Lewis of the Paris days, died June 10, 1871, in Bay St. Louis, at approximately 61 years of age.²⁴⁶ This gentle woman appeared quietly in the background of the letters as a lady of her quality should. In a grand style she did what was expected of her.

The unsure period of Reconstruction gave way to further frustration and difficulties as white southerners attempted to regain control of their parishes and state. On April 13, 1873, confrontation between the former slaves and local white men resulted in a riot at the courthouse in Colfax. Certainly lawlessness was evident on both sides. Encouraged by white Republicans, but in fear of reprisals, Negroes took refuge in the courthouse, the old stable of Calhoun's. The building was set on fire, and the blacks tried to flee. Some were killed in the flames, a few were captured, but the majority were killed as they tried to escape the mob. At the Colfax Court House that day, at least 105 blacks (perhaps 150 or more) and three whites died.²⁴⁷

In retrospect it is easy to assign blame to individuals. Where were the leaders of the community, and where was Willie Calhoun that day and night of bloodletting? He could not possibly, truly, have understood the complicated circumstances and the intensity of emotions of the people involved. But he, the outsider, was certainly an active catalyst to the

events. Careful reading of the records suggests that Willie Calhoun, at some time, realized events were going out of control. Some concerned citizens traveled to New Orleans to alert Governor Kellog to the developing situation. About the 5th or 6th of April, Willie Calhoun also went down the Red River attempting to get help from the federal government. But he never reached the city. Calhoun was discovered hidden aboard a steamer headed downstream for the city. He was removed from the boat, stripped, and searched. Hidden in his boot, a note from the Negro leader at Colfax was discovered. Calhoun was set free and instructed to return home to use his authority to try and stop the “war-to-be.”²⁴⁸

Willie suffered more personal danger and indignities after the riot. While he was aboard a returning steamboat anchored at nearby Alexandria, with the Metropolitan Police on board, several white men boarded the boat with the intention of throwing him overboard. Calhoun’s life was spared only because the men overindulged, became drunk and were therefore unable to continue with their intentions. According to the account, when he was faced with death during these events, Calhoun gave the Masonic distress sign and his life was spared.²⁴⁹

William Calhoun still had many other obligations to keep him occupied. At the plantations there were no reputable overseers and few dependable field hands to make the crops each season. Besides managing the enormous estates and the store and serving in the State legislature, Willie, as the only man in the family, was responsible for his sister, Ada. Nevertheless he soon took on additional responsibilities and started a family of his own.

Sweet Poor Little Willie—William Calhoun

As a guest from a foreign country it was only natural for William Calhoun to visit with relatives who were nearby. Deep family connections already existed along the Gulf Coast at Mobile with the Purvis family. William Calhoun’s great-aunt Sarah Ellen Taylor was married to John Baylis Earle, Adjutant and Inspector General of the state of South Carolina.²⁵⁰ In 1832 at the family plantation, Silver Glade, their daughter, Mary,

married Robert Purvis, Jr., a merchant and cotton broker.²⁵¹ Purvis later moved his family to Spring Hill, near Mobile, where he established his residence and business.²⁵² Willie Calhoun appeared to his Purvis cousins as quite sophisticated with his recent French background and wealth, perhaps receiving sympathy for his lameness.

Cornelia Eleanor Purvis and Willie met in a family setting at the Purvis home and were attracted to one another. On February 3, 1875, Willie, 40 years old and his second cousin, Cora, age 35, eloped.²⁵³ The couple settled near Colfax, but Cora did not like living in isolation at the Mirabeau plantation. Between 1882 and 1885 they built a lovely home of cypress in town. However, wherever they made their home, any public life was seriously curtailed. No white person who sided with the Republican Party was socially received anywhere in the countryside. The word used over and over again in the testimony before Congress was “ostracized,” and any such family was unworthy of the respect of decent people. Their family life also suffered the deaths of two infant sons. The only child of Cora and Willie’s to survive was Mary Earle Taylor Calhoun.

For Willie the management of the family property had become one of losing ground, literally. Outsmarted on all sides, embroiled in litigation and debts, he must have been overwhelmed with disillusionment for what he had expected from realizing his inheritance. William Calhoun died unexpectedly January 14, 1891, of a combination of la grippe, bronchitis and asthma.²⁵⁴ At the time, his daughter, Mary, was away at school in Mobile. Life in Colfax became intolerable for an unprotected widow, and Cora soon joined her sisters and daughter in Mobile. The Purvis family was still fighting to hold on to their possessions there, and she was needed.

Cora Calhoun was hard-pressed to control her Louisiana properties from afar and she relied, as an absentee landowner, on other people’s judgment. Eventually the property in Louisiana became lost in debt and the relentless tangle of legal battles begun in her husband’s time. Cora Purvis Calhoun died August 16, 1924, survived by her daughter, and numerous nephews and nieces she had helped raise. She chose to be buried in her family plot at the lovely Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile.²⁵⁵

Few reminders survive of William Smith Calhoun's life. Within the period of time of Reconstruction and until his death Willie made his home in Louisiana. In these 24 years Willie must have been known and recognized as a central figure in his community. But into the 20th century neither his family nor his contemporaries wrote about him. His name is difficult to find among documents of the confused days of the state legislature. He was a state senator for a period, but no one seems to have jotted his name in his or her diary or journal. Except for a few slim county histories, one journal article, factual testimony in the congressional investigation, and one thinks there would be no reference to the personal man at all.²⁵⁶ Perhaps in the intervals of turmoil, there simply was not time. He did not encourage a photographic likeness being made. As a result there are no known pictures of Willie. In Louisiana the Grant Parish boundaries are still formed as William Smith Calhoun shaped them; but the sugar mill is gone, and the vast acreage is no longer in the family. The lovely cypress home, built for Cora, is no longer in the family.

What was once a vast holding of land is divided—the downfall of a family empire. Life was never easy for Willie Calhoun; he never seemed to quite fit in wherever he was. His childhood in Huntsville was filled with the gloom of mourning, the pain of physical affliction, and the emotional trauma that often comes with misfortune. After going to France, his Mamma, Pa, younger brother Merry, and even the maid left him alone in the hospital in Passy while they returned to America for what must have seemed forever for a child his age. Mary Lewis wrote in her letters that he appeared to be neglected, ignored, or even worse, abused, in their absence. Despite the promises made by the doctors, his deformity remained throughout his lifetime. He waited years to attain the promised inheritance to prove himself in Louisiana. Calhoun certainly had unhappy and frustrating humiliations that remained with him through his lifetime.

If he was at first accepted in Louisiana as a ready source of new money after the War that did not last long. The established white leaders disliked him as an interloper in their community relations. The blacks, in the long run, could not have thought much of his help for their situation.

They were worse in many respects after he came, dreadfully so after the riot. But one will never really know how he felt. Willie Calhoun spent more time in Louisiana than any other single home place. Was he always to remain a pushy outsider, or did he genuinely have concern as a landowner in that 25 years? One hopes he had some moments to enjoy, to show that he was a kind son and brother, an agreeable husband, and a loving father.

Good and Pretty—Ada Calhoun

Mary Margaret Ada Calhoun, born during the last year of the Lewis letters, received the education appropriate for one of her position in schools in Paris and more importantly in the social world of Paris of the glorious Second Empire. In the developing unsettled times of France and at the death of her father, Ada and her mother relocated in America. But with the loss of her mother, Ada became particularly vulnerable. Everything in her life, the home and friends of her childhood and her parents, was gone; she would now have to depend on her brother, Willie, and new companions and advisors. Her brother was already busy establishing his future at the Louisiana properties. Perhaps Ada had business sense sufficient to oversee her share of the properties, but in those years no woman, particularly of her background, made business decisions. In 1872 Ada wrote from Huntsville to her brother “she was a penniless orphan...lonely and blue.” Moreover she needed to borrow money to return to New Orleans.²⁵⁷ She had to rely on others to give her advice, and all she had to do to enjoy her position in life was to keep signing her name when asked.

Part of her share of the estate was the Huntsville property, but for a young miss the real social life was in the only truly cosmopolitan city in the south, New Orleans. There she met a lawyer who had come to take advantage of career opportunities in the building of the south even before the Civil War. George W. Lane represented Willie and Ada in 1873 with legal matters regarding the estate of their mother.

George Washington Lane was from New York State, born about

1836 in Farmington, Ontario County.²⁵⁸ According to an article in the local newspaper, George W. Lane worked with “unremitting industry” to be more than a mere manual laborer. He taught school in New York, and then apparently he went to Louisiana to try his fortune there. He taught, continued his education, studied law, and was admitted to the bar. Lane did well and built a lucrative legal practice in New Orleans. During the Civil War he carefully and quietly maintained his allegiance to the north. It was an unusually skillful northerner that would not give serious offense to his southern neighbors.²⁵⁹

Perhaps George and Ada met originally as client and attorney. This unlikely couple, George the overachieving son of a laborer from New York and Ada the debutante daughter of a millionaire raised in Paris, were married in New Orleans, June 19, 1876.²⁶⁰ Lane’s law practice was profitable, her estate could be even more valuable than ever, and New Orleans offered such a gay social whirl. That same year, despite a “tableau of debts” noted by the judge, the succession of Meredith Calhoun was established before the Supreme Court of Louisiana.²⁶¹ Both Ada Calhoun Lane and her brother, William Calhoun, appeared to be financially secure for life. The Lane’s daughter, Marie Calhoun Lane was born in the next year, 1877.

When George was not actively working at his legal practice, he, Ada and their daughter Marie came to visit Huntsville. They did not stay in the family mansion, Calhoun House that had been empty so long. The couple purchased Oak Place, the lovely ante-antebellum Steele home, at auction in 1883. This stately home had belonged to the George Steele family and was the location of the wonderful barbecue in honor of newly elected President James Polk that is noted in the Lewis letters. When in town, the Lanes were made welcome to stay with their new friends, Milton and Ellelee Humes. Over the years Ada became more and more likely to consult Captain Humes on her business management decisions. In 1885 Ada gave Humes power-of-attorney to conduct her business in Huntsville.²⁶²

In New Orleans her husband’s law practice prospered, and as a northerner he had survived the years of War in the south very well. None-

theless having married someone who formerly associated with the elite of society and with royalty was stressful in a different way. To maintain Ada's level of social status might have been the least of his problems as they developed. The barrage of legal suits and countersuits with other landowners, and within the family, would have worn out many men. Lane paid the price. The New York newspaper tactfully wrote, "overwork brought on several severe attacks of nervous troubles which finally compelled him to give up his business and return north to spend his days with his mother and devoted sister." George W. Lane was declared of unsound mind and institutionalized at Brigham Hall, an asylum for the insane at Canandaigua, New York. He died December 1, 1893, aged 57.²⁶³ Ada Calhoun Lane and her teen-aged daughter, Marie, were on their own now. Everything would be all right. There were still plenty of old money and new friends in Huntsville.

The optimism of the late gay 1890's was reflected in the social life in Huntsville in the *Democrat*—Local poetess and painter, Miss Howard Weeden, entertained at her home in compliment to Miss Marie Lane of New Orleans. Mrs. Ada C. Lane with her charming daughter Miss Marie left for New Orleans on Saturday. When in town Marie joined with a group of young belles who called themselves the "Village Merymakers." Later she was included with a more select group who represented "youth and beauty, gallantry and mirth...The Lucky Thirteen." Mrs. Milton Humes with Miss Marie Lane expect to leave this week for Newport News.²⁶⁴

The social life for those who stayed in town was also inviting—The Dresden China Ball at the Opera House presented by Miss Clay's dancing class passed brilliantly. Among the names attending was one fresh to the social scene. Miss Anna O'Shaughnessy was beautifully costumed in blue silk and led one of the dances most gracefully. Michael O'Shaughnessy led the ball at the Twickenham Club. This last family was recently introduced to Huntsville society. O'Shaughnessy was indeed, a new name to Huntsville and Madison County but was to have a tremendous effect on the economy of the slowly recovering post-war village preparing to enter the next century. The O'Shaughnessy family came to the United

States from Ireland in 1836. In Cincinnati Thomas, the first to arrive, had been in business as a dry goods merchant in 1839 as Withers & O'Shaughnessy. He then established his own commission house for the sale of dry goods and had acquired a considerable fortune. His brother James had joined him in 1846.²⁶⁵

This first James O'Shaughnessy had two sons, Michael J. and James Francis. Both boys were born while the family was in Ireland, and the place name, Kildare, followed the family to Huntsville. During the Civil War Michael left clerking with his uncle's firm and learned skills that would later allow him to fulfill the American dream beyond any possible expectations. Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, appointed capable young men from his home state to the department of Treasury during the bustling years of the Civil War. Michael J. O'Shaughnessy was one of those chosen to work with the archaic governmental bookkeeping and accounting techniques. O'Shaughnessy was particularly innovative and developed ways to speed paperwork transactions. Later he joined his brother, James Francis, in Nashville business ventures.²⁶⁶

James, the younger son of James O'Shaughnessy, born in 1841, attended St. Xavier as his brother had, was listed as a clerk in the city directory, and like his brother boarded about town. He worked in the Quartermaster Department of the U.S. Army and immediately opened his own commission house in Nashville at the end of the War. The War allowed these younger brothers to acquire skills and business contacts that with an inherited predisposition for work and taking risk in business led to success, and sometimes failure. The first years were good. This newly formed company bought the very first cotton shipments to pass through Nashville at the end of the war.

As benefiting those who had served their country, both men acquired military titles. By 1868 Colonel James F. and Major Michael J. O'Shaughnessy were leaders of a new technology, and had started a cottonseed oil factory. For a time this technology was the Cinderella of the new south.²⁶⁷ James moved to New York City for a period of time, and developed business connections to sell the cotton oil abroad. While in the East he married Lucy Waterbury, daughter of Judge Nelson J. Waterbury

of Connecticut. Michael O'Shaughnessy married Anna Pyles of a distinguished Nashville family, and they had four sons and a daughter.

James O'Shaughnessy purchased the machine shops of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad in Huntsville. In 1881 he converted the site into the Huntsville Cotton Oil Mills. The brothers recognized the potential growth opportunities in nearby cotton fields, available waterpower, and a ready work force.

By the 1880's northern Alabama had begun recovery from the destructive years of the War and reconstruction. The future, as seen by many local leaders, had to be in diversification, away from the single agricultural industry of raising cotton. Leaders in north Alabama actively sought capital for the manufacture of thread and yarn to be made from locally grown cotton. Industrialization was not far away, and Huntsville was ready.

The North Alabama Improvement Company was organized in 1886. This company was composed of the two O'Shaughnessy brothers, eighteen local citizens, and two men from Memphis. The goal, with a \$50,000 capital stock, was just that — improvement and development. Exciting plans for the town included building the Monte Sano Hotel and a railroad up Monte Sano Mountain to the hotel. Downtown, the Huntsville Hotel was purchased and renovated. A road from Huntsville to Guntersville and a railroad from Huntsville to Gadsden were planned. Most important to the community, in the long run, a new cotton mill, the Dallas Mills, with the promise of 2000 jobs, was persuaded to locate in town. West Huntsville Cotton Mill, Merrimack Manufacturing, Lowe, Rowe, and Madison Mills soon followed, and "Huntsville became the second-ranking cotton mill town in the south."²⁶⁸

The O'Shaughnessy brothers built homes in Huntsville and were on the scene, at least some of the time, to supervise the growth of their investments. "Castle Delight" was the name chosen by Colonel James for the fine residence he built on Monte Sano in 1885. He often entertained friends and business associates from the Midwest and New York City on the mountain. As gifts to their new community, the Colonel donated money for a new iron fence and porch rail to St. Mary's Catholic Church

while his brother contributed glass windows and new pews.

Major Michael, as the President of the Alabama Cotton Oil Company, actually moved his wife and children to Huntsville for several years. The family was eager to enter into the public life of the community. Many of the social activities were gaily reported in the *Democrat* in the fall of 1894 and later editions. The brothers Conrad and Michael played for opposing sides in a baseball game to benefit the Infirmary—Manufacturers vs. Bankers. Leo O'Shaughnessy returned from Cullman where he attended school, probably St. Bernard's. Marion O'Shaughnessy led a pleasant German [cotillion] with Lizzie Halsey that year. The boys were musical and sang as members of a male quartet. Marion also played the flute. Messrs. O'Shaughnessy shared in a moonlight coaching party to the river given by the lovely Franklin Street girls. There was a brilliant fancy dress German at the Hotel Monte Sano. Mesdames Virginia Clay-Clopton and O'Shaughnessy were appointed to a committee for the Atlanta Exposition.²⁶⁹ Certainly the O'Shaughnessy family, and their set, reintroduced the standards for gracious living in Huntsville as the old economics passed away.

Kildare, Major Michael's home, was begun about 1882 and completed in 1886. Local workmen came to watch the innovative construction techniques of the New York crew. The cost of the house with over 23,000 square feet of living space and fifty rooms was \$65,000.²⁷⁰

The children began venturing out after their school years to take their places in the social and business worlds. With the connections of the family it is not surprising that the children were urged into the family enterprises. In 1895, after a year at Mount St. Mary's College, Michael, Jr., (only 22) was appointed President of the Wisconsin Grass Twine Company in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. "Empire Builder," James J. Hill, and other industry giants were involved in the planning of this company, and it certainly proved to be a great training place for Michael O'Shaughnessy, Jr.²⁷¹

Young Conrad O'Shaughnessy also went away to college and graduated from Mount Saint Mary's in 1891. There he was offered a chance for advanced study leading to a professorship in Greek studies. But he

returned to join the family enterprises as a clerk at the First National Bank and later as secretary of the Alabama Cotton Oil Company. Tragedy struck in Huntsville when Conrad, age 20, was run over and killed by a train, late at night at the Southern Railroad depot on May 20, 1898. Conrad was well liked, one of the best known young men in the city and a leader in society. "The floral tributes were numerous and magnificent." The service at St. Mary's Catholic Church was so crowded, many who wanted to attend were turned away.²⁷²

However, there was a new prospect of future happiness for two of the young people from these active families. The couple met in Huntsville and probably enjoyed the social scene of Nashville and New Orleans. She was the great-great-granddaughter of Judge Smith, and was educated at the Academy of the Sacred Heart of New Orleans. He, the son and nephew of nationally recognized leaders, continued his education in the schools of finance and business. Certainly they moved in same social circles wherever they were. Michael James O'Shaughnessy, Jr., married Marie Calhoun Lane on April 26th of 1899 in New Orleans at the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

Marie wore a bridal veil of lace "woven for the Empress Eugenie and afterwards purchased by Miss Lane's grandfather who was minister to France during the second empire, for his daughter, the bride's mother." She also carried "a pearl and lace fan, a gift to her mother, who used it on her wedding day, from the Empress Eugenie." The bride was given away by her guardian, according to the account, Major Hume [sic] of Huntsville.²⁷³

This marriage united the young people of two families of potentially enormous capital and property. He appeared to have endless money and energy; she would have endless money and property. The young couple was in St. Paul when their daughter, Marie Calhoun O'Shaughnessy, was born on January 23, 1900.²⁷⁴ Two sons were born later as the family moved about the country.

Meanwhile, these were truly exciting times in Huntsville. A site ceded by the North Alabama Improvement Company became an inducement for the Dallas Mill to begin construction on March 18, 1891.²⁷⁵ The

cost of the twenty-five acres to the Mill Company was a token \$1. This property had been the land of Marie Marguerite Ada Calhoun Lane. Her parents died over twenty years earlier, and her brother William died in January of that year. With her husband institutionalized, Ada relied on the business advice of those she most trusted.

