
The Arlington Journals of Martha Custis Williams



Edited and annotated by Douglas Breton

Cover photo courtesy of Tudor Place

Introduction

When Martha Custis Williams began her Arlington diary on October 28, 1853, she had only the faintest sense that someday, it might prove historically significant. Known as “Markie” among friends and family, she was a second cousin of Mary Custis Lee (the wife of Robert E. Lee) and a grandniece of George Washington Parke Custis. Two months after returning from a yearlong trip through Europe, she came to Arlington House to keep her recently widowed uncle company while the Lee family was away at West Point. For the next four and a half years, she recorded nearly everything that she experienced there, ranging from the Revolutionary War anecdotes of her uncle, interactions with prominent visitors, and even her conversations with enslaved people. By far, her diaries provide the most detailed account of daily life at Arlington House in existence.

From the time that descendants of one of Markie’s sisters donated the diaries to Arlington House in 1985, National Park Service staff and volunteers have used the diaries extensively for internal research. Occasionally, quotes have even made their way into published works, as in the case of Elizabeth Brown Pryor’s 2007 work *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee through His Private Letters*. Yet until now, the complete diaries have never appeared in print. Taken together, they present a young woman’s perspective on life at a nationally significant site during the tumultuous years preceding the American Civil War.

For many years, Markie’s name only appeared in print because of her connection to Robert E. Lee, her second cousin’s husband. For nearly three decades, Robert E. Lee and Markie Williams maintained a constant, candid correspondence. While Markie’s letters to Robert have not survived, many of those which he wrote to her were published in Avery Craven’s 1932 book *“To Markie”*: *The Letters of Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams*. Despite being just ninety-one pages, this book became a major historical source. The letters Craven published showcased some of Robert’s human qualities, such as his sense of humor and concern for family. Famously, the book also included his letter of January 22, 1861, in which he voiced his initial disapproval of secession. That letter alone has caused generations of historians to print Markie’s name in their biographies of Robert E. Lee.

Nevertheless, of the numerous biographers who have used Robert E. Lee’s correspondence with Markie in their works, few have many provided much background on who Markie was. Typical descriptions say that she was a cousin of Robert’s wife and nothing else. Some of the authors have completely mischaracterized the nature of their relationship. Seeing the passionate sentences that Robert E. Lee wrote to Markie, one historian wrote, “However harmless, it seems evident that Markie Williams was the object of Lee’s love.”¹ Another contrasted Robert’s letters to Markie with those he sent to his wife and claimed that she provided “the zest and excitement Mary Lee seemed to lack[.]”² Still another biographer has gone further than anyone else, insinuating that that the two might have been tempted to start a romantic

¹ Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 174, 219.

² Emory Thomas, *Robert E. Lee* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 106, 149.

relationship.³ Such conclusions are based on modern assumptions that strong emotional language between a man and woman must be indicative of deeper romantic feelings. Yet as Markie's own letters and diaries show, she frequently wrote passionate phrases to and about male figures in her life. This was common in close cross-sex friendships even before Markie was born.⁴ Moreover, Robert E. Lee, who was absent during most of her stay at Arlington House, hardly appears at all in her diary. He was an important part of her life, but no more so than the rest of her family.

To date, only one book has been written about Markie herself.⁵ Therefore, in order to understand the content of her diaries, it is necessary to first know a little bit about her background. Martha Custis Williams was born on March 28, 1827, at a home in the Georgetown portion of the District of Columbia known as Tudor Place. This home belonged to Martha Parke Custis Peter, Markie's grandmother and a sister of George Washington Parke Custis. As a grandchild of Martha Washington through her first marriage (to Daniel Parke Custis, who died two years before her 1759 marriage to George Washington), Martha Peter claimed a connection to one of the most famous families in the early United States. Likely because of her Federalist convictions, she gave her daughters unusual nationally inspired names. These included Columbia Washington Peter, America Pinckney Peter, and Britannia Wellington Peter. America Peter, called "Mec" by her family and friends, was Markie's mother.

As a young woman, America loved the excitement of Washington's social scene. However, her family did not permit her to attend as many functions as she would have preferred. This, she believed, would hinder her ability to marry. Her aunt Eleanor Custis Lewis wrote, "Mec sometimes says that she anticipates only a life of *single blessedness*, from *necessity*. She is very social naturally, but her Parents & Brothers do not indulge her taste for society. She is much admired when she is permitted to appear abroad."⁶ One description of this admiration came from Josiah Quincy IV, who met America Peter as a young man. Being introduced to her, he later recalled that he "could not avoid an awkward and yet comical consciousness of the august nationality which the lady in some sort symbolized. An introduction, followed by the usual sequences, seemed almost such a desecration as one would be guilty of who proposed to shake hands with the Goddess of Liberty and entertain her with ball-room gossip."⁷

Despite her early fears that she would never be married, America Peter would eventually meet her future husband – and under memorable circumstances too. When the Marquis de Lafayette visited Washington, D.C., in October 1824, the Peter family hosted a dinner for him at Tudor Place. According to family tradition, among the guests were several officers in the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, friends of one of America's brothers. One of these,

³ Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee through His Private Letters* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 203-205.

⁴ For a detailed analysis of this, see Cassandra A. Good, *Founding Friendships: Friendships between Men and Women in the Early American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press).

⁵ Frances Scott and Anne Cipriani Webb, *Who Is Markie?: The Life of Martha Custis Williams Carter, Cousin and Confidante of Robert E. Lee* (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007).

⁶ Eleanor Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, March 4, 1822, in Patricia Brady, ed., *George Washington's Beautiful Nelly: The Letters of Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, 1794-1851* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 125.

⁷ Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 275-76.

Lieutenant William G. Williams, would end up falling in love with her. Yet two years later, when they decided to be married, they encountered opposition. Ann Shaaff, a friend of the Peter family, wrote, “Mr. Williams is a total stranger whom no one knows anything about except that he was born in England and educated in this country at West Point. And although his friends and acquaintances all speak well of him, yet as there seems to be a mystery attached to him[.]”⁸ Even today, much remains uncertain about his background. George W. Cullum’s register of West Point graduates states that he was born in South Carolina and graduated fifteenth in the class of 1824. Following his graduation, he was assigned to topographical duty in the 7th Infantry Regiment, which brought him to Washington, D.C.⁹ Eleanor Custis Lewis commented, “Poor Mec will be united, in June, to Mr Williams, they will come here two days after, I expect. She is in very delicate health, & much changed in her appearance. He is a genteel young man, has an affecte grateful heart, but not at all remarkable I think for talents. ... I hope it may turn out better than her friends anticipate.”¹⁰

On June 27, 1826, America Peter and William G. Williams were married by Rev. Walter Addison of Georgetown’s St. John’s Church in the parlor of Tudor Place.¹¹ Ann Shaaff, who attended the wedding, reported to a friend that it was far from a romantic affair. “I suppose you have heard of America Peter’s marriage. Did you hear of so singular and melancholy an affair? The scene was truly afflicting. It was like a funeral, all the family in tears and the bride almost in convulsions. It was very unexpected indeed, even to the bridegroom.” She added that Martha Peter disapproved of the match and her husband, Thomas Peter, was “more violently opposed even than she.” Despite this opposition and the bride’s poor health, the two were married nine o’clock in the morning and departed for a three-week honeymoon which included stops at Woodlawn and Arlington.¹²

Eventually, the Peter family came to accept William G. Williams as a part of their family. Part of the reason may have been that the young couple was so evidently in love. Eleanor Custis Lewis observed, “My dear Mec & Williams are devoted to each other – her Parents are reconciled & she appears perfectly contented. He is very affecte & generous to excess for his limited income.”¹³ On March 28, 1827, only nine months after their wedding, they had their first child – Martha Custis Williams. Her arrival, however, was not as blissful as the family might have hoped. In the months that followed her birth, America continued to suffer from poor health. Her aunt Eleanor Lewis told a friend that she was suffering from “chills & fever” and was having trouble nursing her baby.¹⁴ She later complained, “Dear Mec is very delicate, she has a sweet good Babe, but she is a helpless Mother, she cannot suckle it, & knows very little about the care

⁸ Guy Castle, “Life in Georgetown, 1819-1841, as told in the Personal Correspondence of Ann Shaaff,” in *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Washington, D.C., Vol. 60/62, 82-83.

⁹ George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, from 1802 to 1867*, (New York: J. Miller, 1879), 1:262.

¹⁰ Eleanor Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, April 23, 1826, in *George Washington’s Beautiful Nelly*, 177.

¹¹ Quertermous, *A Georgetown Life*, 71.

¹² Castle, “Life in Georgetown,” 82-83.

¹³ Eleanor Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, August 3, 1826, in *George Washington’s Beautiful Nelly*, 182.

¹⁴ April 27, 1827, *ibid.*, p. 188

of children.”¹⁵ Considering America was a twenty-four year old woman who was already experiencing poor health, the criticism shows an astonishing lack of sympathy. In the course of the twelve years, she had four more children who survived infancy: Columbia Wingate Williams (1828), Kate Alicia Williams (1832), Laurence Albert Williams (1833), and William Orton Williams (1839). Like herself, three of Markie’s siblings had nicknames. Columbia was called “Lum,” Laurence was called “Lolo,” and Orton was known as “Bunnie.” These nicknames appeared frequently in the writings of Markie and her family members.

Because of his position in the topographical engineers, Markie’s father was absent for much of her childhood. An 1833 letter from Eleanor Lewis observed that while William G. Williams was away on assignment to Alabama and Florida, all of the children developed severe colds. The remaining family had to tend to them at Tudor Place. All the while, America Williams’s health deteriorated.¹⁶ When she accompanied her husband to one of his posts around the year 1840, another officer’s wife observed, “She is said to have been very beautiful and fascinating and figured conspicuously in gay life at Washington, but her beauty is a near wreck and she looks prematurely old. She is not more than thirty-five.”¹⁷ Only two years later, on April 25, 1842, America Williams died at the age of just thirty-nine. At that time, Markie herself was only twelve years old.

With her father serving as a topographical engineer, Markie spent most of her childhood at Tudor Place with her maternal relatives. She spent one year at the school operated by Georgetown’s Convent of the Visitation, leaving in 1838.¹⁸ Her family was Episcopalian, not Catholic, and likely chose the school for its proximity and quality of education rather than its religious affiliation. A few years later, Markie attended the Georgetown Female Seminary, run by Lydia English. During this time, she began the first journal presented in this transcription.