In 1892 the North Alabama Improvement Company reorganized with other outside money and formed into the Northwestern Land Association. Soon local investors also were able to purchase shares in this and other mill factories in town. Housing sites were needed for the mill workers and other prospective job seekers. One of the financial maneuvers involved offered land for sale in an area known as the East Huntsville Addition. Streets were laid out and 1200 lots were planned for sale. The shape of the new city blocks followed the outline of the edges of Judge Smith's land within his original plantation. This acreage was also part of Ada Calhoun Lane's estate. Somehow in all the planning and developing, the property of the Smith-Calhoun estate was available for land speculation whether it was with the freely given signature of Ada on previous suggestion from her brother, her friend Milton Humes, her son-in-law Michael O'Shaughnessy, or other business advisors. In 1885 Ada sold this property, 923 acres, to James F. O'Shaughnessy for \$16,300.²⁷⁶

Family business was not going well. Ada Calhoun Lane was again, or rather still, involved with Louisiana law suits. Willie and Ada Calhoun's legal battles had continued to escalate. It is difficult to disentangle the sequence of events. There was Willie vs. Ada, Willie apparently defrauding his mother, Ada vs. Willie, Ada vs. the bank, the bank vs. Willie, and the widow Cora vs. Ada. In Louisiana, all was about to become undone for Willie and Ada Calhoun's legacy. A case before the Louisiana State Supreme Court, not resolved until much later, disclosed that William Calhoun had previously sold, to Ada for \$35,000 his entire share in the legal succession of their mother, in 1873.²⁷⁷ Ada, as many women over the ages before and after, continued the only way she knew how. She continued to spend more money than she had. The court case that Ada initiated earlier came before the Supreme Court of Louisiana in 1878. Her brother had signed the mortgage notes against the southern

plantations, which a local bank had purchased. Words bandied about included “flagrant fraud” and “conspiracy to defraud” their mother, Mrs. Mary Calhoun. Apparently the bank helped with “a remarkable want of interest” in its own notes. In this finding the court ruled in favor of Ada. One judge said, “I can not recall any case which has come under my observation presenting a record of more flagrant fraud and attempted wrong through the forms of law than that now before us.” However the dissenting judge wrote, “I think the fraud, if any, is rather on the side of the plaintiff and those under who she claims.”²⁷⁸

Now even Ada would lose to those really in control in Louisiana. In the case before that state Supreme Court, decided in May 1884, the decision was against Ada, and she had to pay court costs. The dissenting judge did wonder out loud about the “incredible celerity” with which three experts had surveyed over 7000 acres of land worth \$73,000 and filed the reports on the very same day, the same day the defendant was known to be away from town. The original case went to trial in eight days and judgment was rendered, with “lightning speed, without example in judicial history”.²⁷⁹

In their next case before the Louisiana Supreme Court, a sheriff who completed the sale was one of the purchasers. Another buyer was a deputy clerk at the courthouse. No wonder Ada’s husband had been dismayed, exhausted, befuddled, and finally unbalanced. Eventually everything was lost. The last two Louisiana cases, taken again to the State Supreme Court in 1901 and 1905 by Cora Calhoun and her daughter, involved fence lines and street right-of-ways. Paltry as this seems, there was almost nothing else left worth fighting over.²⁸⁰ At Willie’s death his widow, Cora, was forced to try and maintain the pieces by controlling his succession which he may have already sold to his sister—twice. In the end, the Louisiana estates were lost forever to Ada or Willie’s family.

The legal battles next began in Huntsville. Ada Calhoun Lane’s life had become so complicated. Her husband was first mentally ill and then hospitalized until his death four years later. She and Marie lived for a brief time in New York State with him. He died in 1893, and she continued to rely on her friend, Milton Humes, and others for help. The estate in

Huntsville was also soon gone, sold or tied-in with land development schemes. Poor advice had become bad advice and after the death of her husband she was later declared insolvent.²⁸¹

Prior to March of 1887, Milton Humes was the attorney and managing agent for Ada. During this time he became indebted to her for sums of money. She had sold to his wife, Ellelee Humes, real and personal property for \$25,000 and pictures valued at \$5000.²⁸² When the balance of \$30,000 on her property was due, Humes reassured her it was invested in good securities at eight per cent interest and was being kept very safe. Later she felt he never invested the money but had put it to his own use. Ada tried to get an accounting in 1889. Humes wrote her a statement of indebtedness, but no cash was forthcoming. His own debts were piling up elsewhere, and perhaps in an attempt to hide assets from other creditors, Humes in 1896 sold his wife land in Tennessee, land already owned by Ellelee, for the princely sum of ten dollars. In the case *Michael O'Shaughnessy, Jr. vs. Humes*, 1904, there was an attempt to get restitution for Ada who was his mother-in-law.²⁸³ Moreover, Milton Humes was over-extended with his own enormous financial losses. Ada fell with his losses, too. His affairs in chaos, Milton Humes died unexpectedly at his home, Abingdon Place, on December 30, 1908. The Huntsville *Democrat* wished "peace to his ashes."

Ada lived her later years in fine hotels, with friends, or with her daughter's family. Ada Smith Calhoun Lane died in 1910. Her share of any property in Louisiana and Alabama was long gone. Hopefully some amount of cash found its way to her for the exchange of land in Alabama, enough for her to continue to live comfortably in the last years. She was reared in a time and in a social world to expect the extravagances that money could buy to continue forever. Nothing could have prepared her to accept what eventually happened. Her life, unless she happened to like the excitement of a good fight, became enmeshed in court battles and personal tribulations. It was such an indignity to go court to protect what she must have thought was already hers. Her high-spirited world was replaced by life with a husband whose mental status became suspect and then worse. She may not have known that those she trusted the most

had given her poor advice. She may have ignored it all by turning her head aside and not recognizing the reversal of finances. Ada Calhoun Lane lived to see her own grandchildren born; surely they brought her pleasure. Her photographs in the family album always show Ada cheerful and laughing.

Among the others in the story related to Judge Smith's estate and Meredith Calhoun's succession, Col. James O'Shaughnessy died in March of 1914 in New York City. His few years of speculation in land and industrial development in Huntsville had jolted a sleeping country village into the next century, never to be the same again.²⁸⁴ Ada's daughter, Marie Calhoun Lane O'Shaughnessy, died near Newark, New Jersey in 1918. Her husband, a daughter, and a son survived her. Marie O'Shaughnessy was remembered in her obituary not only for her social activities but also for being a leading activist in Huntsville for women's suffrage.²⁸⁵

Michael O'Shaughnessy, Jr., was attracted to the international oil business. He began publishing a monthly newsletter that eventually became "O'Shaughnessy's South American Oil Bulletin" in which he urged international cooperation. In his later years all of his business ventures were perhaps overshadowed by his personal concern for social equity, as he was a moving force in the foundation of the Catholic League for Social Justice. Michael O'Shaughnessy, Jr., died in Gettysburg, February 14, 1946, the last of those who were personally touched by Huntsville and the original Smith money.²⁸⁶

With the vast wealth, inheritance, political and social position of the Smiths and Calhouns, it might have been expected that they would have had a more lasting impact in the communities in which they lived. In southern Alabama, the only imprint left by the Calhoun family is a sharp curve on the map below Selma in the Alabama River between Three Mile Ditch and Big Swamp Creek labeled "Calhoun Bend." In Louisiana there is little to remind a searcher of the influence of Willie Calhoun's time there. The sugar mill is gone, the plantations unremembered. The lovely cypress home he built for his bride has been empty and forlorn. One would not expect Ada to have left a significant impression in the financial or business world. Mary Lewis described Ada as "good and

pretty”, “the best natured girl in the world.” These attributes may have described her too well and were certainly to her disadvantage.

Today in Huntsville there are two small streets named Smith and Calhoun that a few history buffs might recognize. The chimney of the grand old hotel still stands as a landmark on Monte Sano; O’Shaughnessy Point and Springs are lovely sites for hikers on the mountain. Of course O’Shaughnessy Street is associated with Dallas Cotton Mills and the mill village that shaped such an important part of community life for so many years. The mills survived almost 100 years, closed in 1947, and burned in a spectacular blaze in 1991. The debris left was a small reminder for the workers and their families who lived their lifetimes in the closeness of the mill village. Even the burned rubble is gone now.

At the corner of Greene Street and Eustis Avenue is a modest historical marker noting the city block purchased by Judge Smith. The marker does not even begin to speak of these people and the events that occurred within the few city streets. Who knows of the irascible judge of national prominence and his beloved granddaughter, or dear little crippled Willie and pretty Ada, or the faithful servants Margaret, Priam, Fred, and the others? The city block is remembered with a brief message and designated with the oddity of a respelled name as the Calhoun Block.

The House Flourishing with Mellowness—The Calhoun Place

Little did Judge Smith realize that for all the years of its existence the townhouse he so proudly began building would always be referred to as the Calhoun Place. Smith purchased land in Huntsville in 1823, 1828, and 1831. His plantation, Spring Glade, of almost 1000 acres was in what became East Huntsville. In 1833 he hired the Brandon brothers, William and Thomas, to start his house in town with an order for one million bricks. Although the house itself faced Eustis Avenue, the five foot brick wall surrounded the entire block of what is now Lincoln, Eustis, Randolph, and Greene Streets. Six years of work was spent, but the house was unfinished when he died. Meredith Calhoun, as executor, supervised

the completion of the house and payment of the bills.

The three-story structure "...had seven windows across the facade and a centered entrance. The side walls were two bays deep, and the gabled roof featured cave returns that spanned each end of the house creating the appearance of a pediment. Two, two-story wings extended north from the rear of the main block to give the entire structure a U-shaped layout, while a porch ran along the rear walls and connected to two detached outbuildings, one situated at each end of the two ells. These separate structures were also of brick and each structure was two stories high. The Brandons' bill also disclosed that the site chosen for the house was slightly elevated and the contractors dug and hauled off "the top of the hill where the house sits." At the death of Judge Smith, Meredith Calhoun, as supervisor, added a personal touch to the interior. The contract with George Parker for plastering included a shell cornice design that included the pattern of Calhoun's name.²⁸⁷

The only known photograph shows the exterior as formidable and imposing, even uninviting. Mary Lewis, writing from Paris, declared it to be like the Lourve. In his collection of articles on distinguished Huntsville homes, Pat Jones wrote that the house sat on the "highest spot in the block . . . Wide stone steps ran the length of the small porch in front. Stone copings were placed on each window, even on those of the second floor . . . A large statue of Venus coming out of the bath was located in the center of the wide hallway." He said it was outstanding and unparalleled for beauty and elegance. Of course the interior was filled with the art collection that the Calhouns amassed while abroad.²⁸⁸ In the Gay 90's, Elizabeth Chapman gave an account of the interior of the estimated 12,000 square feet of the house. "The rooms were huge rectangles and squares, frescoes in plumes and flowers on the coping and around the gas jets. Each mantle was of marble . . . There was a dungeon in one of the cellars where the family silver was stored. Rare wines were also kept there . . . The roof was mansard copper."²⁸⁹

During the first years after the Lewis letters were written, the Calhouns stayed on the continent although they did return occasionally to Louisiana and Huntsville to oversee the properties. The 1850's found

the Calhouns traveling in their luxurious coach throughout Europe, collecting paintings and sculptures. These pieces of art were for their apartment in Paris and also for the Huntsville home, Calhoun House. This selection was considered by many as the largest and finest private collection in the South for many years. Charles Lanman, one of America's first professional tourists, visited Huntsville in 1856 and wrote, "The lover of art will be surprised to find here a private gallery of paintings and statuary which is said to have cost \$75,000 and contains some productions of decided merit...a remark that many private galleries in the country cannot bear."²⁹⁰

Of all the Calhoun properties the one that remained a symbol of what wealth could attain was the Calhoun House in Huntsville. It was not offered for sale until many years later. All the years it stood, even empty, Ma Lewis had reassured Mrs. Calhoun the house would be unmolested during their absence; it was an asset and a model for all to admire.

A caretaker staff of servants maintained the house much of the time. After the 1861 adventure when Meredith Calhoun slipped in and out of town in the guise of a French citizen, probably no more trips were made to Huntsville until much later by Ada. The house was desirable, in several ways, for the occupying troops of the Civil War. Some of the objects so carefully collected by the Calhouns for their home were among those "borrowed" from the Calhoun House by the command of General Mitchel to furnish his stay at the home of Hugh Lawson Clay during the war.²⁹¹ Brig. Gen. George Crook used the house as the headquarters of his command in northern Alabama. By then the Calhoun House had little need for the decorative arts. According to the Jones account, unruly prisoners were kept in the below-ground kitchen area behind barred windows. Other floor space was being used as a hospital, and the rooms were crowded with beds. If battle wounds were not enough to justify a hospital stay, measles had attacked the army as well.²⁹²

In 1867 the house served as military headquarters. Still later the house was available for rent. Assessments had been unpaid by the owners during the time it was rented, and the city sold the building for unpaid taxes. In a case that Ada finally took before the Alabama Supreme Court her

lawyer came to inspect the house. A family servant, Frederick Calhoun, who lived in a room in the basement to care for the property, was safeguarding it.²⁹³ Fred Calhoun, the former slave who had carried crippled Willie in his childhood, who had helped put out the fire at the Church of Nativity was still there protecting the house. Perhaps he had no where else to go, or perhaps he remained out of faithfulness and loyalty. He, like Mrs. Calhoun's servant, Margaret, made contributions to the history of the community that have often been overlooked.

As a rental property, the house in 1874 was used as a dancing academy sponsored by Professor George F. McDonald. In 1876 it became the offices of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Northern District of Alabama for an annual rent of \$1000 and served a more dignified function for several years. The building was the site of many court room trials during this next period. Perhaps the most exciting time for the Calhoun House and Huntsville was the trial of Frank James in 1884, for a payroll robbery three years earlier. Apparently everyone who could walk, ride, or crawl came to town to attend the trial or keep up with the latest news about it. James was acquitted, and the sympathetic crowds did not seem to be disappointed.

After this, the house served many purposes. Professor Roy West hired a room in the Calhoun building to open a dancing school in the spring of 1890. The Church of Nativity sponsored a flower show at the Calhoun house in the spring of 1891. Two hundred dollars were raised for the Orphans' Home. Miss Mary Clay's class of 40 little girls entertained with a program, and there were croquet and lawn tennis, too. A Baby Show was scheduled at the house for the next month.²⁹⁴ The property had other uses in the community. "About 8000 darkies held forth in the Calhoun Grove on Sunday, the occasion being that of a grand annual meeting of the Baptist Association. Excursions from up and down the river and loads of Negroes came from a twenty mile area." In the spring of 1895 there was a gypsy camp in the Calhoun Grove that attracted attention for an entire week.²⁹⁵

The Clay sisters in the newspaper suggested that the Calhoun house would make a delightfully cool headquarters for the proposed YMCA.

The Calhoun House served as the location for a school, the Huntsville Academy, from 1895 until 1898. The former grand ballroom of the House became a study hall and classroom for boys. The brick wall, which was demolished in 1893, was replaced with a neat fence as the yard was enclosed in August of 1898 for the benefit of the school children.²⁹⁶

In an effort to raise cash, or more likely to hide assets, remaining pieces of the Calhoun House art collection had been sold. A group of art pieces was transferred from George W. Lane and his wife to Milton and Ellelee Chapman Humes, March 18, 1887. The house, and the entire block, was sold to the Humes at the same time. Later in 1910 the widowed Ellelee was forced to put her own house, Abingdon Place, up for sale and the Calhoun art collection was sold to Eli P. Clark of Los Angeles. Included in the sale were twenty-three oil paintings, eight pieces of marble statuary (including two by Thomas Crawford), two bronze pieces, and one large Florentine mosaic table. The total selling price was \$60,000.²⁹⁷ Other than a few pieces of marble statuary held by descendants of the Calhoun family, this was the end of the most fabulous art collection in Huntsville.

While rented out as a school in 1907, there was some slight attempt to remodel the house again, but a fire put an end to all use and the building remained empty, an eyesore so close to the heart of the downtown. In 1909, the house that cost Judge Smith over \$75,000 to build in the 1830's was sold to L.C. Sugg for \$10,800. In May of 1911, after another fire, the Calhoun House was demolished.²⁹⁸ No photos, other than this cheerless one, capture for history the image of the building. There is nothing to remind one of the past glories and drama of its day except the historic marker at the location. The emphasis of that marker is about the trial of Frank James. Of the house, Mary Lewis's mother said, "It looks sad... flourishing with mellowness over its sad history."

VIII

The Lewis and Clay Families Prevail

1846-1869

LEARN TO RECEIVE IN CALMNESS THE JOYS AND
GRIEFS OF THIS LIFE

After the brief stay with the Clay in-laws, Withers and Mary Lewis Clay lived with her parents at the Lewis home on Eustis Street for several years. Their household began growing quickly, often to the disapproval of the Clay sisters-in-law. The first baby, Caralisa was born July 3, 1847.²⁹⁹ Her name was chosen for the mother of Mary's schoolmate in Paris, Caralisa Endicott Peabody. Many years later Cara Clay's youthful portrait, by an unknown painter, was given to the Huntsville Public Library. On May 9th of the very next year, Clement Comer Clay II was born.

After Clemmy, the next baby, John Withers Clay, arrived the 27th of April 1850. In the summer of 1852 a measles epidemic struck Huntsville and the three children were dangerously ill. When typhoid fever followed within a few days, the youngsters were already weakened. Mary described the death of baby Johnny, just over two years of age, in a heart-wrenching letter to her sister. "Oh! my child how happy he made us! What desolation to lose our darling." His death was perhaps a ... "chastisement for wandering from God. We were too happy before."³⁰⁰ Little did she know that another letter would be written eight days later to tell about the death of Cara, aged five. Mary, seven months pregnant, was unable to attend the funeral.

Young Clem recovered slowly, attended by the family and particularly

his uncle Clement. Senator Clay was very affected by the lingering and painful deaths of the two other children. He described them as true angels in their sickness and later in heaven. In one of Clay's most emotional letters, his words to his wife were full of personal anguish and grief. He and Virginia had become very attached to the youngsters. The senator resolved that they should see less of the one remaining child so the boy would be able to develop more normally with his own mother and father. He suggested to his wife that Clemmy address them as Uncle and Aunt now instead of Papa and Mamma as the child had previously.³⁰¹

Mary had little time to mourn; William Lewis Clay was born on September 30 of that year, 1852. The first of the four girls who would reach adulthood, Mary Lewis Clay, was born May 22, 1854. The next baby, Clarence Herbert, was born October 6, 1856. He died in September of 1858, not quite two years old, from complications of teething.³⁰² (It was a common practice then to relieve the symptoms of teething by lancing the swollen gums.) Because Mother Clay did not like the name Susanna Claiborne, chosen for the next child, born July 3, 1858, she was named Susanna Withers Clay.³⁰³ John Withers Clay II was born August 20, 1860.

If the American Civil War changed the plans of the younger members of the Lewis family, it affected the Clay family immeasurably more. Twice the Yankees invaded Huntsville and Withers was forced to flee both times. Mary was left with the responsibility of his elderly parents, her mother, the six Lewis sisters still at home, and her growing family—with no husband, no servants, and no money.

The senior Clay was becoming hard of hearing, feeble, and apparently senile. His wife coped in the only manner she could. Susanna spoke of her beliefs in a letter to her son, "We are taught in a school of affliction. It is God's school."³⁰⁴ Susanna begged her children to pray and trust God even though the desolation was monstrous. In the same vein she wrote, "Greatly have we sinned—Greatly are we punished!"³⁰⁵ In that same letter her mother-in-law commented, Mary gets on "tolerably." Mary had just made shoes with cloth tops and old soles for the children.³⁰⁶

Besides managing the household, Mary took in boarders who of-

ten brought slender provisions with them. The music lessons she gave, sometimes as many as ten classes a day, provided some small income. She continued to educate her own children at home. Mary could not afford to send Clement to Mr. Banister for Greek and Latin studies; neither would she go into debt to do so. If Willie were not too busy gathering wood, hers and Ma Lewis', he might be able to attend Miss Bower's school. Clement wanted to go to work and purchase his and Willie's clothes. Mary protested, trying desperately to keep the boys in the schoolroom.

The Withers Clay house was full of Yankee boarders, as was the older Clay's. The mingling of enemies did not consist solely of harsh feelings in the community and at the home place. Yankee Billy, when his tour of duty was over, kissed the Clay baby good-bye at the doorstep. One of the soldiers shared a Christmas goose with the family. At least some food supplies, sugar and flour, came into the house with the soldiers who boarded. The young Clay boys were sometimes, as a treat, allowed to eat at the Yankee Officers' mess and they bragged about roast chicken, pound cake and real wine. The boys had learned where to eat; the mess for the regular soldiers was usually hard tack and coffee. Mary was able to offer her visiting sisters a meal of egg bread, eggs, crackers, pork and beans, and coffee.³⁰⁷ Perhaps it was not tactful of Withers to casually mention a supper of "bacon, corned beef, chicken, vegetables of the season, buttermilk and occasionally Catawba or peach brandy" while he stayed in Macon, Georgia.³⁰⁸

Mary may have had a sense of loss for her schoolgirl years abroad when she wrote her husband about their old friends, "Colhoun had given several grand entertainments and had fed all the bon ton in Paris. At their last ball, Ada appeared in a little theatrical performance, a scene from Esther by Racine. Their fete chametre at Neuilly was delightful. The young people dressed a la paysanne and enjoyed themselves amazingly."³⁰⁹

During these War years the other Clay daughters-in-law were less distracted than Mary. Virginia and Lestia had few duties pressed on them by family or friends. Most of the years they lived in homes of other fam-

ily members, away from oppressive enemy occupation or bloody battle scenes. Lestia, always indecisive and ineffective, was dependent on those around her, particularly Virginia Clay. As hostilities were beginning, she wrote in despair, "I know not where I go. I say nothing, do nothing towards changes for fear of the worse."³¹⁰

Virginia Clay, who lived from her earliest years on the hospitality of others, was most effective at making herself pleasant to those around her. Lord Napier is supposed to have said she was the most charming woman in America.³¹¹ If she wasn't the most charming, she thought and acted as if she were. For this self-absorbed woman, hers was a life style that succeeded well. During the Civil War, Virginia stayed as much as she could with her husband, Clement, Jr., moving with the moment. She acknowledged that they "packed and skeedaddled in double quick" time to leave Petersburg.³¹² Money was never important to Virginia; she spent it in the best and the worst of times. As late in the War as 1864, she paid \$75 for a hoop skirt. During her husband's furtive trip into Canada, she asked him to bring her, among other things, an ivory tusk comb, all the rage.³¹³ Although she expressed concern about the wounded soldiers, she at no time volunteered to tend them. She acknowledged her one and only contribution to the war effort was a trip to the hospital to take berries and butter for the patients.³¹⁴ Perhaps her biggest contribution, besides the vast network of letter writing, was her gaiety and utter cheerfulness.

In the meanwhile in Huntsville, Virginia Clementine Clay, the ninth child of Mary and Withers Clay, was born February 17, 1862. Mary's worries were compounded within a few months when 29 elderly civic leaders, including Governor Clay, were arrested, though later released under house arrest, in an attempt to halt civil disobedience.

The dangers of the War, with skirmishes or the threat of skirmishes always at hand, surrounded North Alabama. Soon the unfortunate polarity among many local citizens was made worse by the military rule of the invading army. None the less, family life continued day-by-day. Mary could only sit in the dressing room when she wanted to see a wedding

at the church or Clemmy's first communion.³¹⁵ The reason was obvious; adding to the hardships, and to the disapproval of all the in-laws, Mary and Withers were expecting again. Ellen Jordan Clay was born in June of 1863, in the midst of an invasion of Huntsville by Federal troops. During the confusion, the date of the baby's birth was not recorded in the family Bible. The child described by Withers to his brother, "Was at birth, large, fine looking, wide awake, black-eyed and black-haired and the mother well." The baby developed convulsions and "lived six days and was buried beside the three who had gone before." Withers left town that very night with his printing material and press, leaving his wife still in bed from childbirth. "He committed them with tears, but with humble trust and confidence to the care of our God."³¹⁶

The daily drudgery and anxiety at the Lewis and the two Clay households was enormous. All of the Negroes had left, often enticed by the soldiers to leave and find freedom. Young Clemmy was a blessing, but Mary worried that she depended too much on her son. However Clement, now 16, was eager to contribute to the southern war efforts so he joined his father in north Georgia. Trying to reach home in December of 1864, the Clay father and son arrived in Decatur, Alabama, two hours after the last train had left for Huntsville. Clement and another boy walked the last 24 miles home. In the meanwhile the Yankees had invaded town again and Withers Clay did not reach home until after the War.

Withers shared with his brother part of a letter from Mary, "1 1/2 yrs. have elapsed since I last saw you, & I, still, toil wearily on ... duty & necessity are stern, unflinching drivers, & I hurry over the rocky, flinty road, & stay not to inquire, if I am worn out. I must work while it is yet day—while I can get employment, & thank God gratefully for it."³¹⁷ He wrote to her, "You do not know how deeply I sympathise with you all in your toils, trials and troubles—how my heart is drawn out in love and admiration towards you, in contemplation of your uncomplaining, heroic endurance, your cheerful labors, your humble, abiding trust in our God ..."³¹⁸

After the Civil War much of Northern Alabama was in ruins and Athens

and Decatur were in shambles. Citizens who had survived the War were often robbed of what remaining goods they possessed. Hard feelings would last for many years among neighbors who had sympathized with or aided and abetted the enemy, or who were thought to have done so. Reconstruction began.

In Huntsville Mary Clay, or Ma Lewis for that matter, could not expect help from anyone. All their neighbors were in the same position or worse. The other Clays were of no help. The qualities that allowed the Clay men to succeed—fierce pride, leadership, tenacity, and spirit of independence—were apparently exhausted. Senator Clay was in federal prison at Fortress Monroe for a year at the end of the war; all of his wife's energy was spent getting him released. Hugh Lawson's affairs and ego were such that he was unable to face the ruin at home. He and Celeste stayed with her family in Georgia for the next few years. Withers and Mary set to reconstructing their lives with what was at hand — precious little.

The effects of the War and age were taking their toll. The elder Mrs. Clay died, January 1, 1866. Mary and Withers, with their children, moved into Governor Clay's home while he needed constant care and attention. He lasted not much longer and died in September of the same year. Several of the Clay children and Withers suffered from scurvy during that harsh winter.

Senator Clay wrote his wife, Virginia, not to buy useless things for Withers' family. She had sent flannel, a godsend. He wrote, "They are in a truly pitiable condition, and bro. W. very unhappy. He confessed to me that he feared he could not feed & clothe his family & supply them necessary fuel thro' this winter . . . They seemed to be doomed to hard trials & bitter tribulation."³¹⁹ Furthermore another baby was on the way. Later the Senator wrote that he and Virginia should thank God for not having children.³²⁰ The last baby of the family, Elodie Clay, was born March 13, 1867, in a time of what must have seemed utter desolation and ruin. Just a few months after the baby's birth the Clay family moved in with Ma Lewis and her girls.

The three sons of Governor Clay appeared to have spent all their energies during the war, came home to ruin, and were unable to gather

enough strength to effectively regain their positions in the community. When he was allowed to return, Clement, Jr., tried to practice law and manage the remains of the plantation, but he was never out of debt. His wife, Virginia, was unhappy and left the former Senator at the Wildwood plantation by himself much of the time while she stayed in Huntsville or visited friends elsewhere. Lawson and Celeste returned to Huntsville much later. He practiced law sporadically and she took in boarders. Withers, with his large family to support, was at loose ends. Even his chess partner, his father, was no longer available.

Nevertheless Withers Clay slowly began to reestablish the family business. In the past the newspaper, *The Huntsville Democrat*, had been the lifeblood of the family. But Withers knew that he would need more than the goodwill of the community to start the presses again. In a letter to a prospective investor, a Mr. Hathaway, Withers mentioned that it would take at least \$1500 to get everything in running order.³²¹ Clay Family papers do not mention Mr. Hathaway again. Perhaps he did not feel it was a sound investment. Somehow the Clays found both money and energy and began to publish the newspaper again.

The anticipated better days did not come immediately. Sister Ellen's husband, Jordan, offered young Clement Clay a position with the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad. For the princely sum of \$60 a month Clemmy went to work as a railroad car steward. Soon he was offered a better position in Mobile and Aunt Ellen bought him a new set of clothes for his job. He became a steward on the steamboat *St. Elmo* in Mobile Bay.

In a terse telegram sent to Huntsville, Jordan announced there had been a boiler explosion on board the *St. Elmo*. Only one man was lost; Clement Clay had been blown overboard. The newspaper account said, "He was an excellent young man."³²² Gabriel Jordan wrote, "It is so strange and hard that he the noblest and best of all on board should have alone perished." Jordan was able to return the boy's pocket watch that was blown from the body and found on a lower deck of the boat.³²³

Mary went to Mobile to reclaim the body and wrote home, "Our dear Clemmy was so full of life. His healthful cheerfulness and sweet propriety of thought, word and manner were visible in all he said and

did. He was so affectionate, so proud of his parents, his dear brothers and sisters...making himself an acceptable guest to the old and a genial friend to the young.” She was immensely relieved when, after three days, a fisherman found the body. There would now be “a grave to visit, to weep over and to deck in flowers in memory of our child who so delighted in all things good and lovely.”³²⁴ Clemmy, her first son and her special friend, who had shared the privations and hardships of the War with his mother while his father was away, was a few days short of his twenty-first birthday. After she returned to Huntsville, Mary wrote to her sister that she had remained away from church because she had no mourning dress or bonnet to wear. She was ill and baby Elodie had to be weaned.³²⁵

Reestablishing the newspaper was an on-going, tedious business, particularly with little or no cash. Mary continued to do what she had done before and what she did best to help. She gave lessons—and more lessons. The older girls were able to help with the classes also. As others in the community found some currency to spend, the family continued all sorts of home enterprises that would bring in a little extra money. In this respect the newspaper helped. There were at least free advertisements carried weekly—Mrs. Lewis at her home offered “the usual English branches and also the French Language, vocal music and instrumental music on the piano and guitar, at prices to suit the times.” Miss Mary also sold home-crafted items and hand-painted cards for luncheons and hand-painted colored parlour lamp shades; William offered rental of post office boxes; Virginia’s type writing service was guaranteed neatly and promptly; and Elodie’s dance lessons were promoted.

I Hope to have Good Sense—Business as Usual

Ultimately Withers Clay did tend to the newspaper. He had set high standards for the Huntsville *Democrat* before the war. A strong principled man, Withers chose the motto for the paper, “The people must be heard, and their rights vindicated.” At the start of hostilities, he renamed the paper *The Confederate* and he tried to continue to publish. Because of his strong opinions voiced around town, both verbally and in print, With-

ers was forced by the Federals to cross the river and head south into the heart of Dixie. After the War, restarting the paper was a slow, agonizing process. Collecting actual cash from the sales and the advertisements was laggardly. Mary and the children continued to toil also. In 1885 Withers Clay was paralyzed from a cerebral hemorrhage and the family added to their tasks the complete management of the newspaper and his care.

The Clay daughters had worn many hats, doing all the tasks that were necessary to keep the household running. Miss Mary tended the home, cared for her father and helped with the classes. At first Jennie and Sue also taught some of the classes. But with their father an invalid, these two now rolled up their sleeves and assumed the responsibility of the newspaper. After the father's stroke the family energy, assets, and status in the community remained in the newspaper. They could boast that only two issues of the paper were not printed when Withers was first stricken in November of 1885. After that no single issue was missed while the Clay sisters published the paper.

Undated newspaper clippings in their scrapbook suggest that Virginia and her sister were more than busy. The girls acknowledged the many tasks that were required to gather material, prepare articles, write editorials, and set the type before they could print. Then they still had to split and carry the kindling uptown, make the office fire, set the fire, clean the office, carry the water from the public hydrant on the square and tactfully ask the gentlemen in the office not to spit on the floor. Virginia was proud that it was she and not her sister Susie who was the printer's devil and everyone should watch out for her!

The sisters were pioneer women editors by necessity, but this also entitled them to a certain position in the community. In their day a single woman did not have the equal standing as a married women. The Huntsville newspaper enabled the girls to speak out with confidence, in print, in a manner that other women could not. The citizens of Huntsville would be addressed on some topics, whether they wanted to hear about it or not. Often through the newspaper, they were the voice of the community. The sisters became a moral conscience, able to comment and write about what was on other people's minds.

“We have heard nothing in regard to the proper officers of the law arresting cock-fighters and bringing them to justice. Do they lack moral courage to enforce the laws of our State, or are they guilty themselves.” “Huntsville needs a public library. Let someone start the ball rolling.” What was wrong with the city fathers that they thought to abolish music from the city schools? It was there that the children were taught to sing the songs of their country.³²⁶

Little snippets or reminders were inserted in the city news in case the city fathers had neglected or forgotten their duties. “We have heard nothing recently about a bridge being built across the creek on Clinton Street.” “Citizens when you note new arrivals at our hotels, call on them” to make them feel welcome. “The condition of the cemetery is a disgrace, not a path descent for a lady to walk on, it is so filled with weeds.”³²⁷

Sue and Jennie continued to widen their views with the newspaper during the years to come. Articles about world and national and state politics were carried on the first pages. The inside pages contained local news, advertisements, and additional articles about things that caught their fancy—Esperanto, new recipes, and sometimes their own poetry. As well as their verses, a lasting contribution to Huntsville history included a series “Old Mahogany Table Tales.”

These stories were written as if the Lewis and Clay families were sitting around the table chatting, and the table was the listening and recording. Many other Huntsville families’ anecdotes were saved for today’s readers. The competition newspapers may have sold more issues and been more up to date, but during this time most everything of any importance in town was noted in the *Democrat*. On the inside pages, vital statistics of local interest were noted under the heading of “In the Garden of Life.” Buds announced births, Orange Blossoms weddings, and Cypress broadcast the deaths in the community. These pages often added news about their own family visitors, feeling the readers would want to know, too. This was followed by all the local social items worth reporting. The girls, of course, were the arbitrators of what was worthwhile.

The Clay sisters advanced from the convictions of their childhood to become more progressive. Perhaps they never totally became women

of the new south, but they grew with the times. For instance they had gained confidence to admire, in print, the progressive local authoress Norah Davis, whose books offended many old-time Huntsvillians. Originally the Clays were adamantly against women having the right to vote. However they soon followed the lead of Ellelee Humes and Virginia Clay-Clopton, a very persuasive pair. (Senator Clay died in 1882, and five years later his widow, Virginia, married Judge David Clopton. After his death and her remarriage, she hyphenated the two names.) In addition to her many social activities she also became a leader of the Suffrage Association of Alabama. Virginia may have been only a well-recognized figurehead, but her influence was extraordinary for several generations of southern women. Through the leverage of the newspaper the Clay sisters were able to add their voices to an even greater number of readers to support the right of women to vote.

With more confidence and assurance in their abilities the Clay sisters, as editors, affiliated themselves with the Alabama Press Association and the National Editorial Association. Miss Virginia was recording secretary for both the state and national group at one time or another. The *Democrat* modestly quoted from the *Montgomery Journal* that she was “one of the most charming and deserving women in the south, Miss Clay is a jewel of a woman, intelligent, self-reliant, yet womanly withal.” Other out-of-town comments from the *Detroit Free Press* and the *New York Times* about their work were quoted and printed in the Huntsville paper. Virginia and Susie traveled to newspaper conferences in Asbury Park, St. Paul, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco.

The Old Home Place

Having survived the War and Reconstruction, Mary Lewis Clay’s family, along with many others, regained their position of prominence in the community. One newspaper clipping from their scrapbook mentions the girls were “born aristocrats, thoroughbreds, their home life is beautiful and their hospitality is that easy graceful unassuming hospitality which only comes with the highest breeding.”³²⁸

Music had always played an important role in the lives of the Lewis and Clay families. All the girls were quite talented musically. Lessons for dance and music were given in the addition to the house built by Pa Lewis in 1844. These rooms were also a convenient meeting place for young people of the community. One local musician of national fame, Leo Wheat, visited twice. During one afternoon gathering when he played "Dixie," another special guest from nearby Tusculumbia kept time with her feet. Mary Clay next played a waltz and shared the message of the beat with the visitor's hands at the keyboard. This guest then sat on the floor to feel the five dance positions, and after a few practice turns, Helen Keller learned to waltz at the Clay home.³²⁹

The classes continued in the home place for many years, conducted by Mary Clay and her daughters. Their school was rather progressive compared to educational standards of the time. Art and music often enhanced their programs and there were celebrations in honor of special birthdays. For instance the poet Longfellow's and the patriot Washington's birthdays were celebrated with stories, maps and pictures drawn by the children, followed by recitations, and of course singing.

Visiting among family and friends was always a favorite entertainment. The Clay house was a gathering place for numerous activities. There were cycling and trolley parties, excursions to the river, and steamboat trips to Guntersville. The Clay's held a watermelon feast in the summer of 1898. Each young lady sent a watermelon and when all were assembled in the yard the melons were cut and enjoyed by 40 couples. A storm forced everyone inside where the gathering became a musical afternoon of piano, guitar, mandolin playing, and singing with much chatter in between songs. In 1900, a special program was held for Saint Patrick's Day. Easter rabbits left colorful eggs all over the house and in the yard as a fund-raiser for the Church of the Nativity. A "Christmas Tree" was given at the home of William Clay on Christmas afternoon of 1891 "the children of Howe and Spragins Streets, 30-40 children attended... Each child was given a toy, horn, candy, and fruit that made the day memorable to them."³³⁰

Mary and the girls lovingly nursed John Withers Clay at home for twelve years after his paralyzing stroke. In spite of poor health, he remained the head of the household, well regarded for his interest in civic affairs and for his pleasant smile. The family continued to work around his disability. Withers, always the most religious of the three Clay brothers, often used phrases like prayerful and submissive, passive and devout. One imagines his waiting patiently for death, which came on Palm Sunday, March 29, 1896.

Ma Lewis continued to live at the family home although she enjoyed visiting often with Ellen in Texas. She shared her entire life with her family. During years when there was little else to offer, she shared memories of the sweetest kind. One of the Clay girls wrote of their two different grandparents. At a visit to the Governor Clay household knitting and sewing were encouraged; hymns were sung and good stories were read. At the Lewis home the eight girls and brother played practical jokes, made kites, learned to dance, and told fairy stories. "When the grandchildren spent the day at the Clays, in beautiful little dresses and fresh suits, they were gentlemen and ladies. At Grandma Lewis' they tore around like Comanches from attic to cellar, ran up and down the brick wall and climbed every tree."³³¹

In later years when there was leisure time for enjoying the study of genealogy, Ma Lewis shared recollections with one of her great-grandchildren in a letter. Although there had been hard feelings concerning the Connecticut relations, she wrote with pride of her family there. Grandfather Betts had been a participant in the Boston Tea Party, she said. All the Lewis men had fought in the Revolutionary War at the battle of King's Mountain, and the Lewis women had helped hold back the attacking Indians. She was proud to note that a Lewis relation, Col. Fielding Lewis, had married as his second wife, Betty, sister of George Washington. Furthermore according to Ma, their daughter Mary Lewis married a son of Caroline Bonaparte. (Napoleon's youngest sister had married Prince Murat, thereby adding royalty to the Lewis family tree.) As a young woman, Ma Lewis met them in New York on her wedding trip. Proudly Ma wrote, "You are connected with the brave and good,

great and noble.”³³² None of these more renowned people had qualities any more valuable than the sum of Ma Lewis’ life.