Markie’s initial diary ran from January 1 through April 5, 1844. In many ways, her entries capture experiences that are common to seventeen-year-olds across time periods, such as attending school and spending time with friends. For the most part, her writing provides a typical snapshot of life in Georgetown during the 1840s. Yet her writing also captures a nationally significant moment which she personally experienced.

On February 28, 1844, Markie accompanied her aunt and uncle, Britannia and Beverley Kennon, aboard the *U.S.S. Princeton* for a cruise down the Potomac River. Many dignitaries, including President John Tyler, were also aboard to watch a demonstration of the new Peacemaker cannon. The second time that it was fired, the gun exploded, killing several people around it. One of these was Beverley Kennon. Because she was on the other side of the ship with her aunt, Markie did not witness the tragedy. Yet she soon learned that her uncle had been killed. Hoping to spare her aunt the shock, she concealed the news from her while they were still on the

¹⁵ Eleanor Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, June 24, 1827, in *George Washington’s Beautiful Nelly*, 191.

¹⁶ Eleanor Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, March 10, 1833, in *George Washington’s Beautiful Nelly*, 208.

¹⁷ Frances Scott and Anne Cipriani Webb, *Who is Markie? the Life of Martha Custis Williams Carter, Cousin and Confidante of Robert E. Lee* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2007), 5.

¹⁸ Markie Diary, February 28, 1853. Tudor Place collections. In an email on August 28, 2020, Dr. Susan Naleztyty of Georgetown Visitation said that Martha Custis Williams is listed as graduating from the school in 1838.

ship. After they returned to Washington, Markie informed her grandmother, “Poor Aunt Brit does not know it, but Uncle K is dead.” When she finally learned the truth, Britannia Kennon was so distraught that she did not leave her bed for several days.¹⁹

Markie would experience another tragedy only two years later. During the Mexican-American War, her father, William G. Williams, served as the Chief Topographical Engineer for Major General Zachary Taylor. While leading troops at the Battle of Monterey on September 21, 1846, he was mortally wounded.²⁰ With his death, Markie and her siblings were now orphans. Not only did she have to process the traumatic news, but at nineteen years old, she also became the primary caregiver for her youngest brother, Orton. During this time of grief, an unexpected source of comfort came from Markie’s second cousin by marriage, Robert E. Lee. Also serving in Mexico, he found a belt which had belonged to Markie’s father and sent it to her. He referred to it as “a prized relic to you, of one who loved you So dearly & whose fond affection you so truly returned.”²¹ Markie remembered this gift and fondly connected Robert to her father in subsequent writings in her Arlington diaries.

Six years later, Markie embarked on a journey that she would favorably recall for many years afterwards. To recover after she fell from a horse, Markie took a yearlong voyage through Great Britain and France. From the time that she left New York in October 1852 to the time that she returned in August 1853, she recorded all of her noteworthy experiences in another series of diaries (now in the collections of Tudor Place.) These included her bout of seasickness during the transatlantic voyage, seeing Emperor Napoleon III in Paris, attending a Catholic mass for the first time in fourteen years, and reading *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* during her return to America. She referenced some of these episodes in her subsequent diaries.

On April 23, 1853, while she was still abroad, another tragedy came into Markie’s life. Her beloved aunt Mary Fitzhugh Custis, died at Arlington House. Learning of this on May 20, 1853, Markie wrote, “My heart aches to think that never again, shall my eyes behold her sweet mild countenance.” Even believing that her devoutly Christian aunt’s death was “but a transit to a world of glory,” she still wrote that she had wept ever since receiving the sad news.²²

Two months after Markie returned to the United States, she traveled to Arlington House to keep her widowed uncle G.W.P. Custis company while the Lees were away at West Point. It is unclear whether she decided to do this or if one of her relatives suggested it. Regardless, entering through the portico doors and seeing reminders of her aunt proved a painful experience. Beginning immediately after her arrival, Markie began to write as a way to process her grief. This was the beginning of her Arlington diaries.

Yet her writing was more than an outlet for her emotions. On November 7, roughly ten days after writing her first entry, she observed, “My Journal at Arlington is principally to put

¹⁹ Eleanor Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, April 5, 1844, in *George Washington’s Beautiful Nelly*, 239.

²⁰ Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 1:262.

²¹ Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams, May 21, 1848, in Avery Craven, ed., “*To Markie*”: *The Letters of Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 20-22.

²² May 20, 1853, diary entry by Martha Custis Williams, Martha Custis Williams, Martha (Williams) Carter Papers, Tudor Place Archives, MS6_B4_F2.

down the sayings & doings of my much loved & admired Uncle, wh[ich] in after days when he is gone, may be referred to with pleasure.” At this time, George Washington Parke Custis was seventy-two years old. Given the life expectancy of the time, Markie recognized that her uncle did not have too many years left. In fact, he was already showing signs of poor health. Having grown up at Mount Vernon as the adopted grandson of George Washington, G.W.P. Custis formed a direct connection to the Revolutionary War and the founding generation. For most of his life, both to promote American nationalism and to establish himself as a historical authority, Custis gave speeches, wrote articles, and produced plays on moments from the Revolutionary Era. Markie realized that when her uncle passed away, all of that knowledge would be lost. Thus, almost every entry from her diary recorded at least one of his historical anecdotes.

Markie’s diary also provided detailed biographical information on her uncle’s daily life. Wanting to remember everything about his character, she recorded everything from how he produced his paintings to the kind, encouraging words he said to her. Nevertheless, Markie also portrayed her uncle with both his positive and negative attributes. From the time she arrived at Arlington House, Markie, a devout Episcopalian, was concerned by her uncle’s seeming lack of piety. He seldom attended church and never said morning or evening prayers. Believing that both might help him to overcome the depression he experienced after his wife’s death, Markie revived the practice of saying daily prayers and took him to the Episcopal chapel that stood on the Arlington estate. Her frequent discussion of church services, prayers, and religious books sheds a light on spiritual practices in America at this time.

Notwithstanding the original stated purpose of her diary, as time went on, Markie included more and more of her own experiences and feelings. Though she defined her roles primarily based on the male figures in her life – her brothers, her uncle, and her Lee cousins – she also had ambitions of her own. Like her father and uncle, she aspired to become an artist. She was even planning to attend art school. Yet influenced by the gender expectations of her time, she chose to forgo her own aspirations in order to care for her uncle and younger brother Orton. Even so, her diary does show that at Arlington House, she was able to realize some of her goals. After showing one of her European journals to her friend Blanche Berard on April 9, 1856, she noted that her friend had encouraged her to use the entries as the basis of a travel book. While she never produced that work, one year later, she successfully published an article in the Episcopal newspaper *The Southern Churchman*. Several drafts of her other works are included in the appendix to this diary.

There is yet another reason that these diaries are valuable. In recording all of the daily occurrences at Arlington, which was a plantation before the Civil War, Markie also documented the experiences of its enslaved population. According to one entry, around seventy people were enslaved at Arlington while she was there. With most individuals being unable to leave or write, few left behind documentation of their own thoughts, feelings and experiences during their enslavement. Thus, Markie’s writing provides a window into their experiences – albeit a filtered one. Markie’s own attitudes and actions toward enslaved people were complicated and contradictory. As her Arlington diaries show, she could, on one hand, express horror when hearing how people were bought and sold at a market in Richmond, yet on the other remain fully

convinced that enslavement bettered African Americans. She insisted that enslaved workers were treated better at Arlington than on the plantations depicted in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. When her uncle threatened a young boy who allegedly put paint on one of his battle scenes with a beating, Markie laughed it off, viewing it as an idle threat. She also ignored the fact that during her stay, several enslaved women were hired away from their families.²³ Undoubtedly, Markie would have considered her own conduct toward enslaved workers as compassionate. Carrying on the tradition of her aunt and cousins, Markie taught enslaved children how to read and write, violating Virginia's law in the process. However, the books she gave them to read encouraged obedience, using selected portions of scripture to justify acceptance of their status quo. Even in charitable acts, she still held a deep-seated belief that Black and White Americans were not equal.

Nonetheless, reading between Markie's lines allows one to catch a glimpse into the lives and thoughts of enslaved people themselves. Selina Gray, the enslaved housekeeper, took the initiative to ask Markie to teach her daughters how to read; Margaret Taylor independently decided to join the local church congregation; and Eleanor Harris spoke her mind, even when Markie viewed it as "pompous." The lives of these and other individuals come to life through Markie's lines, even if she never intended this.

Like many historical texts, Markie's diaries are complex. They capture all the daily occurrences that are key to understanding the complicated history of a site like Arlington House, both good and bad. Because of this, they remain an invaluable historical resource.

Acknowledgements

Producing this annotated transcription of Martha Custis Williams's diaries has been a lengthy and involved process. The idea for this project came while I was working as a seasonal ranger at Arlington House in the summer of 2020. While Arlington National Cemetery was closed for the COVID-19 pandemic, I discovered several incomplete transcriptions of portions of the diary. Reading through those made me realize what an incredible untapped resource this was. I proceeded to fix some of the typographical errors I saw (comparing the transcriptions to scans of the original pages), transcribed pages which had not been included, and then added notes to identify the various people and places Markie mentioned. From these initial stages onward, Kim Robinson, then serving as Arlington House's curator, provided me with invaluable assistance. She and Mark Maloy, the George Washington Memorial Parkway's visual information specialist, inspired me to develop my transcription into a form which would be useful for researchers and the general public alike. I am grateful to both for their assistance. Likewise, I wish to thank Cassie Anderson, supervisory park ranger for the south district of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, for seeing the potential of this project, encouraging me to share it, and giving me much-needed words of affirmation along the way. I would also like to thank my fellow park rangers and volunteers at Arlington House for their help – especially for covering some of my spots in the daily schedule so that I had enough time to complete this project. I hope

²³ See for example George Washington Parke Custis to Robert Ball, October 2, 1854.

that all of them will find this resource useful as they continue to share Arlington House's stories with visitors.