At the age of ninety Ma was still quite active. She always instigated the musical evenings and produced the plays at Christmas. She sewed for the Alabama Press Association and United Charities until the time of her death. Mary Betts Lewis outlived almost all of her children, her husband, and her sons-in-law. She died May 30, 1897, aged 91. Always prepared, she had stitched the clothes and sheets for her burial. Her granddaughters said of her, “Grandma Clay was loved and held in respect as the children’s queen, while Grandma Lewis was their chosen and adored one.”³³³

And what became of our Mary? Mary Fenwick Lewis Clay died February 16, 1898, of heart failure. The newspaper noted she died in her sleep, “after her day’s work was done . . . How sweet thus to lay down the cares and anxieties of this earthly life and awake in the calm peaceful home of Paradise.”³³⁴ Knowing Mary, she certainly would not have left any chores of the day undone. She had known more than her share of joys and sorrows. Mary in her lifetime had witnessed the removal of the Indians from Alabama, school days in Paris, marriage and an extensive family, the American Civil War, Reconstruction, better days, and almost the dawn of the new century. Certainly she deserved a rest.

From the scrapbook a clipping written by her children expressed their feelings. Mary had showed “submission and cheerfulness, faith and freedom from guile; [she was a] tower of strength in adversity, [a] congenial companion. Her character was a beautiful commingling of cheerfulness and faith; a cheerfulness that thoroughly enjoyed all the blessings scattered along her pathway . . . From her emanated all the sunshine of her home. Her life had its full proportion of anxiety, care and toil, but under it all she schooled herself and taught her children to always look at the silver lining of the cloud. She herself had never failed to see it and it was this that made her life beautiful to the human eye and acceptable to God.”³³⁵

Her very few photographs show an older and tired Mary. There are no known pictures of the youthful Mary. Her portrait was painted in

1847 by Frye, at the age of 22, and described in the scrapbook. “She is wearing a corn-colored Parisian silk gown decollete, with full skirt and tight waist and a long light blue velvet opera cloak that is bordered with ermine; it is loosely tied across the chest with blue silk cord. On her arm is a gold bracelet set with blue lava medallions, her black hair is drawn over her ears, and a white rose is on the right side; her eyes are blue and complexion fair.”³³⁶ It is a loss not to have a youthful image, but in time, her actions spoke louder than any painted image or photograph could have spoken. Mary’s husband, John Withers Clay, described his bride-to-be in such glowing terms before their marriage. “Her expression was soft, gentle and pure.” He said she had “discrete manners” and “artless simplicity.” The words Withers used to describe his bride-to-be were fine qualities and reflect all that a southern man might expect of a woman. According to the standards of the time, Withers assumed his wife to be “modest and virtuous, chaste in speech and manners . . . she lived only to make home happy.” He could expect her to be a “true-hearted daughter of the sunny South, simple and unaffected. . . .”³³⁷

At the very least Mary appeared to have all these qualities and more. Her children recalled her cheerfulness with great joy. But her personality was more complex. Initially Withers saw her as fragile and needing to be taken care of. In one of her letters, Mary wrote, “I do try right hard.” And try she did. As their lives together progressed, Mary ended up taking care of his elderly parents, assisted her mother and sisters, and gave birth to eleven babies. She managed the home place, supported the family with her teaching, helped keep the newspaper running, and tended Withers in the years after his stroke. Clearly Mary Lewis Clay was no swooning southern belle when faced with adversity. Somehow the combination of heritage, up-bringing, French boarding school, and the formidable years of war and reconstruction enabled Mary Lewis Clay to go beyond her place in the “picture” of ideal southern womanhood as it was so popularly described. In the long run, her womanhood was truer and more lasting.

The Smaller Family Circle Into The Next Century

Of the Clay daughters, Mary Lewis Clay, the oldest girl, maintained the Old Home Place with her sisters as the years went by. A newspaper fragment from the scrapbook noted that she was timid, but she had taught school, in the summer taught dancing, gave entertainments, cared for her father after his stroke and assisted him in making a partial recovery. Although he could walk and understand what was said to him, Withers, after his stroke, could neither speak nor write. Miss Mary also had cared for her grandma Betts and lightened the burdens of her mother. Her hands had certainly been full. This Mary Clay died on June 9, 1901, aged 47, probably as a result of a life of overwork and self-sacrifice. Her obituary was written by her brother William, "She spent her life, and did her life's work among the people she loved so well . . . All of us tacitly made her the head of the family and looked up to her for wise advice . . . Her goodness was felt by all her friends and neighbors . . . The blessed spirit of our precious Sister Mary winged its flight to her Heavenly home . . ." ³³⁸

Extended education as it was known by the Lewis children, was out of the question for any of the Clays. The lawyer in the family, William Lewis Clay was educated in Huntsville and studied for the bar under a local attorney. In 1878 he married Louisa Johnson, the daughter of Dr. James T. Johnson, and they had no children. His wife was mentioned in the social column of the newspaper often as a gracious hostess. As Secretary of the Alabama Senate he was on the road to Montgomery and often away from home. Willie Clay was sometimes called upon to escort his sisters to newspaper meetings, and for pleasure trips, for instance, to the Chicago World's Fair to see the "wonders, beauties and horrors." ³³⁹

As the influence of the older generation declined, Willie decided to live separately from his wife. The 1900 Census listed him with his sisters at the Old Home Place. The Clay household, posed together in an undated photograph, suggests the family alignments as they had developed. Louisa was not included in this family gathering. With Willie's travels and close-knit family of adoring women, life for Louisa had not been easy. At the death of her father in 1899 perhaps her con-

straints were also removed. In 1900 Louisa Clay filed for divorce in the Chancery Court of Madison County. The suit, and he acknowledged the statements, contended he had left her bed and board for more than two years; in effect he had abandoned her. Furthermore she asked for alimony. Her mother, with whom she was living, gave witness.³⁴⁰

Louisa disappeared from the records. One assumes she died in the next few years because the 1910 Census enumerated, Willie, age 56, wife Susie B., age 34, and a son, William Lewis Clay, Jr., age one. In 1906 Willie married Susanna Clay Battle, daughter of William Augustine and Susanna Clay Withers Battle. These are all familiar surnames. Her parents were relatives, on both sides, of Governor Clay and his wife.³⁴¹ Susie Battle was often a visitor in Huntsville. She had stayed with Aunt Celeste Clay at "her suburban home, Sunset Ridge," where she spent the winter of 1900.³⁴² It was not uncommon for the personal column of the newspaper to note that she often visited in town with the Clays on Eustis Street. Susie Battle certainly was known to all the extended family as they watched her grow up.

William Lewis lived only five years after his second marriage; he died September 5, 1911. The post he held for twenty years, a political appointment as Secretary of State Senate, paid a salary only when the Legislature was in session.³⁴³ As a result his estate was minimal. The newspaper noted his career and that he was sympathetic, kindhearted and socially inclined.³⁴⁴ After his death, his widow, Susie, kept a boarding house at the corner of Gates and Madison Streets for a few years with her small son. In 1917 Susie Clay married Lewis Colfax Gibbs, a salesman originally from Massachusetts.³⁴⁵ At some later date the Gibbs family, with William Lewis Clay, Jr., left Huntsville apparently for Canada.³⁴⁶ Nothing else is known about this branch of the family.

Of the remaining three sisters, Virginia Clementine Clay died February 11, 1911, at the age of forty-nine. Once her illness was known, friends brought her flowers instead of waiting to put them on her grave. According to the newspaper, she had been a brilliant writer, was well known in the newspaper world, wrote poetry and history, and had unusual executive ability. Jennie's "vitality, energy, indomitable will to

do, devotion to family and friends, always faced the sunshine and left the shadows behind.” After overcoming poor health the first 22 years of her life, “her mental and physical labors were those of a man.” Her obituary notice was also carried in the black newspaper, the *Huntsville Journal*. The notice mentioned, “She had requested Rev. William Jones (a descendent of a former slave of the family) to read the Scriptures over her body at the house and the Normal choir sing ‘There is a Rest for the Weary’ at the grave where her casket was covered.” Her sister, Elodie, wrote the hymn.³⁴⁷

Susanna Clay continued the newspaper alone until 1919 when it was sold. She was 61 years old at that time. With the death of Virginia, Susanna and Elodie were the only two remaining Clay sisters in the home place. By now Susanna was hard pressed to keep up with Elodie. (The census taker of 1920 recorded her name as Ella D., and indeed she was spoken of with that typical southern inflection by those who knew her.) Previously, Elodie had taught in the home, clerked in the post office, and helped out somewhat with the newspaper. But Susanna, now in advancing years, found it a more and more difficult task to manage Elodie.

This last child of Withers and Mary Clay had not suffered the hardships of the War years. Neither was she as aware, perhaps, of the desperate times afterwards. Although Elodie contributed to the family efforts, she was protected from the terrible days, perhaps shielded and pampered. With joy of better days to be, Mary Lewis Clay’s undated poem to her daughter was saved in the family scrapbook:

To Elodie

When thy bounding step I hear,
 and thy soft voice, low and clear
 When thy glancing eyes I meet
 In their sudden laughter sweet
 Thou—I dream, wert surely born
 For a path by care unworn
 Thou must be a sheltered flower
 With but sunshine for thy dower
 Ah! fair child, not e’en for thee

May this lot of brightness be
 Yet, if grief must add a tone
 To thy accents now unknown,
 If within that cloudless eye
 Sadder thought must one-day lie,
 Still, I trust the signs which tell
 On thy life a light shall dwell
 Light—thy gentle spirit's own,
 From within around thee thrown.

Ma

This youngest of all the Clay children, as the years passed, became more unsettled. She was on the streets all the time. Often Elodie appeared at some neighbor's back door just in time for supper. The family doctor stated that her illness had been gradual, but over the last five years or so she could not be managed well at home. In 1922, Elodie Clay, the youngest of Mary's daughters, was committed to the Hospital for the Insane in Tuscaloosa. Her remaining sister, Susanna Withers Clay, signed the admittance papers.³⁴⁸ Susanna continued to live at the Old Home Place until her death, January 18, 1928. The Lewis/Clay house and the addition, shabby and reflecting poverty, had long been in need of repair. For a single, elderly woman, the old house and its outbuildings most likely seemed so quiet, only echoing with remembered sounds of the children's' plays, the soft strum of the guitar, and the music of the piano from the years. The protected flower of her mother's early poem, Elodie Clay, lived until July 20, 1952 at Bryce Hospital. She was buried in the family plot at Maple Hill Cemetery. There is no tombstone marking the site for Elodie among the other members of the Clay family.

John Withers Clay, Jr., was the only child of Mary's who had known family members to continue the Clay ancestry. Undereducated, as was his brother, this younger Withers Clay did not find work in Huntsville. In the 1900 census he was listed as a salesman in Birmingham, and he had married a Birmingham girl, Caroline (Carrie) Aydelotte Saunders.³⁴⁹ Withers, Jr. died November 15, 1918; his wife lived until 1956.³⁵⁰ Of their six children, four survived to maturity. These grandchildren of

Mary Lewis Clay included Mary Saunders Clay, born in 1888, who attended the New York School of Art and returned to Birmingham to teach at Ensley High School. She was considered quite active at the time of her death at the age of 96. John Withers Clay, III, was born in 1892. He was a professional geologist and mining engineer who worked and traveled with his family in the Midwest. (This Withers III has the only known descendants of J. Withers and Mary Lewis Clay living today.) The second daughter, Emily, was born in July 1898, and lived in Atlanta and Florida. She died in 1980. The last child of Withers II and Carrie was Dr. Clement Comer Clay, for many years the head of Hospital Administration at Columbia University. He also died in 1980. It is through these last generous descendants that arrangements were made for the letters of Mary Lewis to come home to Huntsville to stay.³⁵¹

**Write All You See and Feel now and be able to
Return to the Memories when You Please**

Remembrance

Today, the letters are just about all that actually bring to mind the Lewis family members and their lives in Huntsville. The Old Home Place still stands invitingly on Eustis Avenue, occupied by another family. Only a very few relatives remain and these may not even know of their family's splendid heritage. The letters are such a delight to read, so full of the zest for learning and life.

The study of those mentioned in the letters has given so much information about the individuals and events. Sis Ellen's teen-aged growing pains, the French court, the earthquake in town, and Ma's gossip became all the more real placed in the context of their overall lives. Not the least to learn about were the roles played by the slaves, only one of whom ever had a known last name. Somewhere the descendants of Priam, Margaret and James, and Fred Calhoun should feel honored about their contributions.

The letters reflect families that with money and position were able to avail themselves of the best of the era. But when the money was gone, we know now, they still had to survive the worst of times. With vigor and hardiness the Calhouns, and particularly Mary Betts Lewis and Mary Lewis Clay became survivors, not casualties to their life circumstances. They endured, and surely one feels their life's sum would be more than just resignation. One feels the joy and strength in life they shared with each other and us.

Did the Calhouns and the families of Mary Lewis Clay meet again? Certainly during the several Calhoun visits to Huntsville, Mary visited with her dear old friends. After the initial greeting, catching up on old acquaintances and memories, what would they have had to talk about? In later years when Ada came to town and stayed at the Humes home or the McGee Hotel, they probably visited. The newspaper mentioned Ada as an elegant guest to town, but she was not necessarily someone they identified with. By now the families had so little in common, and after all genteel poverty never really looks good, to either party, standing along side excessive wealth.

The collection of Lewis/Clay letters at the Huntsville Library does not present any hidden secrets, earthshaking events, or even new lessons of history. It is just as well. Within this quality of being unexceptional we can believe what the letters tell us. They reported what really was happening in their lives at that time, as they perceived it. The pages reflect the images of the writers, who of course had no idea of what was ahead in their lives. They present a view of a place and the people in that small time frame. But we, today, are enlightened for having read the letters. Those letters are equal to any facts or statistics because they show how the Lewis family, neighbors, and servants thought, felt and behaved in their daily lives. The reader easily recognizes all these attributes in persons known to them today. In this respect the families are timeless.

In the letters Ma said, “Fill yourself up.”

Mary replied, with a slight southernism, about her work at school, “I do try right hard.” And try they all did. The letters were a prelude to what we know about life for the Calhouns, Ma, and Mary and the family experiences yet to come.

Ma asked her husband, John Lewis, to tell Mary, “She has no idea how her mind will expand and tell her I wish her heart to be equally elastic.” Also, “Write everything down, make a list, follow through, look at list again and improve and grow.” The reader today can appreciate Ma when she said, “memory is too treacherous to depend on. ...Regard all you see and feel now and be able to return to them when you please, perhaps in the vale of years.” The reader today, 150 years later, is grateful.



Fig. 1 Huntsville, Alabama, 1871

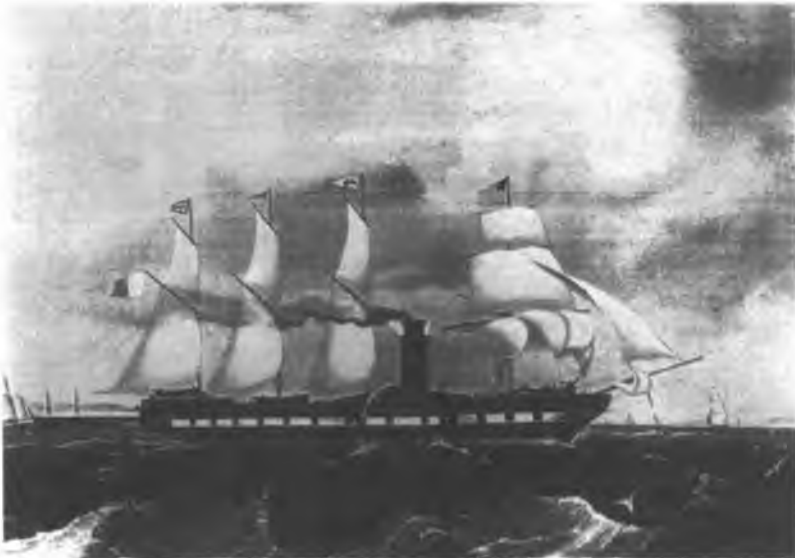


Fig. 1 *Great Western*

Peabody and Essex Museum



Fig. 3 The Old Home Place, 1993



Fig. 4 The Old Home Place, and addition, 1939



Fig. 5 Mary Betts Lewis, 1864

Huntsville Public Library



Fig. 6 Mary Fenwick Lewis Clay, c1870

Huntsville Public Library



Fig. 9 Maysville Pike

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 10 Calhoun House

Huntsville Public Library



Fig. 11 Meredith Calhoun, c1855

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 12 Judge William Smith

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 13 Margaret Duff Smith

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 14 Ada Calhoun by Winterhalter, 1867

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 15 Kildare, 1890

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 16 Saturday on the Square

Hemphill Collection



Fig. 17 Uncle Harmon Vann, age 106

Hemphill Collection

Notes

I. The Lewis Family Before the Letters

- ¹ Lucius Versus Bierce, ed. George W. Knepper, *Travels in the Southland, 1822-1823*, (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1966, 96; Anne Royall, ed. Lucille Griffith, *Letters from Alabama, 1817-1822*, (University: University of Alabama Press, 1969), 236, 247-248; Charles Lanman, *British American Provinces*, vol. 2, (Philadelphia: John W. Moore, 1856), 150-164.
- ² William T. Lewis, *Genealogy of the Lewis Family* (Louisville: 1893), 99-117, (hereafter cited as GLF.)
- ³ GLF 103; Kathleen Paul Jones and Pauline Jones Gandrud. Compilers. *Alabama Records* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press) 201:71; AR 110:70; AR 201:29. (Hereafter cited as AR.)
- ⁴ Huntsville City Council Minutes, 68-69. Attendance was considered important, and a councilman who missed a meeting was fined one dollar.
- ⁵ G. E. Hubbard, *Families of Wilton*. Misc. papers in the collection of the Historical Society of Wilton, Connecticut.
- ⁶ Pleasant Daniel Gold, *History of Volusia County*, (Deland, Florida: Painter, 1927), 36; Wilbur Siebert, "The Early Sugar Industry in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol 25, #4 (April 1976): 314.
- ⁷ Spanish Land Grants in Florida, Unconfirmed Claims (Tallahassee, State Library Board, 1940-1941) 3:74.
- ⁸ Siebert, "Early Sugar", 314, 315
- ⁹ Mary Betts Lewis to great-granddaughter. October 10. 1893, Clement C. Clay Collection, Huntsville/Madison County Public Library, hereafter cited as Clay MSS-H.
- ¹⁰ Clay MSS-H. Much of the history of the family members has been gleaned from the miscellaneous pages of this collection.
- ¹¹ Margaret Matthews Cowart, *Old Land Records of Madison County, Alabama*. (Huntsville: The author, 1979), 105.
- ¹² Dorothy Scott Johnson, *Madison County, Alabama Deed Books A, B, C, D, & E: 1810-1819* (Huntsville: Johnson Historical Publications, 1976), 43, 62.
- ¹³ Huntsville *Times*, December 12, 1985, Bicentennial edition.
- ¹⁴ CFS-H.
- ¹⁵ Gold, *History of Volusia*, 36; Siebert, "Early Sugar," 314; *The Travels of William Bartram*, ed. Mark Van Doren (New York: Dover Publications, 1928), 165-180.
- ¹⁶ John H. and Mary B. Lewis to Mary F. Lewis, May 17, 1844.
- ¹⁷ Abstracts of Wills and Court Records, Madison County, R1, T2, E.
- ¹⁸ St. Johns County Circuit Court Records, St. Johns County, Florida, Box 215, f3,

located in St. Augustine Historical Society collections.