Many people beyond the National Park Service have contributed directly and indirectly to this project. From this project's beginning, the staff at Tudor Place, Markie's other cherished home, have provided me with the information I needed to fully understand Markie's life and writings. In particular, I would like to thank Haley Wilkinson, Tudor Place's archivist, for answering my many email inquiries and facilitating my research. Samantha Snyder, research librarian at the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon, also answered my many research questions and shared resources on the Custis family. Similarly, Dr. Cassie Good of Marymount University, has shared discoveries from her Custis family research with me and answered my numerous, sometimes obscure, questions. Finally, the research librarians at William & Mary's Earl Gregg Swem Library and at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture assisted me throughout the course of my research. I could not have completed this project without them. I am truly thankful for all of their help.

Douglas Breton

March 2023

1844

[Notes written on the first page] Written by my Aunt – Martha Custis Williams Carter.

[Second note] Journals and other scraps of manuscripts, written at Arlington, my dearest and happiest of earthly homes. – MCW

January 1844

January 1 – 1844

I spent New Years day and two preceding days with Aunt Britannia New Years I went to the levee at the Presidents, ¹ in company with Uncle Kennon, Miss Claiborn, Mrs and Miss Kennon, and Mr Wm. Kennon.² We walked; it was a lovely day; and we arrived before the crowd had assembled. I was introduced to President Tyler. A few minutes afterwards Uncle Kennon introduced me to a Mr Merdough,³ a Theological Student from Alexandria, in whose company I passed the remainder of the day. After seeing all the Ministers, and all worth seeing, we left the White house. We walked to the Capitol where we saw Mr Wire's picture⁴ for the first time. It was very beautiful, and attracted much attention. Mr Merdough made me acquainted with the important fact of which I was before entirely ignorant, that he was my cousin, which of course made him more agreeable, than he would otherwise have been (perhaps). We left without seeing the Statue but soon returned to see it again, it is now in the house. I spent a very pleasant day, and a letter from Papa⁵ in the evening in which he mentioned his intention of visiting us in a few days, crowned the enjoyment of the day. On returning home in the carriage in the evening Bunnie⁶ observed that the stars were sublime. He went to Church for the first time the last day of the Year 1843, behaved admirably of course. He is now four years and six months of age.

January 2nd 1844 Wednesday⁷

I went to school as usual, and was delighted to see the girls. Julia was at school, but Louisa, naughty girl, did not come. Every thing went on as usual in school.

¹ From 1801 until 1932, the White House hosted an annual New Year's Day reception for the public, allowing ordinary citizens to meet the President. The *Whig Standard* (Washington, DC) reported on January 2, 1844, "We have never seen the White House more thronged than it was yesterday by those who called to pay their respects to the Chief Magistrate of the nation."

² The various people who went to the reception included Beverly Kennon (1793-1844), Markie's uncle and a captain in the U.S. Navy; an unnamed Claiborne who would have been a relative from Beverly Kennon's first marriage to Elizabeth Claiborne (1808-1832); two other Kennon relatives; and William Dandridge Kennon (1832-1872), Beverly's son from his previous marriage.

³ Edmund C. Murdaugh, who graduated from the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va., in 1845.

⁴ "The Embarkation of the Pilgrims" by Robert W. Weir (1843)

⁵ William George Williams (1801-1846), a topographical engineer who was then stationed in Buffalo. He was subsequently killed at the Battle of Monterrey during the Mexican-American War.

⁶ William Orton Williams (1839-1863), Markie's younger brother.

⁷ Markie mistakenly wrote the wrong date and covered the 2 with a 3.

January 3^d 1844 Thursday⁸

The weather was very unfavorable but we went to school. Lou was not at school of course but Julia and I behaved very well and made many resolutions for the future.

Jan 4th 1844

A lovely day – nothing remarkable.

Jan 5th 1844 Friday

A beautiful day. I went to school as usual. Louisa Abert, Julia Nicholls⁹ and myself went downtown in recess and as we each had a cent I was commitioned to purchase three spice cakes which I did and we three romantic young ladies ate our cakes on our way back to school. After school in the afternoon I went to Bible class with Julia after which we took a walk. Kate and Lum¹⁰ went of Fannie Burr's party.¹¹

Jan 6 1844 Saturday

A beautiful day. I went to school in the morn[ing]. Laura Powel and Tiny Miller¹² came to dine with me. Lou Abert was invited but could not come. Spent a very pleasant day.

Sunday 7 January 1844

A pleasant day. We went to Mr Gassaway's Church¹³ in the morning, and took Bun for the second time to Church, he behaved very well. In the afternoon I went to Mr Butler's Church¹⁴ in the afternoon and heard an African Missionary named Dr. Savage.¹⁵ His text was in the 6 chap. Gal. 9 verse.¹⁶ Cousin James joined the Presbyterian Church.¹⁷

Monday Jan 8 1844

The celebration of the Battle of New Orleans. A lovely day and we went to school as usual. A beautiful moonlight night.

⁸ Like the previous entry, Markie attempted to correct the date by writing a 2 over the 3.

⁹ Louisa Matlack Abert (1826-1896) was a daughter of John James Abert, first commander of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. "Julia Nicholls" is probably Julia Adele Nicholls (1830-1871)

¹⁰ Kate Alicia Williams (1832-1864) and Columbia Wingate Williams (1828-1886), Markie's sisters.

¹¹ Likely Frances Burr (1829-?), daughter of the mapmaker David H. Burr (1803-1875).

¹² Possibly Laura Holmes Powell Tucker (1827-1916).

¹³ Christ Church in Georgetown, of which Steven Griffith Gassaway (1818-1854) was the rector.

¹⁴ St. John's Church in Georgetown. Rev. Clement M. Butler was the rector at this time. A letter he wrote describing the explosion on board the *U.S.S. Princeton* (which Markie alludes to in her diary) is in the Earl Gregg Swem Library's Special Collections at the College of William & Mary

¹⁵ Thomas Staughton Savage (1804-1880), a naturalist and Protestant missionary who visited Liberia.

¹⁶ Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

¹⁷ This might refer to Judge James Dunlop (1793-1872), a first cousin of Markie's mother.

Tuesday Jan 9 – 1844

Snowed all day. We went to school. Lou and Julia were there. I commenced to write my specimen for the examination.

Wednesday Jan 10 – 1844

The ground covered with snow. A beautiful day, lovely night but the snow was too deep for us to attend school therefore we stayed at home and employed my time very usefully darning stockings.

Thursday Jan 11 – 1844

Ground covered with snow but a lovely day. We all went to school as usual. Louisa Abert and myself had a great deal of fun quizzing Julia Nicholls by telling that James A¹⁸ had come. Louisa is enatuated with Zimmerman's On Solitude.¹⁹ Lou has written me a long french letter. Julia has also one for me.

Friday Jan 12 – 1844

A rainy day. We went to school. Lou Abert stayed at school the night before at the soiree. In the morning Mary came and told Louise that James had come. She was enchanted and went home at 12 oclock. I looked very sad at the idea of Pa's not having come but about 2 oclock Cousin Roberta came to my french class and told me that Pa had come. I was delighted and we all went home as soon as possible. Pa had come with James as far as Baltimore but a headache prevented him coming farther. Aunt Jane and Uncle Washington²⁰ spent the day with Pa at Tudor Place.²¹

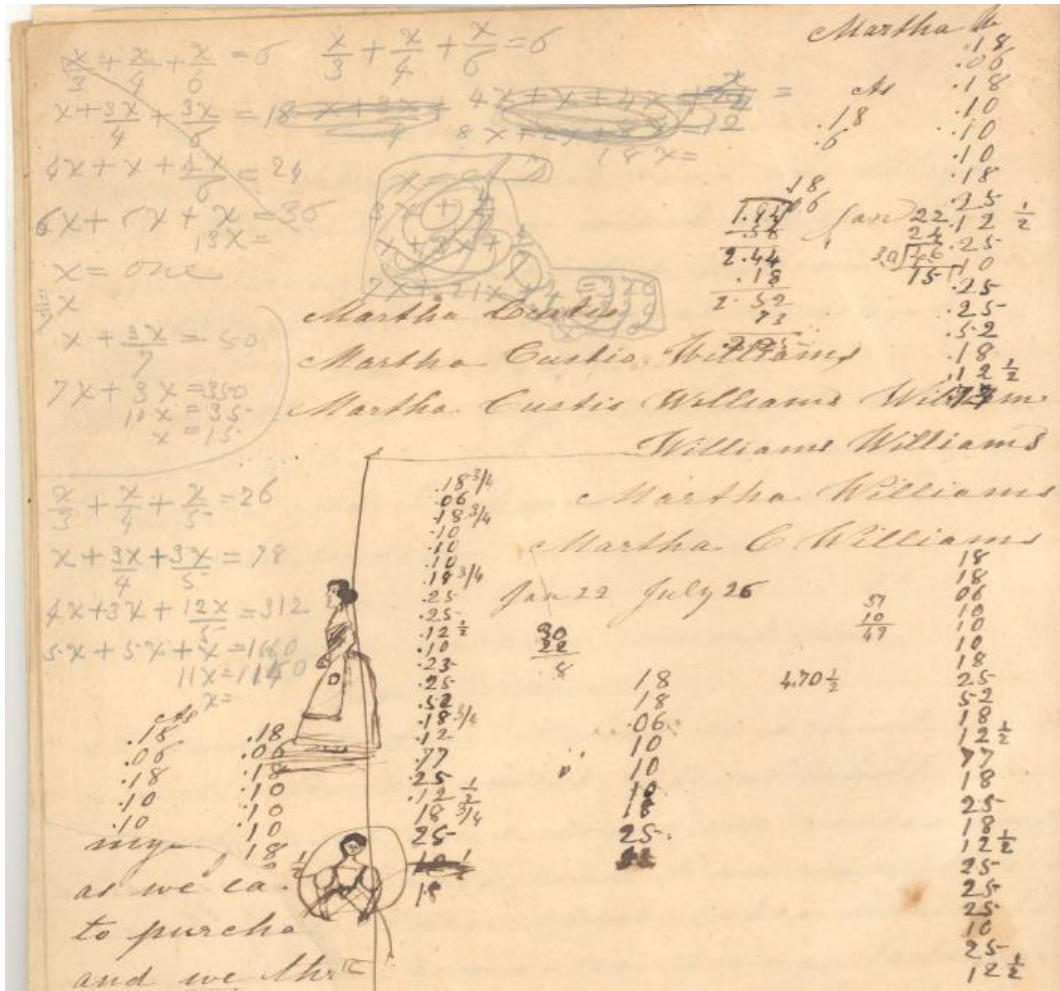
[A partially torn page in this part of the diary features several algebra equations, two sketches of a woman, and Markie's name written repeatedly, likely as handwriting practice.]