¹⁹ Ibid., Box 215, f3, f6.

²⁰ Madison County Chancery Court Case #252.

²¹ AR, 110:12-14; Madison County Chancery Court Case #252.

²² *U.S. Telegraph*, December 2, 1831.

²³ St. Johns County Records, Box 214, f6.

²⁴ Mary B. Lewis to great granddaughter, October 10, 1893, Clay MSS-H. Mary Betts, according to her letter, had already met Lafayette in Connecticut.

²⁵ William J. Stubno, Jr., "The White-Turner-Sanford Home," *Historic Huntsville Quarterly* (Winter 1987): 11.

²⁶ *Huntsville Times, Bicentennial Issue*, 109.

²⁷ Susanna W. Clay to Clement C. Clay, January 24, 1833, in Clement C. Clay Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, (hereafter cited as Clay MSS-D).

²⁸ The vital statistics regarding the children are from a variety of records: GLF 102-104: Madison County 1840 and 1850 Censuses, International Genealogical Index of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, Clay Family Scrapbook (CFS-H), Jones and Gandrud's wonderful compilations, actual tombstone dates of Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, Church of Nativity Sexton Records, Maple Hill Cemetery Phase One, and pages from the Clay Family Bible at the Huntsville Public Library Archives. This information is only as reliable as the person who did the recording, and not all birth and death dates were in agreement.

²⁹ CFS-H.

³⁰ Mary Betts Lewis to Mary Fenwick Lewis, April 26, 1835, Clay MSS-H.

II. The Calhoun Family Before the Letters

³¹ Thomas Jones Taylor, *A History of Madison County and Incidentally North Alabama 1732-1840*, eds. W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole (University, Alabama: Confederate Publishing Co., 1976), 112.

³² For the advanced student of genealogy to ponder, there was a very remote kinship between the Calhoun and Lewis families by marriage through John Taliaferro Lewis and Gen. John Baylis Earle.

³³ John Belton O'Neill, *Biographical Sketches of the Bench and Bar of South Carolina* (Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1975): 1:106.

³⁴ Caroline P. Smith, *Jacksonian Conservative: The Later Years of William Smith, 1826-1840*. diss. Auburn University, 1977. Auburn, Alabama. 61.

³⁵ William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 97-98.

³⁶ Yates Snowden, *History of South Carolina* (New York: Lewis, 1920), 271.

³⁷ N. Louise Bailey, Mary L. Morgan and Carolyn R. Taylor, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina Senate 1776-1985* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South

Carolina Press, 1986), 3;1517-1519.

- ³⁸ Quoted in Gerald T. Dunne, *Justice Joseph Story and the Rise of the Supreme Court* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970), 192-193.
- ³⁹ Cowart, Records, 105, 112, 116, 139.
- ⁴⁰ Marilyn Davis Hahn, *Old Cahaba Land Office Records and Military Warrants* (Mobile: Old South Printing, 1981), 10,23,44. The background of John Taylor's family was more political and distinguished even than Smith's. (This John Taylor is not to be confused with the other John Taylor of South Carolina who was at one time Governor and always referred to as John Taylor of Columbia.) According to Louise Vandiver, *Traditions and History of Anderson County* (Atlanta: Ruralistic Press, 1928), 159. Maj. Samuel Taylor had been granted 500 acres of military bounty land on the Seneca River and later served in the General Assemblies. His other children, besides John, were Major Samuel Taylor, Jr, General William, Colonel Joseph, Dilly, Elizabeth and Sarah Ellen. As told by Richard Wright Simpson, *History of Old Pendleton District* (Covington, Tennessee: Bradford Publishing, 1913), 23,37, 110,111. All of these children except Joseph and Sarah Ellen removed to South Alabama. Sarah Ellen is the daughter who married John Baylis Earle and adds a further connection to Smith and Calhoun stories.
- ⁴¹ Smith, *Conservative*, 62.
- ⁴² Simpson, *History*, 111.
- ⁴³ Maurice Moore. *Reminiscences of York* (Greenville, South Carolina: A Press Company, 1981), 60.
- ⁴⁴ AR 46:3.
- ⁴⁵ *Collections of the Genealogical Society of Philadelphia*, Philadelphia Wills, 1893 10: #5562.
- ⁴⁶ Cornelius W. Stafford, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1800* (Philadelphia: Woodward, 1800), 33.
- ⁴⁷ Quoted in Carolyn Smith, 60,159.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.
- ⁴⁹ Trinity (Natchez, Mississippi) Church Sexton Records; Colfax (Louisiana) Cemetery tombstones.
- ⁵⁰ *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 1722; William Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama* (Atlanta: Atlanta Plantation Press, 1872), 113-114.
- ⁵¹ Charles Warren, *The Supreme Court in United States History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1932), 2: 40.
- ⁵² Pat Jones in *Huntsville Times*, June 11, 1933.
- ⁵³ John Calhoun married Elizabeth Whitman and purchased property in the northeast section of Madison County. AR 141:31; AR 179:48; AR 203:29.
- ⁵⁴ Madison County, Probate Record Book #9: 268-270. In terms of the early 1990's, Mary Calhoun's inheritance would have been almost one and a half million dollars, the boys worth about three quarters of a million dollars each. (Thanks to Robert L. Nathan; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics).

⁵⁵ AR 15: 27.

⁵⁶ AR 15: 31.

⁵⁷ 1867 (Cong. No. 10146), Frederick Calhoun.

⁵⁸ AR 15: 45.

3. The Letters-1842

⁵⁹ Catharine Maria Sedgwick was the most widely read American female writer before Harriet Beecher Stowe. She wrote over 50 books and novels about travel, good manners, and common sense. Bobby Ellen Kimbel, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Detroit: A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book, 1988), 74:323+.

⁶⁰ "Coz" Betts was Martha Betts, daughter of Charles Betts, but no relation to the family. She married Eggleston Townes in 1845. Charlie McClung, perhaps Mary's first beau, was mentioned often in the letters with fondness. Charlie's father, Col. James W. McClung was a member of the Alabama Legislature. Miss Swift taught Mary's Presbyterian Sunday school class. Gandrud, *Notices*, 484.

⁶¹ Sarah Jane Allan, born in Huntsville in 1823, was the daughter of Rev. John and Nancy Hodge Allan. He was the minister of the Presbyterian Church from 1821 until his death. Family Files-Allan, Heritage Room, Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.

⁶² Heneritta Eason, Mary's Huntsville schoolmate, married a gentleman vocal in the temperance league and local politics. In later letters there are vivid descriptions of his opinions and of a confrontation with Clement C. Clay, Jr.

⁶³ President William Henry Harrison died 30 days after his inauguration and was buried in North Bend, Ohio, in 1841.

⁶⁴ Charles Dickens, traveling at the same time on the Ohio River, described in his book, *American Notes*, the uncomfortable accommodations of the cabin berths as "three long tiers of hanging bookshelves, designed apparently for volumes of the small octavo size." (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985), 134.

⁶⁵ The admonition of the slave preacher who married couples "until death or distance do you part" certainly applied in this case. Margaret, Mrs. Calhoun's personal slave, left behind her entire family. According to the inventory of Perishable Property belonging to the deceased Judge William Smith, Margaret, valued at \$800 with her three children, was about 30 years of age; her husband, James was 35 years old and valued at \$500. Quoted in Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 240; 1843 Madison County Probate Record Book 11:149.

⁶⁶ Pope's Hill in Huntsville, named for Leroy Pope, is situated in the heart of old Huntsville and overlooks the entire town.

⁶⁷ A canal boat was a type of steamboat that carried both freight and passengers. Cheap fare and smoother rides made the boat more popular than the stagecoach.

⁶⁸ Charles Dickens also had much to say about the Portage Railroad trip across Pennsyl-

vania as he saw it that very year. He admired the striking scenery and ingenuity of the engineering but he was appalled at the roughness of the construction and even more at the roughness of the citizens on the barges. The South Carolina Legislature deliberated banning his new book.

- ⁶⁹The reader must assume that this Mrs. Calhoun is the mother of Meredith Calhoun and others were members of his extended family. Miss Mary Calhoun was likely a cousin, niece, or even younger sister.
- ⁷⁰The southern use of aunt and uncle often referred to household servants with gentle family-like affection.
- ⁷¹"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," Proverbs 25:11.
- ⁷²Bailey Springs, in nearby Lauderdale County, was a popular summer retreat.
- ⁷³Delia Coleman was the sister of John J. Coleman who filed divorce proceedings against his wife Emeline R. Williams Coleman six years earlier. This was Madison County's first divorce proceeding, and young Delia had been called to testify. Madison County Circuit Court, 1836-38, H: 91. Matthew Steele was the eldest son of architect George Steele.
- ⁷⁴Apparently Mary was visiting with her Lewis relations in Nashville. John Lewis' oldest sister was Sarah Martin Lewis. Her first husband was James King, a merchant in Nashville. Their youngest child, Rachel Mary Elizabeth King, married Dr. Alexander McCall. The Kings had at least three children. Involved, also, was the family of Sarah and her second husband, Major Thomas Claiborne with nine children. GLF 101-103.
- ⁷⁵Fanny McCall, aged 15, second daughter of Dr. Alexander McCall, died March 20, 1842. Silas E. Lucas, Jr., *Obituaries from Early Tennessee Newspapers 1794-1851* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1978), 228.
- ⁷⁶Cousin Thomas Burwell Claiborne was promoted for gallantry in the war with Mexico, "where he repulsed the enemy by holding his pistol at the touch-hole of the cannon he had captured, as though he would fire on them, when the cannon was not loaded." GLF 102.
- ⁷⁷Anastasia Claiborne, 2nd daughter of Thomas Claiborne died July 14, 1842. Lucas, *Obituaries*, 70.
- ⁷⁸Blennerhassett allegedly conspired with Aaron Burr in treason. The mansion on the island estate in the Ohio River burned in 1811 and was in ruins. Currently being restored by the State of West Virginia, it is an outstanding tourist attraction.
- ⁷⁹This connection came from one of the daughters of John H. Lewis' uncle, James M. Lewis. Sarah Pines Lewis Hardin, a widow with three children, married Dr. William McNeil of Nashville. The McNeils had no children. GLF 111.
- ⁸⁰Cousin John Claiborne was the son of Sarah Lewis and her second husband, Major Thomas Claiborne. GLF 102.
- ⁸¹In 1826 Mr. and Mrs. Devendal opened the very prestigious Huntsville Female Academy in Huntsville. Edward Chambers Betts, *Early History of Huntsville*, Alabama (Montgomery: Brown, 1916), 79.
- ⁸²Dr. Jacob Rhett Motte of Charleston, South Carolina, was an army surgeon who traveled extensively in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida during the Creek and Seminole Wars.

He was stationed in Huntsville in 1840. Jacob R. Motte, *Journey into Wilderness*, ed., James F. Sunderman (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953), xiii, xvi.

- ⁸³ Mattie W. Pope, daughter of Benjamin S. Pope, married Peter N. Dox, October 12, 1854. Calvin Fackler, later a commission merchant, married Anna S. Kirk of Memphis in 1853. According to local legend, Miss America Yeatman received her name from Andrew Jackson, a frequent visitor to Huntsville. Her father Preston Yeatman was a merchant, member of the town council, and a charter member of the Presbyterian Church. Yeatman sold the Lewis family home on Eustis Street to the Lewis's in 1836. Pauline Jones Gandrud, *Marriage, Death and Legal Notices from Early Alabama Newspapers, 1819-1893* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1981), 547, 524; Patricia H. Ryan, *Cease Not to Think of Me* (Huntsville: Huntsville Planning Department, 1979), 170; Family Files-Yeatman, HPL.
- ⁸⁴ Uncle Knox and Mr. Calhoun's agent, Mr. Andrews, graciously escorted the family aboard. The agent was one of the five brothers of Andrews & Bros. who were important in New York City, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Huntsville. But the real news here is that the travelers all were safely aboard the great steamship after the arduous trip overland and were now ready to begin their grand adventure on the ocean. Mary and the Calhoun entourage were among the 70 passengers and crew of 50 aboard the 25th voyage of the paddle steamship, *Great Western*. The first trip out from England in 1838 included only seven hardy passengers, Captain James Hosken and his crew. Confidence grew and the number of passengers increased yearly. Denis Griffiths, *Brunel's "Great Western"* (Wellingborough, Great Britain: Patrick Stephens, 1985), 142-143.
- ⁸⁵ These early staterooms were less than eight feet square, snug quarters for these two misses, the luggage, and other necessities. Griffiths, *Brunel's*, 111.
- ⁸⁶ The toasts began for Queen Victoria who assumed the British throne in 1837. Her eldest daughter, Crown Princess Victoria, or Vicky, in 1857 married Frederick William, heir to the Prussian throne. Louis Philippe was the king or "roi" of France and remained so until the revolution of 1848. The President of the United States was John Tyler. All in all, it sounded like a merry evening.
- ⁸⁷ The monument to John Gay reads, "Life is a jest and all things show it, I thought so once but now I know it."
- ⁸⁸ Albert, the beloved Prince Consort to Victoria, was 23 on this day. However, he was born in Coburg, Germany, not in London as Mary reported.
- ⁸⁹ This tunnel under the Thames River was a tourist attraction for many years. Fanny Kemble, among others, visited the construction site in 1827. Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* ed. John A. Scott (New York: Knopf, 1961), xxiii.
- ⁹⁰ In 1811 Parliament passed a resolution setting aside 372 acres located in the Marylebone district of London to form Regents Park. Thirty-seven of these acres were allocated for a zoo. Mary was enjoying "The World's Largest Wild Beast Show", one of London's most popular attractions. Arthur Mee, *London: Heart of the Empire and Wonder of the World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937; reprint, 1946), 555-556; Sir Walter Besant, *London in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Ada and Charles Black, 1909; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 235.

- ⁹¹ These friends include Mrs. Priscilla Withers McDowell, sister of Mrs. C. C. Clay, Sr.; Eliza Maria Henderson Fearn, wife of Robert Fearn; Elizabeth M. Turner Fackler, wife of John J. Fackler; and Sallie Shelby Watkins, wife of Dr. Miles Watkins. Ryan, *Cease Not*, 170,175; Gandrud, *Notices*, 252.
- ⁹² England abolished slavery in 1834. Perhaps Margaret was treated politely because she was a visitor and well mannered.
- ⁹³ Riots and strikes were occurring in the manufacturing districts prior to Mary's arrival but it appears that this agitation was unrelated to the murderous attempts made on Queen Victoria's life. Two of these attacks occurred at or near the locations Mary identified (around Hyde Park and Constitution Hill). John Ashton, *Gossip in the First Decade of Victoria's Reign* (London: Hurst and Blackett, Ltd., 1903; reprint Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968). 136-139.
- ⁹⁴ Writing this letter after the end of a confusing journey in a foreign land, Mary recalled the villages along the Seine River in the wrong order. According to the map, Quillebeuf is the first village along the way, then Villiquier and la Mailleraye.
- ⁹⁵ Mlle. Bandin became a dear friend of Mary's during these Paris years. Recorded in the family newspaper, her story is difficult for any reader to believe. "Mademoiselle Marguerite Bandin was born on the French Island of St. Domingo. During a slave uprising her family was massacred. Her father put the baby in an empty cask in the ocean, and a passing ship from Bordeaux picked her up. The infant was given to Mme. Liot in Baltimore. Later in France she was made a pensioner of the French government." Mme. Trigant and her sister Mlle. Liot, gave Mlle. Bandin room and board. She acted as a chaperone for the girls and did light sewing and mending. Mary shared her homesickness with this sympathetic friend. (This could be the revolt of 1795. So far the story has not been verified but it has not been disproved either.) CFS-H, "Old Mahogany Tales," #14.
- ⁹⁶ The purpose of the trip to Paris for the Calhouns was to visit the Orthopedic Hospital at Passy and the renowned Dr. Jules Guerin. He already was named the director of the division of the children's hospital dealing with deformities and he also edited the "Gazette Medicale," Paris' oldest medical journal. F. Campbell Stewart, *The Hospitals and Surgeons of Paris* (New York: J. and H.G. Langley, 1843), 295-299.
- ⁹⁷ This favorite spot of Mary's is still a splendid site. In the mid-16th century Catherine de Medicis, Queen Regent for her sons, Frances II and Charles IX, decided that France needed a new royal residence. The residence became the Tuileries Palace and Gardens. Henry Haynie, *Paris: Past and Present* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1902), 142-6.
- ⁹⁸ Mr. Bode played the organ for the Presbyterian Church. Later letters depict him as having a strong accent and a stronger temper. Mrs. Bode died December 22, 1851, in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi. Family Files—Presbyterian Church, Heritage Room, HPL; Gandrud, *Notices*, 514.
- ⁹⁹ Robert Bibb moved to Jackson, Mississippi; his wife Ann died December 5, 1852, at age 52 at the Madison House in Montgomery. Gandrud, *Notices*, 523.
- ¹⁰⁰ Jane Hamilton Childs came to Huntsville in this period, taught, and managed her own private school. She was connected with the Huntsville Female College and after the Civil War she became principal of the Methodist College at Athens. She died May

22, 1882 at the age of 77. AR 165:59.

- ¹⁰¹ At this time Texas was an independent republic. In March of 1842 a Mexican force invaded San Antonio and retreated across the border. However in September a second attempt was made and the town was captured. The actual Mexican War began in 1846.
- ¹⁰² Mrs. Mosely Hopkins was the former Eliza Parmelia Bibb, the youngest child of Gov. Thomas Bibb. She and Arthur Mosely Hopkins had ten children. James Bradley's commission business suffered and never recovered from the Panic of 1837. James Jay Pleasants and Emily Julia Bibb Pleasants were the parents of Julia Pleasants a local authoress. Her poetry was much admired by Charles Lanman in his account of Huntsville. Ryan, *Cease Not*, 170-172; Charles Lanman, *Adventures in the Wilds of the United States and British American Provinces*, (Philadelphia, 1856), 170-172.
- ¹⁰³ Ma's use of the down-home character, Sam Slick, reflects how quickly jokes and stories spread. First written in 1836, "Samuel Slick of Slickville," was the creation of Thomas Chandler Haliburton of Nova Scotia. First written in 1836, the main character, a Yankee clock peddler, often understood more about human nature than his customers might want. Sam was shrewd and out to make a buck at all times. He coined such common phrases as "upper crust," "quick as a wink," "six of one and half a dozen of the other," and numerous others. Many consider him "the father of American humor." Literary 11: p169-175 by Edward E. Waldron. 1988 ed.
- ¹⁰⁴ Priam was the only "inheritance" Judge Smith received from his father. As foreman in South Carolina, Priam stayed with Smith through the move to Huntsville. In this letter Ma Lewis clearly found him noble and commanding at the age of 63. O'Neill, *Sketches*, 2:112; Probate Record, Madison County, Alabama, 11:149.
- ¹⁰⁵ Galignani's English Library offered books, magazines, and newspapers from England and America. The shop became a gathering place to hear the latest news, to see who was in town, and just to listen to one's native language spoken.
- ¹⁰⁶ Major Wm. T. Lewis II, (Uncle of Mary's father), of Nashville had six daughters and one son. When his only son was killed in a duel, the Major asked his girls to marry someone who already had the Lewis name in order that the name from his branch would continue. Margaret Lewis, the youngest girl, dutifully or otherwise, married Major William Berkley Lewis. Major William B. Lewis was an old and dear friend of President Andrew Jackson's. It was the Major that Jackson sent to Natchez to seek the record of his and Rachel's marriage when it became an issue in the presidential campaign. William B. Lewis had great influence with the President as a member of his "kitchen cabinet." Lewis was at Jackson's bedside, cushioning his head, when he died at the Hermitage in 1845. GLF:98; Marquis James, *Andrew Jackson, Border Captain* (New York: Literary Guild, 1933), 382; Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Social Life in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: Lipincott, 1902), 259.