¹⁸ James William Abert (1820-1897), a future U.S. Army officer, explorer, and bird collector. He was the son of John James Abert.

¹⁹ *Solitude Considered with Respect to Its Influence upon the Mind and the Heart* by Johann Georg Zimmermann (1791)

²⁰ Jane Boyce Peter (1813-1882) and George Washington Peter (1801-1877)

²¹ Tudor Place was the Peter family's home in Georgetown, DC.



Saturday Jan 13 – 1844

A fine day overhead, but dreadful walking.

Sunday Monday Jan 15 – 1844

A damp gloomy day. I walked to school with Pa. Had a bad headache all day. It snowed, hailed, and rained.

Sunday Jan 14 – 1844

A damp gloomy day. Pa went to Mr Gassaway's Church with us we had a very good sermon the text was Prov 9 Chap 12 verse. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it." I went to Mr Butler's Church in the afternoon with Miss Mary Chandler. Mr Butler preached a delightful sermon in Hosea 6 Chap 3 verse. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." Miss Elizabeth Morris fainted in Church.

Tuesday Jan 16th 1844

A very gloomy rainy day. We went with Pa to spend the day with Aunt Britannia. Stopped at the Post Office and Papa got me two letters one from Dr. Tripler,²² and the other from Miss Blanche Berard.²³ We then stopped at Mrs Aberts for a few minutes only and proceeded to Aunt Brit's where we all spent the day with Aunt Jane Uncle Washington and all the children. In the evening Pa dressed in full uniform and went to the President's Lévee. Road home with Pa about 11 at night.

Wednesday Jan 17 1844

A dreadful gloomy day. Papa went to the City and stayed until three oclock and then returned. I wrote to Mrs Stewart of NY. Bunnie wanted very much to go to Buffalo with Papa So he went out, put on his hat and cloak, put up a bundle and bade every one good bye. At last however after much persuasion he took off his coat and decided that Buffalo was too cold for him and there would be no one there to take care of him. Poor little fellow burst into tears and said that he would stay here with Grandmama. When Papa had gone Bunnie said sister it seems as if Papa had not been here at all now. It cleared off in the afternoon and is a clear night but the wind is very high and bleak and I feel more gloomy than words can express.

Thursday Jan 18 – 1844

A very good day. We went to school Lou Abert was there.

Friday Jan 19 – 1844

A white frost in the morning but other wise a lovely day. Lou and Julia were at school. Julia went home at 12 oclock Mary Abert walked down town with me at 12 oclock to get a point to my pencil. I had to get Lou a cake to console her for my absence. I have commenced Zimmerman On Solitude upon the Mind and am delighted with it so far.

Saturday Jan 20 – 1844

A very pleasant day. Lum and Kate²⁴ spent the day with Aunt Brit. I stayed at home with Grandmother.²⁵ I went down town in the morning and took Bunnie to the toy store went to the Post Office and got an invitation to the Washington Assemblies.

²² Likely Charles Stuart Tripler (1806–1866), an Army surgeon.

²³ Blanche Berard (1824-1901) was one of Markie's best friends. Her father Claudius Berard emigrated from Bordeaux, France when he was 21 and eventually became a French professor at West Point. She lived in West Point, NY, where she managed the post office after her father's 1848 death. A teacher and writer, in 1855 she published *A School History of the United States*.

²⁴ Columbia Wingate Williams (1828-1886) and Kate Alicia Williams (1832-1864), both Markie's sisters.

²⁵ Martha Parke Custis Peter (1777-1854)

Sunday Jan 21 – 1844

The ground covered with snow, snowing hard all day. I was the only one of that went to Church in the family except Uncle Washington. Mr Gassaway preached his text was in the 95 psalm [*sic*] 7 and 8 verses. To day if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts.²⁶

Monday Jan 22 – 1844

The ground covered with a little snow in the morning. We went to school. I went to the Post Office after dinner received a letter from Miss Nora Bankhead.²⁷ The snow all melted and we had a lovely day.

Tuesday Jan 23 – 1844

Ground covered with snow again in the morning and raining hard. We did not go to school. Rained all day, very dreary.

Wednesday Jan 24 – 1844

A beautiful day very warm like spring. We went to school and when we came home found Aunt Britannia and the baby who spent the day.

Thursday 25 – 1844

A very pleasant but cold day. Went to school. Louisa Abert, Julia Nicholls and myself went down town at recess, not however without providing ourselves with a roll of bread which we eat on our way. Louisa Abert went to Velards Jeweler's²⁸ to get her bracelet mended. Bunnie is sweeter than ever. A lovely night.

Friday Jan 26 – 1844

A pleasant day, we went to school but nothing remarkable signaled the day. Very cold.

Saturday Jan 27 – 1844

²⁶ Markie altered the text slightly. In the King James Version, the full verses for Psalm 95:7-8 read, "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness[.]"

²⁷ Honora Smith Bankhead (1820-1856) was the daughter of James Monroe Bankhead, a colonel in the 3rd U.S. Artillery. She married George Guest, an English immigrant, in Baltimore, Md. Robert E. Lee mentioned her several times in his 1844 letters to Markie.

²⁸ Richard Henry Lee Villard (1794-1849) was a silversmith who had a shop on Bridge Street (modern M Street) in Georgetown.

A bitter cold windy day. We went to the school in the morning. Louisa was there to my astonishment. We sit in the schoolroom. Miss English²⁹ kept school in, reading the accounts of the whole term, until past 1 o'clock. Lou saw James pass the window and told me that he had gone to see me. I was terribly vexed at the idea of having to stay until school was out, however I made the best of it. I hurried home as soon as school was out James had called, but Grandmother was engaged and he walked back in the cold. I dressed as soon as possible and we went (in the carriage) to see Aunt Britannia. Stopped at Mrs Aberts left my card for Louisa, then called on Mrs Goldsboroughs³⁰ and then proceeded to Aunt Brit's. Kate and Lum got out of the carriage and she accompanied me to see the Miss Scotts³¹ who, however were out. We went back and dined and in the evening I went to a Concert with Mrs Kennon and Miss Luce³² it was very, very cold, clear moonlight night; the concert took place at the Assembly rooms near the City Hall given by the ladies of Washington City for the benefit of the poor. Only the amateurs of the City performed Mrs Benjamin Page, Mrs Gales, Mrs Dr. May, Miss Wickliff, Miss J. Seaton, Miss Louise Agneille, and several other ladies. Mr Adams sang beautifully Mr Gebère also sang magnificently.³³ Many other gentlemen sang accompanied by the whole orchestra.

Sunday Jan 28 – 1844

Snowed all day. We went to Mr Gassaway's Church in the morning and took Bunnie. It snowed all the morning. When Bunnie and myself came out of church we both fell in the yard but no one happened to be there. The text was in 2nd Cor 4 chap 3 verse "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost."

Monday Jan 29 – 1844

A beautiful clear day, the ground covered with snow. Went to school as usual commenced another quarter in Music with Mr Schaad.³⁴

Tuesday Jan 30 – 1844

A dull day, every prospect of a snow tomorrow. Louisa and myself went down town in recess to leave my watch at the jewelers. Nothing remarkable passed to-day.

Wednesday Jan 31 – 1844

A good day. Louisa and Julia were at school. No event worth recording.

²⁹ Lydia Scudder English (1802-1866), head of the Georgetown Female Seminary.

³⁰ Possibly Jane Goldsborough (1799-?), a Georgetown resident.

³¹ It is possible that these are the daughters of General Winfield Scott. His daughter Virginia (1821-1845) became a sister in the Georgetown Convent of the Visitation in 1844.

³² Several members of the Luce family lived in Georgetown. It is unclear which one Markie meant.

³³ Julia Winston Seaton (1812-1889), the daughter of former D.C. Mayor William Winston Seaton, and Sarah Juliana Maria Lee Gales (1798-1879), wife of former D.C. Mayor Joseph Gales Jr. Gales and Seaton published the *National Intelligencer* newspaper together.

³⁴ There was a professor John C. Schaad living on 9th Street NW in 1871. It might be the same person.

February 1844

Thursday Feb 1st 1844

A beautiful morning. On our way to school Lum and myself met Miss Gale, Matilda Dana, and Mademoiselle Martan and they accompanied us to school. Lou and myself finished our copy books. I wrote a farewell piece of poetry in Louisa's. I walked to the Post Office in the afternoon, and was overtaken by a hailstorm. Cousin Margaret Thomas was married at 3 o'clock.³⁵

Friday Feb 2 1844

The ground covered with snow. Louisa was at school. To-day I have been made the confident [confidante] of a very very important secret, it makes me feel inexpressably curious. This is the last day of school for this term. Lou and myself spent our recess alone, (for a remarkable coincident) a very dull day. I did not go to Bible Class for I returned too late from school.

Saturday Feb 3d 1844

A cloudy day. Lum was quite sick. In the afternoon I went to the Post Office and got a letter from Papa. I took a long walk with Miss Mary Shaaf. It was extremely muddy.

Sunday Feb 4th 1844

A cloudy day. Grandmother and myself went to Church, it was communion Sunday. Mr Gassaway preached. His text was in the 14 chap St. Luke 17 verse. It snowed all the afternoon.

Monday Feb 5th 1844

A very dull rainy day. Neither of us went to the examination. It commenced to day. Music lesson.

Tuesday Feb 6 1844

A dull rainy day. Lum went to the examination alone. She was examined. Nothing wonderful happened.

Wednesday Feb 7 – 1844

³⁵ Harriet Margaret Thomas née Dunlop (1809-1886) married Nathan Loughborough (1772-1848) on January 30, 1844 at Hayes in Montgomery, Md. Both had been married before. The wedding was announced in the *Alexandria Gazette* on February 12, 1844.

A muddy day. Lum and Kate went to the examination. Aunt Brit Aunt Jane and Uncle Washington dined with us.

Thursday Feb 8th 1844

A dreadful day none of us went to school.

Friday Feb 9th 1844

A fine day but the ground being covered with snow we road to school. Louisa was there. We went in school just in time for our french class. I recited my piece first. We were not examined in any other lesson. Louisa stayed at school all night. We went to the concert in the evening.

Saturday Feb 10th 1844

A lovely day. Louisa Abert came over early in the morning and spent the day. Aunt Brit and the baby spent the day with us. Sarah Agnes also dined with us. Mary came over about 12 oclock and in the evening I went home with Louisa. We walked. General Swift³⁶ and Mrs Com (?) Dalas spent the evening at Mrs Aberts.

Sunday Feb 11th 1844

Sunday we went to Church at Mr Hawley's.³⁷ I saw James Abert³⁸ for the first time since his arrival, in the choir. Bishop Hopkins of Vermont³⁹ preached both morning and afternoon. We did not spend our evening very profitably. Willie Stone (as Lou calls him) pass the evening with us, and our conversation was not what it should have been – but

Monday Feb 12 1844

Jane Stone stayed Sunday night with us at Lou's. Monday morning we walked out on the Avenue shopping, then returned and soon after Louisa, Jane, James and myself went in a hack to pay some visits. We called on Miss Porter, Miss Wool, Miss Masons of Detroit, and Mrs Reed of Erie.⁴⁰ The last two we found at home. When we returned home we prepared to go out to Mr Stones'. Lou, Jane, James and myself road in the carriage; and William Stone road on horseback;

³⁶ Possibly General Joseph Gardner Swift (1783-1865)

³⁷ St. John's Episcopal Church in Lafayette Square. Its rector until 1845 was William Dickinson Hawley. He was also Chaplain of the Senate.

³⁸ James William Abert (1820-1897). Like his father, he was an officer in the Topographical Engineers. He participated in the Frémont expedition.

³⁹ John Henry Hopkins (1792-1868), eighth bishop of Vermont.

⁴⁰ The women named here appear to be relatives of prominent politicians. Possibly identifications are as follows: Sarah Barnard Porter (1807-1885), wife of Sen. Augustus Seymour Porter of Michigan; Julia Phelps Mason, widow of Stevens T. Mason (1811-1843), first governor of Michigan; and Harriet Walton Gilson Reed (1821-1901), wife of Rep. Charles Manning Reed of Erie, PA. "Miss Wool" might be a relative of John Ellis Wool (1784-1869), who was commander of the army's Department of the East.

when we arrived near home he was thrown from his horse but not hurt much. Professor Jeger (Yago)⁴¹ spend the evening there.

Tuesday Feb 13 1844

I passed a most uncomfortable night for Louisa was very restless, so the next day I felt as you may suppose very much fatigued, however Jane and myself went down to the City to get some articles while Lou stayed at home and assisted Mrs Stone in making a dress to wear on Tuesday evening to the Levee. I took a long nap and then assisted Louisa. We finished the dress and returned to Mrs Abert's in the afternoon. We soon dressed. First Mrs Abert, Jane Stone, the Col and Charles went and then sent the hack back for Lou, James, and myself. We enjoyed or rather Lou enjoyed herself very much. We were all introduced to the President. "I could not dance that night." I remained with Mrs Abert, James, Charles, and the Col all the evening.

Wednesday Feb 14 1844

A pleasant day. A lovely day. Lou, Jane Stone and myself remained in the house all day. Jane and I did some sewing for Mrs Abert. I had the hysteries for the first time at least for a long time. Grandmother sent the carriage for us in the afternoon. I was invited to pass the evening at the Pottses but declined going. Lou and Jane were to go.

Thursday Feb 15 1844

A cloudy day, but I went down to see Miss English and Mademoiselle Martan. In the evening it rained very hard. I wrote to Pa. Mr Shod gave us our Music lesson.⁴² Was invited to a party at Mrs Dunlops.⁴³

Friday Feb 16 1844

A lovely morning but it clouded over. Lum and Kate spent the day and evening at Mrs Boyces.⁴⁴ Grandmother went over and stayed nearly all day at Mrs Masons with her little boy who was not expected to live. Bunnie went to sleep and I was left all alone. I wrote to Lou Abert after which I felt very nervous all day. Mrs Masons little boy died at 12 oclock at night.

Saturday Feb 17 1844

A cloudy day, the ground was just covered with snow. I have had a sore throat all day. Nothing remarkable happened to day except that I am going to take a dose of medicine.

Sunday Feb 18 1844

⁴¹ It is possible that this is Benoit Jäger (1789-1869), a professor of French language.

⁴² The 1850 census lists an "A. Shod" as living in Georgetown. He was a professor of music who was born in Germany in 1813.

⁴³ Elizabeth Peter (1771-1787), sister of Markie's grandfather, married James Dunlop (1755-1823) in 1787.

⁴⁴ Probably Mrs Mary McEuen Boyce, owner of Montrose Park in modern Rock Creek Park.

I was not at all well and did not go to Church.

Monday Feb 19 1844

A lovely spring day. My throat was too sore to go to school. Dr. Riley⁴⁵ came to see me. Cousin Henrietta Dunlop⁴⁶ and Sarah Agnes Aber came to see me also.

Tuesday Feb 20 – 1844

A very fine day. I went to school in the morning and I asked Miss English to let Mary Abert sit with me at her mothers request, which she did. Julia Nicholls sits on one side of me and Mary on the other. I returned home after school with Mary Abert. Lou seemed delighted to see me. Mrs Hunt from Detroit spent the day there also General Swift and Miss Louisa Harrison. I spent a delightful day. I had a bad headache but some Carbonate of soda soon relieved me. When we were going to bed James told me that Louisa's arm was sore, and he had some ointment that he wished me to rub it with. I was very credulous on the subject and gravely posed in on my hand, to perform the operation but as soon as the disagreeable odour came in contact with my smelling faculties, I at once perceived the design, but too late. I washed my hands in soap and water, and cologne but the odour was preceptable for several days after.

Wednesday Feb 21 – 1844

Louisa hurried Mary and myself (the schoolgirls) off to school. We had a pleasant walk. Aunt Brit and the baby dined with Grandmother.

Thursday Feb 22 – 1844

A beautiful spring day. We all went to school as usual. At the fifteen minute recess, just before our french class I was walking on the portico with Maria Morris studying my french grammar, when one of the girls came and told me that Miss English wished to see me. I went and she told me to go to the parlour that some one wished to see me, and that she believed it was Papa. I ran to the parlour and to my surprise & delight found that it was he. We all went home in a hack. A few minutes after we arrived Uncle Custis⁴⁷ came over; Grandmother had gone down to town and was of course very much astonished on her arrival to see the unexpected visitors. Pa went with Uncle Custis to the 22nd ball in Washington. A beautiful night.

Friday Feb 23 – 1844

A sweet summer day. The Dr. came to see my throat which was too sore to go to school. Lum and Kate went, Pa did not come over until three o'clock. A rainy night.

⁴⁵ Dr. Joshua Riley (1800-1875), a Georgetown physician.

⁴⁶ Henrietta Dunlop, sister of Judge James Dunlop and a distant cousin of Markie.

⁴⁷ George Washington Parke Custis

Saturday Feb 24 1844

A cloudy day. Lum and Kate went to school. My throat was too sore to go. It commenced to hail about nine o'clock in the morning. Papa came over from Washington about 12 o'clock.

Sunday Feb 25 1844

A beautiful day. We all went to Mr Gassaway's Church in the morning (except Papa) and heard a delightful sermon from a Mr Jackson. In the afternoon, I went with Papa to Mr Butler's Church where Mr Jackson preached again. It was an excellent sermon and Pa liked very much. After Church I went with Pa to see Miss Bryent of Alexandria.⁴⁸

Monday Feb 26 1844

A lovely day. Papa took Bunnie and myself over to Washington. We stopped at Aunt Brit's where we remained until one o'clock, then Papa came and took Bun and myself visiting we called on Mrs Spencer, Mrs Hunt, Mrs Mitchel, Mrs And Misses Scotts, Miss Worth, Miss Porter, Mrs Wilkins & Miss Louisa Abert.⁴⁹ All out except Mrs Mitchel and Lou. We then returned to Uncle Kennon's and dined. I received a little package from dear Lizzie Gardner and a sweet note. About five o'clock we came back to Tudor Place where I found a note from Miss Emily Austin, and Miss Porters card.

Tuesday, Feb 27, 1844

A very mild day. We all went to school. I was very glad to see the girls. We returned home at three o'clock and found Papa and Aunt Brit here. Aunt Brit went home soon after dinner and Pa bid us good bye soon after, with the intention of leaving Washington to-morrow Oh! I feel so sorry.

To-morrow I anticipate going to Mount Vernon on board of the Princeton, but the wind is very high and I fear as usual, my hopes will be blighted.

Wednesday, Feb. 28, 1844

The morning was beautiful, but a little windy. At nine o'clock I left Tudor Place in Grandmother's carriage for the steam-boat wharf, calling on the way for Aunt Brit, Miss Lucy, Mrs and Miss Kennon. I waited at Aunt Britannia's until eleven o'clock, then we left in two carriages, and stopped at the Navy Department for Uncle Kennon. We all anticipated much pleasure. The wharf was crowded with hacks and carriages, and about twelve o'clock the little Steamboat Joseph Johnson awaited us. The river was calm and beautiful and although very very crowded, we had an agreeable trip down the river. I was with Miss Wickliff⁵⁰ all the time, and Mrs Reed, of Erie. We soon arrived at the Ship, which was laying off Alexandria, not however without being in great hazard of ~~our~~ drowning or sinking. The U.S. Ship Princeton presented a

⁴⁸ Likely Mary Bryant (1838-1882), daughter of Rev. William T. Bryant.

⁴⁹ Most of the people named here seem to be relatives of members of the 28th Congress.

⁵⁰ An unnamed daughter of Postmaster General Charles Anderson Wickliffe (1788-1869)

most magnificent appearance, being completely manned, and Decorated with the flags of the different nations. The day passed delightfully the band played and the cannons were repeatedly fired until about three o'clock. On our return from Mount Vernon and just past Fort Washington, the Great Gun was again fired. I was sitting on a little bench around the helm of the boat and saw the dreadful explosion. In a few moments we heard the shocking news of desolation. Aunt Britannia who was with me but we did not suspect our own cause of alarm until Miss Claiborne told us. I will not record the heartrending scene and universal sadness which prevailed the Ship. Enough, to have it enstamped on my memory. My Uncle Kennon fell a victim to the blow.⁵¹

Thursday, ~~March~~ Feb 29, 1844

We went down to Aunt Dicks in the morning where we stayed for three weeks. I did not go to school during the time but remained with Bunnie my angel, baby brother. Nothing remarkable occurred.