The Major and Margaret Lewis' daughter, Mary Anne Lewis, and Huntsville's Mary Lewis were second cousins. After her mother died, Mary Anne was one of the many young people "adopted" into the Jackson's extended family group and she was comfortably at home in Washington, D.C. For a brief period in 1830 she was the temporary mistress of the White House. She was courted and in November of 1832, married Mons. Alphonse Pageot, for many years secretary to the French legation

and charge' d'affaires. This very early White House wedding was one of two during Jackson's presidency and he graciously gave the bride away. The Pageot's only son, the boy who spoke languages so well in 1842, was christened in the Red Room of the White House, named for his godfather and was called Andrew Jackson Pageot. In 1865, the young man died in Nashville at age 32 of a heart attack. Marquis James, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1938), 548; Marie Smith and Louise Durbin, *White House Brides* (Washington, D.C.:Acropolis Books, 1966), 48-49; Jill L. Garrett, *Obituaries from Tennessee Newspapers* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1980), 215,216; James, *Life*, 681.

Nothing was ever said in the letters about one other of Mary's great-uncles by marriage, John H. Eaton. Eaton, a cousin of Gov. Wm. C.C. Claiborne, first married Myra, the fifth daughter of Major Wm. T. Lewis. She lived, as did all her sisters, for only a very short time after her marriage. To the dismay (or the delight) of those on the political scene, Eaton next married the Widow Timberlake in Washington, D.C. This marriage to Margaret (Peggy) O'Neal Timberlake resulted in one of the few skirmishes Jackson's supporters ever lost. Known about town as the "petticoat war," it resulted in Eaton's withdrawal from Jackson's cabinet.

- ¹⁰⁷The name Elodie rhymes with melody. In Huntsville Mrs. Lewis was pleased with the sound of the name and later used it for her daughter born while Mary was in Paris.
- ¹⁰⁸The Calhouns and Mary would not have missed Niblo's, the fashionable center of all that wealth and fashion displayed. Niblo's contained an opera hall, concert hall, reception rooms, dining hall, and a ballroom.
- ¹⁰⁹With slight variations from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," 1. 211. *Bartlett's Quotations* will become useful at this point.
- ¹¹⁰The discerning reader will need to separate "O rare" Ben Jonson (1573-1637) and Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) writer of the celebrated *Dictionary* and *Rasselas, The Prince of Abyssinia*. The story about paying the funeral expenses of his mother in that manner has not been verified —anywhere.
- ¹¹¹Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) at one time was secretary by private appointment to Arthur Lord Grey. The story of Ben Jonson's about the Spenser infant killed in the flames is probably apocryphal. Spenser did escape Ireland with his wife and four children. R. E. Neil Dodge, ed., *The Complete Poetical Works of Spenser* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936), xxii.
- ¹¹²Ma confused in her mind what she recalled about Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), the French philosopher. On the one hand she has great admiration for the famous writers and on the other hand she does not admire their lives – as she remembers events.
- ¹¹³Felicia Hemans (1793-1835) was the first significant professional female poet in England. After marrying Captain Hemans who was 15 years older than she, it became imperative that she earn money for her works. She soon was supporting her mother, sister, five sons and her husband. She is best remembered for the line, "The boy stood on the burning deck" from "Casabianca". *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, ed. John R. Greenfield, (Detroit: A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book, Gale Research Inc., 1990) 96:130-143. Article by F. Dorothea Browne.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838) was the "angel muse" of British poetry and

literary critic known as L & L. She married George Maclean and died in Africa (not India as mentioned by Ma) by accidentally poisoning herself in circumstances that still remain a mystery. *Dictionary*, 96:220-228. Article by Brenda H. Renalds.

Caroline Sheridan Norton (1808-1877) wrote both novels and poetry successfully. She married the Honorable George C. Norton, was presented at court, and had three sons. Norton sued for divorce, citing adultery with William Lamb, twice Prime Minister of England. Norton was given custody of the children, but public sentiment was with her. She also wrote strong pleas for the rights of women. *Dictionary*, 21:234-238. Article by Lois Josephs Fowler.

Lydia Howard Sigourney (1791-1865) was the American "Mrs. Hemans". A widow with three children she wrote sentimental verse published in leading magazines. *Dictionary*, 1:163-164. Article by Madeline B. Stern.

Mrs. Lewis had obviously been reading from an anthology, and it is almost a relief to return to the local poetess, Julia Pleasants.

- ¹¹⁴ Ma's reading was very current. Edward Bulwer-Lyton (1803-1873) had just written the very popular *Zanoni* in 1842. Today Bulwer is more noted as the inspiration of the popular fiction contest sponsored by San Jose State University asking for the worst possible opening sentence to an imaginary novel.
- ¹¹⁵ Again, Ma's comments show how quickly fads spread. Mesmerism and hypomnism were all the rage, and Ma reported attending these sessions even before Mary did in Paris. The pseudo-science of phrenology would be next.
- ¹¹⁶ Judge Edwin R. Wallace, now a widower, married the sister of John H. Lewis, Mary Louisa, April 4, 1825. A lawyer, he became a Judge in Morgan County. The Wallaces had five boys and one daughter. The children and their approximate birth dates were: William (1826), George (1828), Edwin R. Jr., (1830), Joel (1832), Charles (1834), and Mary Louise (1836). Also a baby, Myra Louisa, aged six weeks, died on March 30, 1833. Mary's aunt, Mary Louisa Lewis Wallace, died in Huntsville in 1837. The families were still close, and his opinion was highly regarded in the letters. Not exactly a typical "friendly" letter, Uncle Wallace wrote about what was on his mind, agriculture and industry of the future. He could not have dreamed of all the uses for the hemp he so glowingly described. GLF 108, 109; Ganrud, *Notices*, 478; GLF 108.
- ¹¹⁷ Ma wrote quite a bit more admiringly about these two men, but political fame is so fleeting. Thiers and Guizot were extremely influential powers during this period in the French Cabinet, the Ministry, as Prime Minister, and as Ambassadors. During one lapse from power Guizot used his energy to write what was for a long while the definitive work, *Life of Washington*, thus insuring his reputation in other circles.
- ¹¹⁸ The Kirkman family presents another dynamic family, typical of the associates of the Lewis families. About 1821 Thomas Kirkman came to Florence where he became a merchant and also invested in iron works. At one time he owned 35,000 acres of farmland, and his stables included the celebrated "Peytona." The senior Kirkman also did business with Patton and Donegan & Co. in Huntsville. Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1921) 3:987-988; William B. Wood. (Dr. Bernarr Cresap ed.) "History of Lauderdale County," *Journal of Muscle Shoals History*, Vol 5 (1977) 61-83; Bell Factory Record Book, HPL. The most distinguished of his six children was Samuel who at the age

of 18 was one of the youngest men to have graduated from Harvard up to that time. (One of Samuel's daughters married Emmet O'Neal. Emmet O'Neal was the son of Gov. Edward A. O'Neal. He, in turn, also became Governor of Alabama.) 1850 Lauderdale Census; Owen, *Dictionary*, 3:987-988; Marie B. Owen, *The Story of Alabama* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1940), 4:17; "History of Lauderdale County, *Journal of Muscle Shoals History* 4(1976):101.

In 1842 young Thomas Kirkman, about 15, was sent to study in Paris and entertained Mary Lewis during his lively visits with her. Perhaps a typical teenager, he kept changing tutors and schools. He may have been brought home by his parents who lost patience with him, because in 1850, he was living at home and working as a clerk, probably in the family store. During the War he served in the Confederate Army and was captured by the Yankee cavalry. Jill Knight Garrett, *A History of Florence, Alabama* (Florence: P-Vine Publications, 1968) 66; C. Wilder Watts, "Civil War in Lauderdale County," *Journal of Muscle Shoals History* 5 (1977):45.

- ¹¹⁹ Mrs. Spotswood boarded children of many families in the area. Unfortunately there were misunderstandings about the rates at her boarding house. Sally D. Spotswood presented a bill for the two McClung children for board, washing and sewing from 1837-1841 at \$50 each; 1841-1845 at \$75 each, and 1845-1848 at \$538 subtotal for that year. The total was \$1538.88 and interest claimed of \$659. On the behalf of the McClung family, Judge Wallace wrote a very indignant letter about these outrageous costs. There was no notation of any settlement. Misc. papers among McClung Family Papers, Box 1243/6-D-11/file #4, Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.
- ¹²⁰ Georgiann Beale married Reuben B. Norvell in 1842. She died July 6, 1868. The oldest daughter of Dr. Thomas Fearn, Mary Eleanor Fearn, married Gustavus Lyle Mastin in 1846, and Septimus D. Cabaniss married Virginia Shepherd on June 20, 1843. Gandrud, *Notices*, 226; Ryan, *Cease Not*, 171; American Association of University Women, Huntsville Branch, *Glimpses into Antebellum Homes* (Huntsville: Hicklin, 1986), 55.
- ¹²¹ John James Walker, the second son of John Williams Walker, married Maria M. Hopkins, daughter of Judge A. F. Hopkins on May 17, 1837. Gandrud, *Notices*, 27. Understandably there is confusion about the names of the Pope, Walker, and Percy families. As young men together at Princeton they pledged to keep their friendships alive forever by naming their children after one another.
- ¹²² Susan Spotswood, daughter of Elliot and Sally Dandridge Spotswood, married Dr. John David Malone of Limestone County, October 5, 1846. When Sally D. Spotswood died in 1854, her next of kin were listed as Lucy Ann (Mrs. Luke) Matthews, Edwin B. Spotswood, Sarah E. (Mrs. Samuel) Matthews, Susan (Mrs. David) Malone, William E., John C., Mary R., and Irby E. Spotswood, all over 21. Also listed were Peyton W. Spotswood, James W. McClung, and Spotswood McClung, infants under twenty-one. Gandrud, *Notices*, 348, 544. As noted above Mrs. Spotswood kept a boarding house for many years. With the size of her own family, perhaps a few more children were not noticed.
- ¹²³ Eliza Walpole later married Aaron H.H. Rountree, March 20, 1845. Gandrud, *Notices*, 485.

- ¹²⁴ This other traveler and friend of Mrs. Childs was Jane Whann (Balch) Williamson. She first toured England and Scotland to see her sister, Mrs. Cameron. Later in Paris she visited with Mary and made a lovely impression. One writer suggests that it is the possibility of this Williamson connection that enabled Madame Childs to save Athens Female Institute from invading Union troops. Elva Bell McLin, *Madame Childs* (Nashville: Rand-McNally, 1992), 198-200.
- ¹²⁵ If Mary visited in New Haven it is likely she made a call on her Aunt Sally Betts Darling who lived in Wilton. From the tone of the letter Mary was unsure of her welcome. Perhaps they were already sensitive about the inheritance and distribution of funds from the death of Mary's grandfather, Samuel Betts.
- ¹²⁶ Albert Russel Erskine, the son of Dr. Alexander Erskine and Susan Catherine (Russel), was born in Huntsville, and his family lived next-door to Dr. Thomas Fearn. Of the nine children who survived to adulthood three became doctors. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1851, Albert began his practice in Huntsville. He married Maria D. Matthews, the daughter of Judith (Peete) and Luke Matthews. One of the many very memorable doctors of the county, he died in 1903. Dr. Erskine was an uncle of Russel Erskine who for a time was president of the Studebaker Corporation. Jewell S. Goldsmith and Helen D. Fulton, *Medicine Bags and Bumpy Roads* (Huntsville: Valley Publishing, 1985), 133-134.
- ¹²⁷ In 1883, "Mrs. Wallace and Mr. Penn of Huntsville, daughter and son of the late Mr. Penn, of great culture and much fame as a ripe scholar, great authority as a Mason and one of the founders of that order in Alabama, are teaching here . . ." in Decatur. Gandrud, *Notices*, 413. This suggests Mrs. Wallace was a widow and living with her brother. Nothing is known about Edwin Wallace's sons or any of their children, Mary's first cousins.

4. The Letters—1843

- ¹²⁸ Mary Jane Matthews actually married Richard S. Robertson of Virginia in November of 1846. Gandrud, *Notices*, 348.
- ¹²⁹ The *Memphis American Eagle*, January 6, 1843, dramatically described that city as "visited by one of those awful throes of Nature, so convulsive and terrible, as to spread almost universal alarm over the city . . . The commencement of the jarring we conceived to proceed from the violent undertaking of some person to shake open a door beneath us. But in a moment afterwards, the agitation seized the brick walls surrounding us, shaking and reeling them, to such an extent, as to knock down particles of brick and plaster, jarring the roof and whole building. The fate of ancient Memphis rose up in our memory."
- ¹³⁰ Uncle Knox became a banker and settled in Montgomery. GLF 109.
- ¹³¹ Germaine Necker de Stael-Holstein (1766-1817) did not marry Gibbon, the historian. Perhaps the richest heiress in France, she married Baron de Stael-Holstein and began her literary career. She was a successful novelist, playwright, and actress, but she was also "one of the most brilliant and most effective talkers in the history of the human race." Her personality reached all classes of Frenchmen, including Napoleon. S. G. Tal-

- lentyre, *The Women of the Salons* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 113-133.
- ¹³² Emma, daughter of James H. Scruggs and Maria Scruggs, about 8, died in 1855. Later still, James H. Scruggs married Mrs. Rebecca Robinson, July 30, 1868. Sophia Lowe was the oldest child of Ma's childhood playmate, Bartley M. Lowe and his wife Sarah Sophia Manning Lowe. Sarah Allan's sister, Eliza Elinor, married David Allan Smith in 1831. The Cruses were dear neighbors who had built the house at 600 Adams St. about 1825. Mary Ann Cruse, a beloved worker and teacher at Church of the Nativity, lived until 1910. Gandrud, *Notices*, 551, 227; Ryan, *Cease Not*, 172; CFS-H; Allan FF-HPL; *Glimpses*, 16.
- ¹³³ Although he felt "poor & in debt," Clement C. Clay, Jr., married Virginia Caroline Tunstall in Tuscaloosa on February 1, 1843. Afterwards the newlyweds took the two-day stage trip from the then-capitol of the state to Huntsville so he could share his bride with his family. The coach drove around the Town Square twice, with horn blaring to announce their arrival. Ruth K. Nuermberger, *The Clays of Alabama* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1958), 82-84.
- ¹³⁴ William Bibb Figures was the editor and owner of the *Southern Advocate*. Ryan, *Cease Not*, 171.
- ¹³⁵ Despite its unsophisticated name, Nubbin Ridge was an area just inside Limestone County with both prosperous land and prosperous families.
- ¹³⁶ Although Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) was a very successful author, there is no record that she wrote *The Ballad Singers*. Perhaps it was too insignificant to be recalled or Mary confused the name of the actual writer. Sophie Cottin (1773-1807) began writing poetry and fiction after the death of her husband. Countess Felicite de Genlis (1746-1830) was the governess of Louis Philippe. Perhaps Mary Lewis was not aware that the Countess was both a friend to the child's mother, Louise-Adelaide, and mistress to his father, Louis Philippe Egalite. She wrote educational and moral essays. Sarah Hale, *Woman's Record* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855; rep., New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 293-298; *Ibid.*, 272-3; *Ibid.*, 321-325.
- ¹³⁷ These girls from the boarding school were daughters of George and Clarissa Endicott Peabody of Salem, Massachusetts. At that time Clara was about 15 years old, Ellen about 10. Their grandfather was Capt. Joseph Peabody, the wealthy East India merchant of Salem. Clara later married Arthur L. Payson and died at a young age in 1856 in Paris. Ellen married William C. Endicott who was later U.S. Secretary of War. Ellen lived until 1927. Selim Hobart Peabody, comp. *Peabody Genealogy*. (Boston: Pope, 1909), 155; William Crowninshield Endicott, *Captain Joseph Peabody* (Salem: Peabody Museum, 1962), 178-179. This information suggests that the school was both select and expensive. One wonders if the French schools girls and the Peabody sisters had ever heard a soft southern accent such as Mary's might have been. Did she address the others with "y'all?"
- ¹³⁸ Miss Bassett was the sister of Dr. John Y. Bassett. Dr. Claudius H. Mastin described her, Margaret, as "a maiden lady of advanced age, a woman of education, disappointed hopes and endowed with a liberal share of bitter sarcasm." Furthermore he describes her as a weight upon Dr. Bassett's neck and a "terror to the community." John Y. Bassett, *The Medical Reports of John Y. Bassett, M.D., The Alabama Student*. (Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1941), 58-59.

- ¹³⁹Such a mature conversation, but her young heart may have been broken at the time—no matter what she said to Mrs. Lewis. Ma obviously felt that Mary needed to hear her friend's moral message—all of it. Much later, in 1855, Maria Eliza Fearn married William Willis Garth. Ryan, *Cease Not*, 170-171.
- ¹⁴⁰This concern with Puseyism, that later developed full-blown into the Oxford Movement, suggested that the church was a divine society, not controlled by the state. Thus the work of the minister became more important. The church and its members were then exposed to a larger view of their power and duty, particularly among the poor in the larger cities. Walter H. Stowe, author in *World Book Encyclopedia* (Chicago: Field Enterprises, 1972), 14:676.
- ¹⁴¹Here Ma is referring to the use of calomel taken so commonly at that time as a cathartic. It was a form of mercury that slowly poisoned the patient, often introducing worse medical problems.
- ¹⁴²Charley McClung waited quite a while, but in April 1857, he married Laura M. Bunch of East Tennessee. Gandrud, *Notices*, 579.
- ¹⁴³In 1851, Sarah Fearn married William Sullivan Barry and moved to Columbus, Mississippi. *Ibid.*, 513.
- ¹⁴⁴Fortunately Mary Jane Bradford recovered and married John W. Robinson of Jackson, Mississippi, on August 31, 1852. *Ibid.*, 519.
- ¹⁴⁵*Evelina*, written by Fanny Burney in 1778, was so popular it eventually went through four printings. Ma was encouraging her daughters to read about a naive girl's entrance into and survival in the social world. (Doody 30:90+).
- ¹⁴⁶In 1829 the community was shocked by the murder of Colonel Northcut, a highly respected militia leader. Logan Brandon, defending the name of his sister, Mrs. Smith, against slanderous attacks, acknowledged the deed. Brandon was acquitted. Mrs. Martha Allen Northcut, originally from Pittsylvania County, Virginia, remained in the community raising her daughters, and died in 1857 at the age of 65. *Democrat* December 16, 1829; Gandrud, *Notices*, 589. For an interesting study of this episode and the effects of community opinion see Daniel Stuart Dupre, "Liberty and Order on the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840." Diss., Brandeis University, 1991.
- ¹⁴⁷Martha C. Gee, the only daughter of William H. Gee, married Joel W. Jones of Pickens County in September 1844. Gandrud, *Notices*, 481.
- ¹⁴⁸Waddie and Mary Jane must have changed their minds that spring because in a later letter Ma shared with Mary a description of the fine wedding she had attended of James Mastin and Mary Jane Erskine. John H. and Mary B. Lewis to Mary Lewis, Nov. 9, 1843, Clay MSS-H.
- ¹⁴⁹Mary felt that the French water probably contained small living things that could be seen with a microscope.
- ¹⁵⁰Again, too many titles for the reader, and Mary confused the authors. Corneille wrote *Polyeucte*.
- ¹⁵¹Persac Castle remains unidentifiable. The most likely possibility is a town near Bordeaux, Pessac.