March 1844

Friday, ~~March~~ Feb 30, 1844 [March 1, 1844]

Nothing happened worth recording.

Saturday, ~~March~~ Feb 31, 1844 [March 2, 1844]

A cloudy gloomy day. The funeral of the unfortunate killed took place from the Presidents. All seemed to be mourning even the sky exchanged its azure hue for a dark and dismal shroud, more appropriate indeed.

Sunday, March 1, 1844 [March 3, 1844]

I went to Mr Butlers Church and heard a most delightful sermon.

Nothing happened worth recording until

Thursday, March 28th, 1844

My birthday. It passed by unnoticed by all except my dear Grandmother. Aunt Brit's baby was christened by Mr Butler.⁵² I went to his Church in the afternoon, and he returned with me.

⁵¹ Here Markie has described the infamous *U.S.S. Princeton* disaster. In addition to Captain Beverly Kennon, the exploding the Peacemaker gun also instantly killed Secretary of State Abel Upshur, Secretary of the Navy Thomas Gilmer, Maryland attorney Virgil Maxcy, New York attorney David Gardiner, and Armistead, President John Tyler's enslaved valet. At least sixteen other people were injured. President Tyler married Gardiner's grieving daughter Julia after the tragedy.

⁵²

April 1844

Tuesday, April 2nd, 1844

I spent the evening with Cousin Annie and Rosalea Morris⁵³ at Mrs Boyces lovely moonlight night.

Wednesday, April 3d, 1844

A lovely day Went to school and about two oclock I was charmed most unexpectedly by a letter from Mr And Mrs Simpson from Buffalo. Words could not express my joy at seeing them dear friends.

Thursday, April 4th, 1844

I went to school in the morning. It was a lovely day. At 12 oclock I went with Grandmother in to the City, to see Mrs Pomroy.

Good Friday April 5 1844

A very warm day. I went down to Miss Englishes in the morning to see Mademoiselle Martan and from there to Mr Butlers Church where I heard an excellent sermon from Mr Shires.

⁵³ Anna Maria Morris (1826-1900) and Rosalie Eugenia Morris (1824-1878). They were the daughters of Thomas Willing Morris (1792-1852), an attorney in Howard County, Md.

1853

October 1853

Arlington House – Oct 28, 1853

Yesterday, dear Uncle Custis sent the carriage for me, to go over and stay with him.

He came as far as Washington and remained at a Book Store¹ ~~in~~ where I stopped for him. We talked of various circumstances relating to ~~our~~ the journeys wh[ich] each had taken since last we met. He seemed not in good spirits and my heart grew heavier & heavier the nearer we approached the dear old mansion – and by mutual consent conversation flagged until ~~each~~ both became mute[.] One by one, the large tears fell from my eyes as each familiar object dawned upon my vision. Perry² came to the door as usual and Uncle getting out assisted me from the carriage & with his usual kind words of welcome led me into the parlor –

As I entered the room my sensations were undefined – I s[t]ood for a moment scarcely daring to raise my eyes. Dear Uncle doubtless appreciated my feelings and hurriedly left the room. I could no longer restrain my grief, but, throwing myself on the the [sic] sofa gave vent in bitter tears & sobs to my long pent ~~grief~~ up feelings – It was on that very spot my dear aunt had sat beside me when last I visited Arlington. There was something peculiarly impressive in the last scene wh[ich] transpired between us at that time, tho' little then did I dream it was my last. I had on my bonnet and things seated on the end of the sofa Thayer Abert³ sat by the centre table conversing with me when dear Aunt⁴ came in and taking her seat very close beside me and putting her arms around me in her gentle spirit like manner said “What shall I do Markie when you are gone?” I could not then have imagined all the events that w[oul]d happen between that time & this.

Our horses were brought to the door & T & myself road [sic] down to the bridge, crossed in the Ferry Boat⁵ and rode home in a carriage. From that time for two or three months I was an invalid confined much of the time to my bed. I carried on an active correspondance by note with my poor Aunt, notwithstanding my indisposition. The next & last time I saw her she came to Tudor Place to tell me good bye. In a few days, I expected to leave for New York prior to sailing for Europe. For nearly a year I have been in Foreign Lands – one dear letter only did I receive from that loved friend – Now by God's mercy I am returned and I come to visit these old scenes so hallowed by past association and to cheer if so sad a heart can cheer my widowed Uncle.

As I entered ~~that~~ the parlor my eyes first rested on the old green covered Bible & Prayer Book in the very spot where I had last seen them on the centre Table – and there her vacant chair – I looked to-wards the door through wh[ich] she always entered. It was closed never again to be opened by her – I retired to my room – There, two of the servants were waiting to see me – one was poor Aunt's maid who always sat at work in her room. I could look upon naught that

¹ The entry Markie wrote on February 23, 1854 implies the bookstore G.W.P. Custis visited in D.C. was Adam's Books on Pennsylvania Avenue.

² Perry Parks, an enslaved butler or valet who was the brother of James Parks.

³ Silvanus Thayer Abert (1828-1903), son of John James Abert. He later wrote a work called *Is a Ship Practicable?* which explored possible routes for ships to reach the Pacific Ocean from the Atlantic, including the Suez Canal.

⁴ Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis (1788-1853)

⁵ At that time, a ferry ran from Mason's Island (modern day Theodore Roosevelt Island) to Georgetown in the District of Columbia.

reminded me of her without tears – I threw myself on the bed & burrying my face in the pillow again gave way to my painful feelings.

When I went down stairs and took her seat at the table – when the evening candles were lit & the cheerful fire blazed and her vacant chair was before me the tears came fast in my eyes, but, I felt that I ought to be cheerful, and I banished my mind to foreign Lands and talked of what I had there seen & of my adventures by land & sea. Uncle seemed interested. He listened with fixed attention & ever & anon interrupted me by questions. I was glad to have succeeded in diverting his mind & I felt happier.

He talked of many things that he too had seen & we read and I did everything but look about the room.

The hour for prayer came, but we had no prayer – The Bible was unread, the prayer book untouched. I looked at them, breathed a deep sigh and kissing dear Uncle, he called my little maid to take the candle & go with me to my room. Several times he Uncle has alluded to his now desolate home. I trust I may be of some comfort to him. I would be so happy if I could be of some use & make his home less desolate; and oh! that his eternal welfare may not be wholly neglected. God grant him his Holy Spirit.

To-day, I have been interested by his various anecdotes. Sat with about an hour in his studio listening to little anecdotes of relating to celebrated artists[.] “West, he said tho’ an American was a thorough Royalist and lived most of his time in England. It was in his studio that Trumbull painted his celebrated picture of “the death of Montgomery”[.]⁶ Sir Josh Reynolds entered and was astonished when he beheld the picture & asked who painted it West introduced young Trumbull⁷ & said he considered it an honor that such a picture should have been painted in his studio.

While at dinner he conversed about Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton – said that she was never admitted at the Court of Great Britton – so great was their contempt for her, and that after Lord Nelson’s death his wife was created Countess of Trafalgar in her own right not as Lord N’s widow and that Lady Hamilton died at ~~Bolo~~ Boulogne sur Mer having become addicted to debauchery & was indebted to an American for a decent burial. I think he also said that the mother of Nelson’s only daughter was the Queen of Naples – Lord Hamilton was ambassador to the Court of Naples.⁸ Uncle relates everything with so much interest, I think he feels deeply his loss, tho he tries by reading and talking to divert his mind. He is reading the Count de Charney par Alexander Dumas⁹ wh[ich] he says he likes much.

Dear Orton came over from school this eve to stay with me till Monday.

⁶ “The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775” (1786) by John Trumbull

⁷ Benjamin West (1738-1820), Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), and John Trumbull (1756-1843) were all celebrated painters.

⁸ Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) had a lengthy affair with Lady Emma Hamilton (1765-1815), the wife of the British ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples, Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803). Emma Hamilton, not the Queen of Naples, was the mother of Nelson’s only daughter, Horatia. Emma Hamilton died in Calais, not Boulogne-sur-Mer, of amoebic dysentery. She had used laudanum extensively to dull the pain and may have become addicted.

⁹ *The Countess de Charny* by Alexandre Dumas (published 1853-1855).

Oct 29. Saturday. Uncle is pretty regular in his movements – He reads & talks for some time after breakfast – then goes in his painting room where I generally go & sit with him some time. Then, he goes to the farm & returns about 1 o'clock. ~~About~~ After dinner he takes his coffee goes in to the painting room & then to the farm again – When he returns he smokes a segar & then comes in the parlor for the evening. This eve his conversation has quite delighted Bunnie & myself. He spoke of Sir Walter Scott – gave an anecdote wh[ich] Mr. Childs¹⁰ had related. Mr. Childs had been travelling on the Continent & made the acquaintance of a Scotch gentleman to whom he had the opportunity of being very kind. At parting, he expressed the hope of being enabled to return his many civilities & asked him if he ever intended to go to Scotland to wh[ich] Mr. C replied he should certainly go there if it was only to see Sir Walter Scott – He then said his Uncle Mr. Rutherford was an intimate friend of Sir Walter's & he could give him a letter wh[ich] would admit him when no one else would be admitted. Such a letter was written & Mr. C– went & asked if Sir Walter Scott was at home – Yes was the reply but he cannot see company – Many titled gentry have already been refused. The letter from Mr. Rutherford was produced & Mr. C admitted instanter.¹¹ He soon heard Sir Walters cane upon the floor (for he was lame) & he entered said he was happy to see him but very much engaged – however as the best time to see the Lion was when he was feeding he would be much pleased to see him the next morning at Breakfast at Abbotsford. He thanked him & retired immediately not wishing to detain him. He was most pleased with his good luck & the next morning availed himself of the invitation and partook of a quiet breakfast with Sir Walter Scott & his daughter – During conversation Sir Walter asked what Books or what author was most read in America to wh[ich] Mr. C ~~had an~~ embraced the opportunity of saying with a complasant bow “the works of Sir Walter Scott” – Orton listened to this with as much gout as I did and I took down the likeness of Sir Walter wh[ich] Uncle told me Mr. Childs had brought him. The large seal wh[ich] hangs over it, he likewise told me, was the Park coat of arms made for him in London by Order of his Father, before he was born.

Uncle received a letter the other day from a certain Mr. Bowers¹² asking him to certify that a likeness in his posession of General Washington by Sharpless¹³ was very much resembling the one at Arlington except that his, represents the left side & ours the right side of the face. It appears it was taken in the same year & by the same artist for Mrs. Cushing. Uncle had seen the portrait & got me to copy the certificate.

At the Table to-day Uncle was speaking of Louis XVIII and said he was so fond of oysters that he was called “Le roi des huitres.” This doubtless impressed itself on his mind more particularly because of his own penchant for them. Uncle reminds me of dear Grandmother in his likes & dislikes for certain dishes. Neither of them ever tasted spinage [spinach] & Uncle never tasted cod-fish. The papers came this eve bringging news of the favorable reception of the Japan expedition and of almost inevitable & immediate war between Russia & Turkey.¹⁴ Russia has

¹⁰ This may be a reference to the story that Edward Vernon Childe, Robert E. Lee's brother-in-law, told in his book *Edward Vernon: My Cousin's Story* (1848). In that part of the book, he met Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, his home on the Scottish border, through a mutual acquaintance named “Mr. Burn.”

¹¹ Sir Walter Scott had an uncle named Daniel Rutherford (1749-1819).

¹² Henry Bowers inherited a sketch of George Washington from his uncle, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court William Cushing. Mrs. Cushing is the justice's wife, Hannah Phillips Cushing.

¹³ James Sharples's original 1796 drawing of George Washington is at the National Gallery of Art.

¹⁴ The Perry Expedition had arrived in Japan on July 8, 1853. The Crimean War, which was initially a conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, began on October 16, 1853.

long wished to extend her possessions & makes a pretext on the grounds of some disturbance in religious matters. If France & England side with either it will be Turkey and so I should think the Czar would think twice before he arrayed himself before the combined naval force of England & France. A letter came from Cousin Robert¹⁵ this eve & Uncle read it out to me and expressed his great admiration of his character – said how kind he had been to him during his journey &c&c – and added, when he felt disposed to murmur at his fate he remembered what a blessing he had proved to him & his family & he felt grateful to God.

Sunday [October] 30. I miss my precious Aunt at every step – most particularly at the hour of morning prayer. Uncle said nothing about my undertaking this duty and I did not like to propose it. Some time after breakfast, I said “Uncle may I read you a sermon?” Certainly my dear, he replied and two or three chapters in the Bible – but, let me go & smoke my segar first.” During his absence I busied myself in taking down from the well filled shelves several volumes of sermons and looking over them in the hope of finding something that would particularly interest & benefit him.

I at length, decided on Barnes Sermons¹⁶ & picking out two or three to select from I laid the Book on the Table and sat down to read an old number of the Southern Churchman wh[ich] I found so naturally on my poor Aunt’s little work-table.

In the course of an hour & a half Uncle reentered with Bunnie and taking up the old green Bible & opening it saying “here my dear, read three chapters in the Gospel of St. Mark, but, as he opened the book at St. Mathew – and pointed to the Parable of the Server”¹⁷ & commenced there & read two chapters, the third I found is the first Epistle of St. James first chapter. When this was done, I laid down the book and took my seat not knowing exactly whether he still wanted me to continue with the sermon, however, my mind was soon at rest on this subject by his saying “Well my dear, you had better read the sermon now, as the mornings are not very long. I opened the book with the hope that it might be beneficial to us all. The Text was “remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy.” As I went on dear Orton seemed to listen attentively, but, I was disheartened to see Uncle drop to sleep in his chair.

The sermon was very long so I curtailed it. Bunnie seemed glad to get out in the yard to play with the Dog & leaving Uncle asleep in his chair, I took my little Prayer Book & went out to read to poor old Mammy¹⁸ – I found her very feeble. They tell me her age is 74. She seemed to feel poor Aunt’s death very much – said it was “dreadful lonely now” and wondered that Uncle had not more consideration than to want me to stay in that house wher it was so lonely – for her part she said she never went there unless she had special business. I told her I was not lonely, but, I was very sad, because I thought of my dear Aunt all the time, but, that I was very glad to be with my Uncle if I could make his time pass pleasanter. ~~I then~~ She said she missed Miss

¹⁵ Robert E. Lee (1807-1870). The “journey” Custis mentioned might refer to a trip to Niagara Falls the two made in one month earlier.

¹⁶ *Practical Sermons: Designed for Vacant Congregations and Families* by Albert Barnes (1798-1870). Barnes was a Presbyterian theologian from New Jersey. In addition to producing extensive commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, he wrote several works opposing slavery. Frederick Douglass quoted him in his 1852 speech “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

¹⁷ Markie probably meant the “Parable of the Faithful Servant” (Matt. 24:42-51)

¹⁸ An enslaved woman who had previously lived at Mount Vernon. According to Agnes Lee, died around Christmas 1856 at the age of about 78 years old. See Mary Custis Lee deButts, ed., *Growing Up in the 1850s: The Journal of Agnes Lee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 80.

Annie very much – she was so good to her. I then entered the Cabin of Aunt Ellenor[.]¹⁹ It was in much better order than that of old Judy – a hoe cake was on the griddle before the fire and one of her grown sons a very likely looking Negro whom she called Angelo sat before the large hospitable fire. Aunt Ellenor was quite a different looking negress from poor Mammy – While the latter was the picture of humility & meekness the latter [former] is the personification of pomposity. She received me with a great deal of air & manner & putting a chair to the fire begged me to sit down – she was very glad to see me – she wanted to tell me all about Mistress (Ellenor had come in the day after my arrival to welcome me back and to tell me if there was anything I wanted I must send right out for here – and I must make my little maid, Mary Anne,²⁰ do anything I wanted, for she had nothing to do, but, to wait on me.) Sadly & with tearful eyes I listened. She told me, that only two days before her death, she had gone in the garden to have some flowers planted and she seeing her there had gone to monstrate with her on the impropriety of staying there and that Mistress said – “Nurse, I have on my india rubbers” – but, Nurse continued I don’t care if you is I tell you, you had better listed to the advice I give you & go straight in the house. Comming from any body but Nurse this would have seemed a very dictitorial tone for a servant to assume towards her Mistress, but, Nurse was a priviliged character and always prided herself on ~~the~~ her superior wisdom and the right she possessed of speaking just as she chose to any of the family. The Queen of Ethiopea could not display more pompous dignity in her mein, than did said “Nurse.”

After talking for about an hour with scarce an interruption, and answering many questions wh[ich] I had to ask about poor Aunt, I got up to go – she begged me to come over to see her at any time. She was afraid I found it very lonely in the house – that Uncle had told her I was coming and how much company I would be for him – if there was anything in the world I wanted or anything she could do I must be sure to send to her. I thanked her kindly & assured her I would do so. I was glad to hear that dear Uncle was so pleased to have me here. I hope indeed, I may be some solace to him, in his hours of affliction.

In the afternoon it was damp & cloudy & and Uncle did not seem much disposed to go to Church, but, I thought the weather was not bad enough to keep me, at least, from the sanctuary, so I made no overtures to remain at home; accordingly Uncle told Perry to saddle the old mair “Anne” for Miss Martha to ride to Church & I went up stairs to put on my wrappings & riding-skirt. When I decended to the door to get on my horse I could not refrain from recalling the last day that I mounted “Anne” from those steps – It was the last day I was at dear Arlington, before I went to Europe and dear Aunt kissed me there & stood upon the steps, the old back steps, to see me mount and waved an adieu to Thayer Abert & myself as we rode down the bending pathway to the woods. That scene seemed but yesterday to have occurred so vividly did I recall it – and then my ride with Thayer a few evenings before – that ever memorable ride wh[ich] involved such serious consequences – Thanks be to a merciful God that I am now restored. I could not help feeling a little timidity in riding albeit my fall was not attributable either to any fault of the horse or of the rider (unless it was the fault of getting on her at the time and in the manner I did. However dear Orton walked beside me all the way expressing great care & anxiety lest I should fall. Uncle flanked off by himself on foot and my cortege was formed of a troop of black boys

¹⁹ Eleanor Harris, an enslaved woman.

²⁰ Mary Anne Burke, an enslaved woman. G.W.P. Custis hired her out to a woman in Washington, D.C. and brought her back just before Markie began staying at Arlington.

among whom were Perry & George²¹ my especial escorts. Arrived at the old School House, Bunnie seemed quite proud of the manly assistance he rendered me in dismounting. I was glad on entering to find the colored congregation (made up almost entirely of Uncle's Negroes) so large. We sat more than an hour awaiting the clergiman & at length concluded to disperse. One of the servants offered to put on my riding dress & all stood round to see me mount (that astonishing curiosity wh[ich] is always evinced at seeing a Lady on a horse). After much difficulty I succeeded from a very low chair in mounting & had just turned my horses head in the way home with my numerous ebony retenue, when Uncle called out in a stentorian voice "Stop! And on turning around we beheld a buggy containing the two Revnd. Gentlemen from the Seminary."²² We all returned & reassembled once more beneath that humble roof. The evening service was somewhat curtailed & we had a whole hearted sermon from a good looking gentleman.

I felt that my soul might be more benefitted there, than in the gorgeous edifices of Paris. I could but compare the probable amount of good done in this very very humble room, to that effected in the Church of St. Genevieve²³ the exquisit structure & decorations of wh[ich] cost \$5,000,000. I was somewhat struck with the closing remark of the Preacher – It seemed a little ludicrous to me, tho' I hope it did not to any one else. And I would not for the world call the attention of any one to it in that point of view. The Preacher, without having had previously any similitude to justify it said in closing his discourse "Never give up the Ship until you are anchored safe in the Paradise of God." I am sure he is from Ireland or the West. I was much pleased at the unusual seriousness with wh[ich] Uncle listened to the sermon.

When we returned home and took our seats at twilight by the blazing fire, he said that he was glad we had remained – he liked the gentlemans discourse very much – he preached to the heart. He said he liked too this humble manner of worshiping God – that altho' he paid pew rent in the Church at Alexandria, he should never go anywhere but here. I remarked that I thought ones thoughts were less apt to be diverted in such an unostentatious edifice than in one of more costly architecture. He said he thought religion made more impression on the mind when taught in this social way and for this reason he always liked family worship, especially where there were children. When he said this, I almost reproached myself for not having proposed to have it; but, I said nothing. As he has so long enjoyed the privalige, perhaps the absence of it for a while may be more impressive than its continuance. Un I observed that I was glad to see so large a congregation he said "yes much good had been done by their preaching and several had become communicants." And then commended the gentlemen for the trouble they had in coming over so regularly. It did my heart good to hear dear Uncle speak of these things with so much interest.