5. The Letters—1844

- ¹⁵² Ma and Pa Lewis were about 38 and 50 years old when Mary so unthinkingly burdened and enfeebled them with years.
- ¹⁵³ Uncle Hick's plantation, called Round Bottom, was within a great curve of the Elk River in northern Limestone County. Part of the property had belonged to his wife's family, the Lindsays. Uncle Joel Lewis had often been mentioned, in passing, in the letters. But with this question Mary calls to mind that the family always thought of him as eccentric. During the Mexican War he commanded a regiment from Tennessee and then settled into farming in Tennessee. Unmarried and restless, Joel moved to California and taught agriculture to the Mendocino Indians. LFG, 100, 10, 109.
- ¹⁵⁴ Here Mary's word was very difficult to read. Perhaps it was meant to be "cauterer" which is a poultice or a form of the verb "cotir," to bruise. It is not unlikely she was using a common American term for lice, cotie. At any rate, it was obvious that Willie Calhoun was not being well cared for.
- ¹⁵⁵ According to Ma, several of Mary's Huntsville friends were attending boarding school at Canada Academy owned and operated by Charles and Adele Canada in New York City. Some of them were Louisa Hopkins, G. Thorton, Kate Maltbie, Sophy Lowe, and Kate Fearn. From their family letters, Kate Fearn found none of the subjects agreeable—English Grammar, singing, astronomy, or Italian. Ryan, *Cease Not*, 14.
- ¹⁵⁶ This old bosom friend was John A. Smith, a man of unblemished character, according to the legal documents. St. Augustine Historical Society Collections, Box 215, f5.
- ¹⁵⁷ Mary wrote a great deal more about her first opera and was clearly enthralled. This comic opera was "La Sirene," a fortunate choice. The composer was Daniel Auber, the libretto was written by Augustin Scribe, and the production premiered March 26, 1844, at the Opera-Comique. Rossini said, "Auber produced light music but produced it like a great musician." Joseph Wechsberg, *The Opera* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 62. Thanks, Peggy Baird.
- ¹⁵⁸ Alexander Wilson, the Scottish born ornithologist and poet, wrote the pioneer work of three volumes on birds of North America.
- ¹⁵⁹ Rev. and Mrs. Brown may have only been visiting for he did not serve that Parish as a Rector or an assistant. Perhaps he was there as a special aide to Bishop Otey. As young schoolgirls, Mrs. Brown and Mary Betts Lewis apparently attended a branch of Richmond Academy established as a seminary at a site near Augusta, Georgia, called Sand Hills. This school was named Summerville Academy until 1866. Personal letter from Rev., Thomas S. Wilson, Columbia, Tennessee; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *Memorial History of Augusta*, Georgia (Spartanburg, South Carolina: Reprint Co., 1980), 320.
- ¹⁶⁰ Dr. William McNeil, aged 79, died March 21, 1844. His wife, Sarah P. McNeil, had died January 27 of that year, age 50. Lucas, *Obituaries* 242.
- ¹⁶¹ The unfortunate young James Brown was a nephew of Tom Percy, and he did inherit the family tendency toward depression or "melancholia." The father of James Brown was Dr. Samuel Brown who married the sister of Tom Percy. They all relocated in Madison County with their dear friend, John Williams Walker. In a later family history John H. Percy wrote, "My grandfather was James Percy Brown of Mississippi, who was Secretary to our Minister of France, Edward Livingston of Louisiana. On

his return to this country he married Lizinka Campbell, daughter of George W. Campbell, Senator from Tennessee, Secretary of the Treasury and Minister to Russia under Alexandria I.

James Percy Brown died in his early thirties, and during the War between the States, his widow married Lt. General Richard S. Ewell . . . James Percy Brown and Lizinka C. Brown had three children, one of whom was killed by accident when a child." John Herford Percy, *Percy Family of Louisiana and Mississippi, 1776-1943* (Baton Rouge: prvt. prnt., 1943), 68-71. The Percy family was quite prominent in Huntsville. Ma Lewis was not fond of the Percy, Walker, or Pope families and often said so. Bertram Wyatt-Brown has given a great deal of insight into the extraordinary Percy family and included their years in Huntsville in *The House of Percy* (New York: Oxford Press, 1994).

- ¹⁶²The account by Mrs. Lewis is livelier than the statement of fact reported in the marriage notices—"Martha A. Echols and Rev. W. H. Muse married in Fayetteville, Tennessee, April 18, 1844." Gandrud, *Notices*, 480.
- ¹⁶³Samuel Matthews of Limestone County married Sarah Spotswood, the daughter of Elliot and Sally Dandridge (Littlepage) Spotswood on April 25, 1844. *Ibid.*, 480.
- ¹⁶⁴Ma, in this letter, appeared so burdened with the complications of caring for her own family and her slave family responsibilities. She had little training in the discipline of servants, and in the absence of her husband, they also knew she was only a delegate of real authority. In order to run his town house and lot, John Lewis maintained at least seven slaves. Madison County 1840 Census, slave schedule.
- ¹⁶⁵The medal of Hickman Lewis was probably for service in the Seminole War. The lock of hair was from either John Herman, who died in 1833, or John Heber Lewis who died in 1840.
- ¹⁶⁶Mrs. Lewis often seemed concerned with the seemingly fragile health of her only remaining son, Lindsay. Reading some of the episodes related to Mary about her brother, at the least he appeared to have poor eyesight and was not as advanced a student as his sisters. Perhaps she was just an over-protective parent.
- ¹⁶⁷Young Thomas Brandon, aged 7, died May 25, 1844. Gandrud, *Notices*, 480.
- ¹⁶⁸According to her story Mrs. Calhoun rejected Mr. King's proposal. Not only did she miss the chance of being the wife of an ambassador; she might have been the wife of the Vice President of the United States. William Rufus King, born in North Carolina, was a Senator from Alabama from 1819 to 1844 and from 1848 to 1852. From 1844, during the time of the letters, and until 1846 he served as minister to France. He was elected Vice President of the United States under Franklin Pierce. Because he was attempting to recover from serious illness in Havana, Cuba, he was permitted to take his oath of office before the American consul there. He died six weeks later at his plantation on April 18, 1853, never performing any duties as Vice President. (Williams 11: 252) Most likely King met socially with the Calhouns while at his plantation near Cahaba where Mary Smith Taylor Calhoun's father had extensive property. King never married, and Mary Calhoun may have made a good choice. King was described by one writer as, "a man of solid rather than shining qualities and his life was redolent of purity and of exalted conception of duty." B. F. Riley, *Makers and Romance of Alabama History* (no publisher given, c1915), 24. On the other hand

a recent work suggests, in bold terms, that King was regarded by his contemporaries as dramatically too effeminate to suit the rugged westerners in Congress. Steve Tally, *Bland Ambition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1992), 101-106.

- ¹⁶⁹ Mrs. Calhoun anticipating the need for more help brought a second servant, Maria, to Passy upon her return from Huntsville.
- ¹⁷⁰ The need for more assistance was now obvious. Baby Mary Marguerete Ada Calhoun joined the family of "Merry" and Willie Calhoun in France.
- ¹⁷¹ This would be the baby of the new Mrs. Wallace. The infant, Mary Louisa Wallace, died September 1, 1844. Gandrud, *Notices*, 481.
- ¹⁷² Former Gov. C. C. Clay and his eldest son, later Senator, Clay, also attended this "... great National Mass Convention of leading democrats from all parts of the country." The Clays spoke proudly of the two miles of tables at the Great Dinner and the absence of spirits among the groups. Nuermberger, *Clays*, 94.
- ¹⁷³ Much to the surprise of Mr. Lewis, the Democrat candidate, Polk, defeated Marin VanBuren in the election of 1844. Mary's father was so sure that VanBuren would win that he made a bet with the builder of the addition to his house, George Steele. As a result of losing the bet, the 13-room addition to the Lewis house cost \$7000 instead of the original bid of \$3500. Perhaps with some of the money from this wager, Steele, in celebration of the election of his candidate, invited 4000 citizens to attend a victory party at his home, Oak Place. Among all the food served, the crowning glory was a cake four feet high, made in Nashville and carried carefully by wagon to Huntsville. On the top layer was a figure of the newly elected President, James K. Polk. CFS-H; *Glimpses*, 25-26.
- ¹⁷⁴ This return trip was voyage #35 for the *Great Western*, now captained by the former first mate, Barnard Matthews. The preceding voyage of the month before faced the worst storms recorded in the North Atlantic up to that time. The weather halfway out of port included gale winds for several days and a tornado at sea. The surviving grateful passengers collected over 200 pounds sterling to be shared among the captain, officers, and crew. One hopes Ma and Pa Lewis did not hear about this fearful trip. Mary's ship sailed October 12th and arrived in New York on the 26th. Also on the ship was an Englishman, Mr. Leech, who was quite charmed with Mary. Cousin John Claiborne wrote to Mary that she "no doubt deserves a more brilliant match, than an English Cotton Spinner's agent...a good young man, but rather soft." Griffiths, *Brunel's*, 97,143; John Claiborne to Mary F. Lewis, November 28, 1844, Clay MSS-H.
- ¹⁷⁵ Statuesque Madame Bodisco would not have been deterred by the mere threat of a rough sea. Baron Bodisco, the diplomatic Minister from Russia since 1838, married Harriet Williams of Georgetown when in his sixties. The bride, 16, was given away in a lovely service by Henry Clay. Admiringly, the Russians had nicknamed her the "American Rose" while she was there. The couple was married for 10-12 years and had seven sons before the Baron died. Virginia Clay attended the funeral of Alexandre de Bodisco in the Spring of 1854. Mrs. Clay also attended the widow's second marriage to Captain Scott of Her Majesty's Life Guards. This time President Buchannon gave the bride away, and Mrs. Clay, in a discreet manner of course, let her readers know that the bride was now plump and that later in India her health and beauty were ruined. Wharton, *Social Life*, 275-312; Sterling, Belle, 31,33-34.

6. The Lewis Family After the Letters

- ¹⁷⁶ John Withers Clay to Rev. Henry C. Lay, June 19, 1846, located in the Lay Papers, Collection #418, in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, hereafter cited as Lay MSS.
- ¹⁷⁷ H. Lawson Clay to Susanna W. Clay, 17 August 1845, Clay MSS-D.
- ¹⁷⁸ Susanna W. Clay to C. C. Clay, Jr., May 31, 1833, Clay MSS-H.
- ¹⁷⁹ Virginia Clay Diary, Clay MSS-D.
- ¹⁸⁰ Nuermberger, *Clays*, 76-77.
- ¹⁸¹ J. Withers Clay to Rev. Henry C. Lay, June 19, 1846, Lay MSS.
- ¹⁸² Mary L. Clay to J. Withers Clay, undated 1852, 1857. Clay MSS-H. Mary often forgot to put the specific date on her letters.
- ¹⁸³ Gandrud, *Notices*, 520.
- ¹⁸⁴ AR 165:73.
- ¹⁸⁵ Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, August 24, 1856, Lay-MSS.
- ¹⁸⁶ CFS-H. Nelly Jordan married John Gano Winter. Their son, Gabriel Winter, a lawyer in Waco, Texas, later received a treasured keepsake from his Huntsville cousins. He inherited, according to the family scrapbook, the portraits painted by Frye in the 1840's of John and Mary Betts Lewis (his great-great grandparents).
- ¹⁸⁷ AR 165:80.
- ¹⁸⁸ Gandrud, *Notices*, 572.
- ¹⁸⁹ AR 169:81.
- ¹⁹⁰ Clay MSS-H.
- ¹⁹¹ *Democrat*, February 12, 1896.
- ¹⁹² Farnham, Christie Anne, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 4.
- ¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 60-61.
- ¹⁹⁴ Madison Co. Will Book #1, 195. The location of the gravesites of John H. Lewis, Mary Betts Lewis, their adult children, and the three Clay babies is not known. Likewise, there is no marker for Clement Clay, son of Mary Lewis and Withers Clay, who was killed in the explosion of the *St. Elmo* in Mobile Bay. Logically, they are within the plot owned by Lewis at Maple Hill Cemetery marked by the stones of the two infant Lewis brothers. This would seem to be another indicator of the poor state of finances of the Lewis and Clay families.
- ¹⁹⁵ Gandrud, *Notices*, 377.
- ¹⁹⁶ AR 173: 1.
- ¹⁹⁷ CFS-H.
- ¹⁹⁸ J. Withers Clay to Mary L. Clay, May 3, 1876. Clay MSS-H.
- ¹⁹⁹ *Democrat*, July 15, 1891.
- ²⁰⁰ Madison County Will Book 2: 427.
- ²⁰¹ John H. Lewis to William L. Lewis, September 1850, Clay MSS-H.
- ²⁰² Huntsville *Southern Advocate*, June 18, 1859.

- ²⁰³ Mary L. Clay to Virginia T. Clay, April 3, 1861, Clay MSS-D.
- ²⁰⁴ Gandrud, *Notices*, 374.
- ²⁰⁵ CFS-H. One somehow doubts if the silver was ever returned to Alabama.
- ²⁰⁶ CFS-H.
- ²⁰⁷ Edwards and Axford 42-43. In 1888 Elodie's brother-in-law, John Thomas Tanner, was a Vice Presidential nominee.
- ²⁰⁸ *Democrat*, February 7, 1877.
- ²⁰⁹ CFS-H.
- ²¹⁰ Clay MSS-H.
- ²¹¹ AR 165:33.
- ²¹² *Huntsville Times*, Bicentennial Issue 109.
- ²¹³ Madison County Court House, misc. papers, file #7719.
- ²¹⁴ John Withers Clay to Clement C. Clay, Jr., October 2, 1869, Clay MSS-H.
- ²¹⁵ Madison County Probate Record Book GG, 252.

7. The Calhoun Family After the Letters

- ²¹⁶ Hattie Whittington, "Early Records of Trinity Episcopal Church," *The Natchitoches Genealogist*. Vol. II, #1:25.
- ²¹⁷ Church of the Nativity Sexton Records, Huntsville.
- ²¹⁸ Bennett Smith settled in Rutherford County and married Isabella the daughter of Gen. Joseph Dickson. A daughter of Isabella and Bennett's, Mary (Polly) Smith, married John Hutchings. The young couple died prematurely leaving their small son to become the ward of his namesake, Andrew Jackson. Throughout the years, Smith maintained his friendship with Jackson, noting in a letter in 1810 that Jackson should visit him at Smith's home place, Oak Forest. A country dinner might be tempting; after all there would be "plenty of Lamb & peas at the White house." Bennett Smith lived seven years longer than his brother the Judge. Besides longevity, both carried to the grave with them a name for unmitigated agitation. Bennett, it was said, "had the gift of inventing...ways to annoy and vex indirectly, without making himself liable." Jill L. Garrett, *Obituaries from Tennessee Newspapers* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1980), 181-182; Harold D. Moser and Sharon MacPherson eds., *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*. 2 vols. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 2:243; John C. Spence, *Annals of Rutherford County* (Rutherford County Tennessee Historical Society, 1991), 57,60. It is easy to see that this might be the brother Judge Smith had not spoken to in over forty years. If the Calhouns visited, perhaps they did not linger.
- ²¹⁹ John Taylor married a second time to Fanny Owens of Baltimore. Simpson, *Pendleton*, 111.
- ²²⁰ Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, February 21 and May 24, 1848, Lay MSS. (In these Lay letters Calhoun was always spelled with an *o* as it was in the Church records.)
- ²²¹ Church of Nativity Sexton Records, Huntsville.

- ²²² Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, October 14, 1850, Lay MSS.
- ²²³ Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, April 17, 1853, Lay MSS.
- ²²⁴ Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, August 8, 1853, Lay MSS.
- ²²⁵ Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, August 20, 1856, Lay MSS.
- ²²⁶ Henry C. Lay to Betty A. Lay, July 9, Lay MSS.
- ²²⁷ Ernest Alfred Vizetelly, *The Court of the Tuileries, 1852-1870* (London, Rouge, 1912), 262.
- ²²⁸ AR 82:19; Colfax *Chronicle*, Mar. 22, 1935.
- ²²⁹ Ada Sterling, *A Belle of the Fifties*, (New York:Doubleday, 1905), 161.
- ²³⁰ Among other things, young Henry Lay attended the opera and commented to Mrs. Rice that one visit there would last a lifetime. Moreover, school days in Paris were not to be taken too seriously by students. Young Henry Lay's tutors had advised him not to confine himself so closely to his studies — "It would make him stupid." Diary of Mary P. Rice, Lay MSS.
- ²³¹ Colonel Duff, who died in 1845, first willed all of his more than 22 slaves to the American Colonization Society to be freed forever to Liberia. The children of the slaves, both male and female, until arrangements were made for them to leave, were to learn to read and write and "cipher" and were to be given \$50 each. A single gentleman, his estate went to various nieces and nephews scattered thorough the southeast. These heirs were in-laws of the Smiths and Calhouns. From the will one will learn that Duff's sisters were Margaret Duff Smith, Elizabeth Duff Campbell and Mary Duff Walker. Those who inherited were Mary and Meredith Calhoun; Franklin A., James D., Andrew J., and Mary Campbell and her son Enos Wilson; James B. Walker and his daughter Mary, Susan M. Walker and her husband Edwin Alexander of North Carolina, Peggy Walker and her husband Cowan of Mississippi. (For the explanation of the relationship thanks to Dorothy Scott Johnson.) Lincoln County, Tennessee, Deed Book Vol. N-1, p 227; Jane Warren Waller, ed., Lincoln County, Tennessee 1840 Census (Batavia, Illinois, n.p., 1970) 47; Helen C. Marsh and Timothy Marsh, *Abstract Wills of Lincoln County, Tennessee 1810-1895* (Shelbyville, Tennessee: Marsh Historical Publishing, 1977), 44; Kathleen Paul Jones and Pauline Jones Gandrud, *Tennessee Records* 9 vols. Typed manuscripts, 4:40; Lincoln County Probate Record II 4, 1845, 276; Lincoln County Chancery Minute Book #1814; 131.
- ²³² Donald D. Cameron, misc. papers in Colfax, Grant Parish Library Local History File, taped interview on file, July 19, 1976.
- ²³³ Bonnette family papers.
- ²³⁴ Cameron, misc. papers.
- ²³⁵ Rapides Parish, Louisiana, Census, 1860.
- ²³⁶ Glenn R. Conrad, ed., *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, 2 vols. (Louisiana Historical Association, 1988), 1:146.
- ²³⁷ Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana Records. (It was this Masonic membership that was to return an unexpected favor a few years later.)
- ²³⁸ Bonnette family papers.
- ²³⁹ *Democrat*, September 11, 1861.

- ²⁴⁰ Madison County Deed Book: HH, 313.
- ²⁴¹ Paris Archives, Departement de Paris, MJ/CP/93.7589.
- ²⁴² Mabel Fletcher Harrison and Lavinia Mcguire McNeely, *Grant Parish, Louisiana, A History* (Baton Rouge: Claitor's, 1969), 108; Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana Records.
- ²⁴³ Colfax *Chronicle*, August 24, 1962.
- ²⁴⁴ Mary Eleanor Bonnette. Interview.
- ²⁴⁵ Calhoun v. Mechanics and Traders' Bank, 30 La Ann 772 (LSC April 1878).
- ²⁴⁶ AR 54:66.
- ²⁴⁷ Ted Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 188-193. Details of the official investigation can be read in House Reports of the 43rd Congress, 2nd Sessions, #261.
- ²⁴⁸ House Reports, 43rd Cong., 2nd Session, No. 261.
- ²⁴⁹ Manie White Johnson, "The Colfax Riot of April, 1873", *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*. XIII (July 1930), 391-427.
- ²⁵⁰ Vandiver, *Traditions*, 167. Much of the Taylor and Earle properties is part of Clemson University.
- ²⁵¹ Brent Holcomb, *Marriage and Death Notices from Pendleton, South Carolina Messenger, 1807-1851* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1977), 38; John R. Purvis, *The Purvis Family 1694-1988* (Tillicoultry, England: W.M. Betts, Ltd., 1988), 297.
- ²⁵² Virginia G. Meynard, *The Venturers*. (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1981), 964. Currently the Purvis estate is part of the Mobile County Club golf course. The two-and-a-half storied Purvis house still stands at 59 McGregor Avenue. Their town house was at 920 Government Street. *Purvis, Family*, 297.
- ²⁵³ Clinton P. King and Meriem A. Barlow, eds., *Marriages of Mobile County, Alabama, 1856-1875* (Mobile: Alabama Ancestors, 1986), 165.
- ²⁵⁴ New Orleans *Times Picayune*, January 15, 1891.
- ²⁵⁵ Helen A. Thompson, ed., *Magnolia Cemetery* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1974), 365.
- ²⁵⁶ The other references to the Colfax Riot have been noted elsewhere. Dosia Moore in her recollections gave the slim footnote, "...Mr. Calhoun, to whom the plantation belonged...." Dosia Williams Moore, ed., Carol Wells, *War, Reconstruction and Redemption on the Red River: Memoirs of Dosia Williams Moore* (Ruston, Louisiana: Louisiana Tech. Univ., 1990), 66.
- ²⁵⁷ Ada M. Calhoun to Willie S. Calhoun, October 14, 1872 in Bonnette family papers.
- ²⁵⁸ Ontario County, New York 1850 Census.
- ²⁵⁹ Victor, New York *Herald*, December 9, 1893.
- ²⁶⁰ Nicholas Russell Murray, *Orleans Parish, Louisiana 1830-1900, Computer Indexed Marriage Records* (Hammond, Louisiana: Murray, n.d.), 241.
- ²⁶¹ Succession of Meredith Calhoun, 35 La Ann 363 (Louisiana Supreme Court March

1883).

- ²⁶²The Lanes did not ever use Oak Place as a home. From following the trail in the deed books of Madison County for those years, it appears that Milton Humes, while administrator of the Steele estate, purchased the house for the Lanes on speculation for \$5000. The Steele town lot, #18, was sold to Lane for \$34 at the same sheriff's sale on the courthouse steps. In 1882, writing from New Orleans, Lane stated he did not intend to ever use Oak Place and its surrounding acres. Lane sold it to Ellelee Humes for \$1.00. Humes sold it in 1889 for \$10,000 to J.F. O'Shaughnessy. For some reason O'Shaughnessy sold it back to Humes in 1894 for \$800.
- ²⁶³Victor, *Herald*, December 9, 1893; Surgate Court, Ontario County, NY, November 18, 1889; Boughton Hill [NY] Cemetery Records, 839.
- ²⁶⁴*Democrat*, September 18, 1895; November 27, 1895; June 24, 1891; October 23, 1895.
- ²⁶⁵C. S. Williams, *Cincinnati City Directory* (Cincinnati: Wrightson, 1839), 297; *Northern Alabama Historical and Biographical* (Birmingham: Smith & Deland, 1888) reprint, Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Co., 1978), 255.
- ²⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 255-256.
- ²⁶⁷Whitney's invention of the cotton gin increased cotton production, but the seeds were still considered a useless waste until after the Civil War. However, once extracted economically, the oil was of great commercial value. Lynette Boney Wrenn, *Cinderella of the New South: A History of the Cottonseed Industry, 1855-1955*, (University Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1995), 1-15.
- ²⁶⁸Patricia H. Ryan, *Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles*. (Huntsville: Huntsville Planning Department, Special Report No. 4, 1983), 7-17; Wayne Flynt, *Poor But Proud* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989), 93. These were truly exciting times for a formerly sleepy little southern town. Real estate was being sold and bought, gathered up at sheriff's sale, peddled, and resold for tremendous profits. The county deed books recorded hundreds of entries in the next few years. Almost before the ink could dry, land was sold again to the next party. The names of Calhoun, O'Shaughnessy, and Humes appear often.
- ²⁶⁹*Democrat* August 7, 1895; July 3, 1895; May 5, 1895; November 14, 1895; October 10, 1894; September 12, 1894; August 7, 1895.
- ²⁷⁰Surname File #1167; Personal interview with James Reeves, Huntsville, Alabama. Kildare was purchased in 1900 by Cyrus McCormick as one of the several residences he maintained for his handicapped daughter, Virginia. According to the newspaper the selling price was \$30,000. *Democrat*, September 5, 1900.
- ²⁷¹Mount Saint Mary's College Archives; Forester 4.
- ²⁷²*Democrat*, May 29, 1898; Huntsville *Weekly Mercury*, May 20, 1898. Conrad O'Shaughnessy apparently slipped out of the family home late at night to join his friends when the unfortunate accident occurred.
- ²⁷³*Democrat* April 12, 1899; *Daily Picayune*, April 30, 1899. The newspaper account may have been inflated; there is no evidence Meredith was a Minister to France.
- ²⁷⁴Cathedral of Saint Paul, St. Paul, Minneapolis.
- ²⁷⁵Madison County Deed Book LLL, 276. The price realized amounted to \$17.66 per

acre.

- ²⁷⁶ Madison County Deed Book LLL, 276.
- ²⁷⁷ Calhoun v. Levy, 33 La Ann 1296 (Louisiana Supreme Court November 1881).
- ²⁷⁸ Calhoun v. Mechanics' and Traders' Bank, 30 La Ann 772 (LSC April 1878).
- ²⁷⁹ Cameron v. Lane, 36 La Ann 716 (Louisiana Supreme Court May 1884).
- ²⁸⁰ Lane v. Cameron, 36 La Ann 773 (LSC May 1884); Calhoun v. Town of Colfax, 29 SR 887 (LSC May 1901); Calhoun v. Town of Colfax, 38 SR 551 (LSC January 1905).
- ²⁸¹ O'Shaughnessy v Humes, 129 F 953 (Tennessee Supreme Court March 1904).
- ²⁸² He may have done this to hide assets from her brother and his creditors in Louisiana.
- ²⁸³ O'Shaughnessy v Humes, 129 F 953 (Tennessee Supreme Court March 1904).
- ²⁸⁴ New York *Times*, March 5, 1914. Among his many plans, O'Shaughnessy organized a company with capital of \$60,000,000 for an Atlantic-Pacific canal. A grand concept—wrong site. His carefully formulated plans were for a Canal site in Nicaragua. For more information about the O'Shaughnessy family see Nancy M. Rohr, "The O'Shaughnessy Legacy in Huntsville", *Huntsville Historical Review*, 21 (Summer/Fall 1994), 1-17.
- ²⁸⁵ Newark *Evening News*, February 4, 1918.
- ²⁸⁶ William Forester, "Michael James O'Shaughnessy and His Reform Program," Diss. University of Notre Dame, 1966, 6-8,16.
- ²⁸⁷ Linda Bayer, "The Calhoun House," *Huntsville Historical Quarterly*. IX #3 & 4 (Spring/Summer) 1983: 32-33.
- ²⁸⁸ Huntsville *Times*, June 11, 1933.
- ²⁸⁹ Chapman, *Changing*, 6-7. Like every cellar of every mansion in the deep South, it was alleged that this was the model for the dungeon scene described in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Contrary to public belief, Harriet Beecher Stowe did not visit Huntsville.
- ²⁹⁰ Lanman, *Adventures*, 151.
- ²⁹¹ Bayer, "Calhoun," 34.
- ²⁹² Susanna W. Clay to J. Withers Clay, September 5, 1863, Clay MSS-D.
- ²⁹³ Calhoun v. Fletcher, 41 Ala 281 (Alabama Supreme Court December 1879).
- ²⁹⁴ *Democrat*, Mar. 26, 1890, May 13 and June 17, 1891.
- ²⁹⁵ *Democrat*, September 28, 1892; May 1, 1895.
- ²⁹⁶ *Democrat*, June 28, 1893; August 24, 1893.
- ²⁹⁷ Chapman, *Changing*, 30-31. Dr. John Rison Jones, Jr. describes the art works in detail in "Some Reflections on Art in 19th Century Huntsville," *Huntsville Historical Review*, 21 (Summer-Fall 1994): 21-25.
- ²⁹⁸ Bayer, *House*, 35-36.

7. The Lewis and Clay Families Prevail

- ²⁹⁹ Here again, dates for births and deaths have been gathered from a variety of sources.

The most commonly used in this chapter were pages from the family Bible at Huntsville Public Library, Church of Nativity Sexton Records, and markers at Maple Hill Cemetery.

- ³⁰⁰ Mary Lewis Clay to sister, July 17, 1852, Clay MSS-H.
- ³⁰¹ Clement C. Clay, Jr. to Virginia T. Clay, August 15, 1852. Clay MSS-D.
- ³⁰² Gandrud 357.
- ³⁰³ Celestia C. Clay to Virginia T. Clay, July 14, 1858, Clay MSS-D.
- ³⁰⁴ Susanna W. Clay to Clement C. Clay, Jr., July 5, 1863, Clay MSS-D.
- ³⁰⁵ Susanna W. Clay to Clement C. Clay, Jr., September 5, 1863, Clay MSS-D.
- ³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰⁷ Mary L. Clay to J. Withers Clay, March 20, 1865, Clay MSS-D.
- ³⁰⁸ J. Withers Clay to Mary L. Clay, May 2, 1865. Clay MSS-D.
- ³⁰⁹ Mary L. Clay to J. Withers Clay, April 3, 1861, Clay MSS-D.
- ³¹⁰ Celeste C. Clay to Virginia T. Clay, July 14, 1861, Clay MSS-D.
- ³¹¹ CFS-H.
- ³¹² Virginia Clay Diary, Clay MSS-D.
- ³¹³ Virginia T. Clay to Clement C. Clay, Jr., July 28, 1864, Clay MSS-D.
- ³¹⁴ Virginia Clay Diary, Clay MSS-D. One wonders if perhaps a servant picked and cleaned the berries for Virginia to take to the hospital.
- ³¹⁵ Mary L. Clay to Virginia T. Clay, May 31, 1863, Clay MSS-D. A pregnant woman was not expected to take her usual seat within the sanctuary, but she was allowed to sit at the edge of the ceremonies in the near-by dressing room.
- ³¹⁶ J. Withers Clay to Clement C. Clay, Jr., July 4, 1863, Clay MSS-D.
- ³¹⁷ J. Withers Clay to H. Lawson Clay, February 4, 1865, Clay MSS-D.
- ³¹⁸ J. Withers Clay to Mary L. Clay, February 13, 1865, Clay MSS-H.
- ³¹⁹ Clement C. Clay, Jr. to Virginia T. Clay, January 27, 1867, Clay MSS-D.
- ³²⁰ Clement C. Clay, Jr. to Virginia T. Clay, February 5, 1867, Clay MSS-D.
- ³²¹ J. Withers Clay to R. M. Hathaway, December 7, 1865, Clay MSS-H.
- ³²² *Mobile Daily Register*, April 28, 1869.
- ³²³ Gabriel Jordan, Jr. to Mary L. Clay, April 27, 1869, Clay MSS-H.
- ³²⁴ Mary L. Clay to J. Withers Clay, April 29, 1869, Clay MSS-H.
- ³²⁵ Mary L. Clay to Elodie M. Lewis, May 1869. Clay MSS-H.
- ³²⁶ *Democrat*, April 4, 1894; March 28, 1894; March 21, 1894.
- ³²⁷ *Democrat*, March 21, 1894; March 21, 1894; September 12, 1894.
- ³²⁸ CFS-H.
- ³²⁹ CFS-H.
- ³³⁰ *Democrat*, July 20, 1898; April 4, 1900; May 2, 1900; December 30, 1891.
- ³³¹ CFS-H.
- ³³² Mary B. Lewis to great-granddaughter, October 10, 1893, Clay MSS-H.
- ³³³ CFS-H.

- ³³⁴ *Democrat*, February 23, 1898
- ³³⁵ CFS-H.
- ³³⁶ CFS-H. Readers of the letters might hope the current owners of the painting at least know Mary's name.
- ³³⁷ Hundley, Daniel Robinson. *Social Relations in our Southern States*. (New York: H.B. Price, 1860, rep. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1979), 72-73, 98-99. Hundley probably had met both Mary Lewis and Withers Clay. He was a prominent landowner from nearby Mooresville, Alabama.
- ³³⁸ CFS-H.
- ³³⁹ CFS-H.
- ³⁴⁰ Madison County Chancery Docket #3333; Record Book LL, 534.
- ³⁴¹ AR 100:47; 165:69.
- ³⁴² Huntsville *Democrat*, October 17, 1900.
- ³⁴³ Surname file, #805, Alabama Archives, Montgomery.
- ³⁴⁴ *Democrat*, September 6, 1911.
- ³⁴⁵ Madison County, Marriage Book, Vol. 43:210.
- ³⁴⁶ The wonderful family portrait painted by Grimes was apparently with the Gibbs family and lost to Huntsville forever. It was a rendering of Clement C. Clay, III, painted when he was a boy of five with the cliffs of the Big Spring as a backdrop. Wherever the family went one hopes young William Lewis, Jr., was made aware of his heritage. Surname files, #549,805, Archives, Montgomery.
- ³⁴⁷ CFS-H; Huntsville *Democrat*, April 12, 1911:CFS-H.
- ³⁴⁸ Perhaps Elodie Clay was simply hungry when she appeared at a neighbor's doorstep. Apparently she was no danger to herself or to the children of the neighborhood whom she often invited in to sing and play at the piano with her. Perhaps more important to the commitment, she accused the ladies of the church of intimacy with the Rector and other unfounded statements, dwelling largely on immorality of the church members and the town in general. Madison County Insane Records 3:185.
- ³⁴⁹ Jefferson County, Alabama, Federal Census 364, 1900.
- ³⁵⁰ CFS-H.
- ³⁵¹ CFS-H.

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The starting place for assistance at all times was the wonderful staff of the Huntsville/Madison County Public Library, most particularly the Heritage Room staff. Margaret Henson, Annewhite Fuller, and Raneé' Pruitt fielded endless questions with unbelievable patience. Of course the answers led to ten more questions. Thanks to Gabrielle Liddon for cheerfully translating the sections of the letters written in French. The previous work of Dr. Caroline Smith allowed me insight into the politics of South Carolina. Graduate student, Ralna Howell, shared enthusiasm and attention to detail for the 150-year-old sheets of paper. Other Huntsville writers, particularly Patricia Ryan, added to the understanding of many local events. Dr. Frances Roberts tried, only somewhat successfully, to keep me on the right track. Dr. Leah Adkins gave me renewed hope.

The element of chance and stumbling blind luck must be acknowledged. The chancery court record book on the most accessible shelf just happened to include divorce records. No researcher could have passed by a list of the local insane records, just in case there was a name to be recognized. And there was a lot of midnight oil.

Perhaps the dedication to the search by Tybring Hemphill of Victoria, British Columbia, was the single most energizing factor. His family had saved and then generously shared family information and photographs of the Calhouns and of early Huntsville. His cousin, Mary Eleanor Bonnette, also kindly shared her family material. These cousins had not known one another before. Thanks to the other more far-flung relatives who also expressed their interest.

This effort is not intended to be a scholarly tome but is for readers who enjoy history. If a family name or place is mentioned, all the more pleasure. Surely there will be mistakes discovered in the research of the families. For that I am sorry and can only hope they are errors of omission and not of fact. But just as surely, readers will discover something new or insightful in their own particular historical quest.

New material will be located. For instance, since editing this manuscript in the spring of 2001, we already have additional stories— Frederick Law Olmstead spent two days with Meredith Calhoun at the Louisiana plantations during his travels in the southland in 1853. The children of James Fenimore Cooper attended the boarding school of Madame Trigant de la Tour some 17 years before Mary. Susan Fenimore Cooper included a description of the school in her memoirs. The archives of Girard College in Philadelphia has located approximately 1 1/2 inches of index cards related to original material related to Girard's business with Calhoun. The search continues. Somewhere, someone may recognize the portraits of the youthful Clement Clay at the cliffs of the Big Springs or Mary Lewis in her Parisian silk gown. The search for the other family portraits has not finished; the search for related material will never be complete. With wonder I wait because there will always be something more to be discovered.

Other libraries were more than helpful. The archives at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have a glorious assortment of southern history papers. The "other" Clay collection at Duke University is awesome, and the staff was interested and helpful. The St. Augustine Historical Society was particularly patient with a novice researcher – all six times. However there has to be amazement and wonder that other people took seriously, and replied to, my numerous letters of inquiry. Other library archival rooms and historians within their specialties were wonderful. One hopes the historical community, on whatever level, never quits sharing our common interest.

Scores of people took the time to answer my many letters. If they were asked simply to do their job, many did more. In the months of writing, almost every source, professional or avocational, took the time to give some kind of reply. For instance there was the bank trustee in North Carolina who searched in boxes stored in the basement to look for an address. A librarian in an upstate New York library wrote by hand three pages of material and apologized because the copy machine was broken, The friendly volunteer

genealogist in Connecticut researched and corresponded many times to untangle the families. Charles Rice found and thought to share the delightful tale of Meredith Calhoun sneaking back into town during the Civil War. Annewhite Fuller casually mentioned the reference to the slave, Fred Calhoun. One supporter kept urging, "just do it." If I did not before, I now count them all as lifelong friends.

This was a personal road of discovery. Involvement with the astounding Lewis, Clay, and Calhoun families has filled ten years of enthusiasm. The writers of the letters, Mary Lewis and her mother, had a lasting zest for learning and for life. Countless people along the way, with their own special eagerness to share and their own caring interest, led me to the discovery of wonderful sources of the era, the bibliography that follows.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

AR	<i>Alabama Records</i>
CFS-H	Clay Family Scrapbook, Huntsville
Clay MSS-H	Clement C. Clay Collection, Huntsville
Clay MSS-H	Clement Claiborne Clay Papers, Duke
Democrat	Huntsville Weekly <i>Democrats</i>
FF-HPL	Family Files, Huntsville Public Library
GLF	<i>Genealogy of the Lewis Family</i>
HPL	Huntsville-Madison County Public Library
Lay MSS	Henry Lay Papers, University North Carolina

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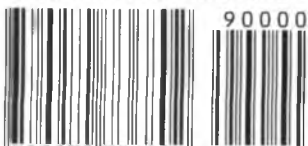
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An Alabama School Girl in Paris, 1842-1844: The Letters of Mary Fenwick Lewis and Her Family

Mary Fenwick Lewis was seventeen years old when she left Huntsville, Alabama, in 1842 and traveled to Paris, France, "to finish" her education. Her mother insisted that Mary write long letters home so in later years they might renew her memories of her time in France. Mrs. Lewis also wanted to know everything that was happening in her daughter's life so the family in north Alabama might live her trip vicariously. Mary writes in great detail about Paris and the French countryside she visited, and her family responds with newsy letters about her friends and relatives and events taking place in Huntsville. These letters offer a delightful peek at a mid-nineteenth century Alabama family and provide historical information about north Alabama in the 1840s. Nancy M. Rohr has done a sound job of editing, and the book is complemented with numerous family and historical photographs, essays about the family before and after the letters were written, and genealogical charts to help keep everyone straight. Scholars have known about and used these letters for some time, but publication will enable a larger audience to know Mary Lewis. This work will place a significant Alabama primary source easily at hand, one that high school teachers and college professors alike may mine for special assignments for their students. These letters should interest the general public as well, especially those fond of Huntsville history and Alabamiana.

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