God grant his speedy conversion!

I took down from the shelf "Hannah Moore's Practical Piety"²⁴ wh[ich] it is always a pleasure to me to read, but, Uncle seemed disposed to converse, so I thought it better to yield to his inclination. His conversation was instructive as it always is & I think innocent tho' not spiritual.

²¹ George Clark, the enslaved gardener at Arlington

²² The Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria.

²³ Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, a church on the Montaigne Sainte-Geneviève near the Pantheon. It houses the shrine of Paris's patron saint, Saint Geneviève. Markie visited this church while in Paris earlier that year.

²⁴ Hannah Moore (1745-1833) first published *Practical Piety* in 1811.

He spoke with great delight of Cumming's five years in Africa²⁵ wh[ich] quite inspired Bunnie with a desire to read it. This led to my giving some description of the Animals I had seen at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. Thus passed Sunday evening.

Monday [October] 31. After Breakfast I went with Orton down to the farm gate on his way to school giving him during the walk what advice I thought would be profitable wh[ich] he received with amiability & attention. Uncle was in his painting room working upon his large picture of the Surrender of Cornwallis. I sat with him some time & sympathized with his attempts to make a good sky. He said it was a branch of the art in wh[ich] he never had & never expected to succeed; but he seemed to think the General & his white horse would atone for all other deficiencies[.] Gen O'Hara's²⁶ waist, seems to me a most unconcionable length, but, Uncle thinks his proportions are very fine & that the scarlate coat is not to be surpassed. He used upon it his most beautiful vermillion. He says one cannot go amiss in using plenty of vermillion, but, with all due respect I cant help thinking he has gone a little amiss – especially a little sprinkling in a bank of dark blue sky; but, as he says “skies are so ~~numerous~~ various & variable!” He says this will probably be his last painting & he wishes it to be a good one & shall spare no pains to make it so & will probably present it to the City of Washington.

In the afternoon he goes to the farm & accompanied by Laurence²⁷ on horseback generally shoots about two partridges for our breakfast. To-day I gathered some autumn leaves & put in the large blue vases and when I saw them there tears of sad recollection fell for the departed. How often have I done this when her dear eyes were here to admire it. The weather is lovely but dear Uncle seems out of spirits.

November 1853

Tuesday Nov 1. This is the anniversary of my arrival in Paris. How different will this winter be from last – and yet perhaps more quiet happiness in the thought of being useful to another – I feel it my duty to stay with dear Uncle if he desires it, tho' it entirely frustrates my plans for this winter. I had quite set my heart on taking painting lessons or drawing, but it would be impossible to get a teacher to come so far from Town to give them to me. I will put it off till a more convenient season.

Uncle is constantly boared with letters from perfect strangers, asking autographs.

Tuesday [November 1]. This morning while with Uncle in his paint room, Perry brought in a card “Mr Jenks”²⁸ – Uncle said looking at me & putting down his palette walked out where he me the bowing Mr Jenks. I had on my bonnet & things & so came out & passed through the Hall

²⁵ Roualeyn George Gordon-Cumming (1820-1866) published *Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa* in 1850.

²⁶ Charles O'Hara (1740-1802), Cornwallis's second-in-command who stood in his place when the British surrendered at Yorktown.

²⁷ Lawrence Parks, an enslaved man.

²⁸ William Jenks (1805-1859), owner of a berry farm near G.W.P. Custis. His daughter Sarah Elizabeth Jenks married Harvey Bailey the same week that he visited Arlington House.

on my way out. I had not yet been to the grave – I had only an idea of what direction it was in, by the motion of Nurse’s hand as she spoke of it. It was a lovely day – such a day as my dear Aunt would have been in the garden with her flowers – ~~almos~~ I had not been in the garden – though I had seen the bright chrysanthemums peeping through the fence & I wondered how they could be so bright now. But, I could hesitate no longer, I [*word scratched out*] walked slowly toward the old black gate, wh[ich] opens to that Labyrinth of roses, Ivy & jessamin – and as I plucked the roses to strew upon her grave her living image came before me and I wept. I went around & looked on all the ~~old~~ familiar flowers. I felt that I was greeting a circle of old friends some of whom had departed[.] They were all cast down. It seemed right they should be, for the one who had supported them with her care & ~~suppo~~ was no longer there to sustain them. I wended my way with my sweet tokens of love along the road until seeing a little path leading out of the main road in the direction where I supposed the grave to be I followed its course. It conducted me to that hallowed spot – with a little wreath of Immortel²⁹ in one hand and some lovely flowers loosely gathered in the other I stood and wept beside the green mound wh[ich] marked the last resting place [of] one of my best & dearest fr[ie]nds.

I wept & did not refrain from weeping for I thought tears were but a small tribute of my deep affection. They were selfish tears I know. I did not weep for her, for I knew that here gentle spirit had fled to a sphere far more congenial than the one it had occupied. I knew that in her Savior’s arms she rested. But, I wept for myself and those who loved her as I did. I thought of dear Cousin Mary³⁰ & Robert & the dear children & of poor Uncle now so desolate. The little arbor was a monument of Cousin Robert & Mary. Several of the railings had fallen from the enclosure and I made George³¹ get some nails & I assisted him in rearranging them. Not more than two thirds of the fence was completed. I said what I could to encourage them in completing it as soon as possible. I put the little wreath from Père Lachaise on her tomb & surrounded it with flowers & planted a sprig of Ivy, but, upon second thought I took away the little wreath and hung it in the Arbor. It seemed too gay for her grave. It reminded me of the Tombs in Paris – it seemed out of place. I returned from these scenes in sadness – about two hours after I had taken my seat one of the servants came in to announce a carriage & in a few minutes it rolled up to the door & four Ladies entered the portico. Uncle came in at the same time & taking them into the Hall stood for about ~~an hour~~ half hour discussing the paintings. He then opened the parlor door & presented the Ladies to me. The face of one I recognized as Mrs Nesbit of C Street Washington who had been here once with the famous Hungarian Exile (now Mrs Tochman)³² & I escorted them around ~~the~~ to see the pictures. Mrs N did not seem to have profited by previous visits to Arlington for she turned & asked Uncle how long General Washington lived in this house to wh[ich] Uncle told her it was built after his death so of course he had never been in it. She then asked to go in the garden. The other Ladies were as mute as mice tho’ from the appearance of one of the Ladies whom she called Miss Smith, I should suppose she was a literary Lady & more interesting than her loquacious companion. As they got up to go they asked to go in the garden. Never did I grant a favor with more reluctance. It seemed a desecration for strangers to go in that

²⁹ A flower of the genus *Helichrysum*.

³⁰ Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee (1807-1873)

³¹ Likely George Parks, an enslaved man.

³² Appollonia Jagiello, who married Gaspar Tochman (1797-1880) in 1851. Both were involved in the failed Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and came to the United States as political exiles. Gaspar Tochman later served in the Confederate Army. There was a Harriet Nesbitt, widow of John Nesbitt, who lived at 386 C Street North in Washington, D.C.

garden. However, there was no alternative & while I went up stairs to get my hat Mrs N asked Uncle if the garden was not planted by General Washington & when he said “Not” she said she did not care particularly about going in it. However, we went & I gave them each one or two rose buds. At parting Mrs N said as she did two years ago Miss W I shall be very happy to see you on C Street. I thanked her as I did for a similar invitation three years ago, with as little probability that I shall ever accept ~~the invitation~~ it.

At dinner, Uncle spoke of Mrs Tochman in consequence of my allusion to the day she had called with Mrs Nesbit – and said how fleeting were earthly honors – “The other day he said Mrs Tochman was talked of and & lauded and Hungary was on every tongue. Now, they are entirely forgotten – never heard[.] You see how it is my dear – such is life.”

In the evening he complained of not being very well & said his spirits were very bad – I remarked that one ought to be well this lovely weather. He said “Yes, it was indeed lovely, that he used to like the Fall, it seemed to brace him up, but all seasons were alike to him now and indeed it made him recall so much that is past that it seemed very sad. I remarked that the delightful aspect of all nature seemed to make us feel more keenly the desolation within. He said yes it made the contrast so much stronger. I feel much for poor Uncle & wish that I could do something to comfort him. But I can & will pray for him, that God may send his Holy Spirit into his heart.

Apropos of the visitors looking at the pictures I asked Uncle for the half dozenth time the names of some of the pictures & their artists, wh[ich], tho’ perfectly familiar with them when I left home, have become obliterated by the myriad paintings I have seen. General Park by Sir Godfrey Kneller (I was very much struck with “William 3d’s beauties” at Hampton Court Palace by the same artist) Daniel Park Custis & his wife afterward Mrs Washington -- General Washington while in the British service as a Col. – the former by Woolaston an Englishman (before the revolution) and the latter by Peal the elder –³³

Old John Custis a Clergiman by an unknown artist – more than a century old –³⁴

A painting by Vandyke³⁵ of supposed to be one of our ancestors and two other very old portraits belonging to the family, but, whose history is past the recollection of any one living. Uncle’s portrait when a child holding a staff in his hand painted at Mt. Vernon by Peal a good paint by Pine a very fine American painter of that day.³⁶ Also, the corresponding one of his Sister Mrs Law³⁷ corresponding with the one at Tudor Place of Grandmother, all taken by the same artist at the same time & place.

The Lady with a sprinkle of white roses in the picture is Uncles Mother.³⁸

³³ The painters are “Portrait of Daniel Parke II” by Sir Godfrey Kneller, Bt. (1646-1723); John Wollaston (active between 1742 and 1775); and Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827)

³⁴ There is no evidence that any John Custis in the family line was a clergyman. The painting Markie is referring to may be a portrait of John Custis IV (c.1744) by Charles Bridges. Since he is wearing a gray coat and has his hand on a book, Markie may have mistook him for a minister.

³⁵ Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). It is unclear which of his paintings Markie was referencing.

³⁶ A 1785 painting of G. W. P. Custis by Robert Edge Pine (1730-1788)

³⁷ Elizabeth Parke Custis Law (1776-1831). She separated from her husband, Thomas Law, in 1804. In 1811, they divorced.

³⁸ Eleanor Calvert (1754-1811)

The more modern looking gentle man in black with white frill is Mr Wm. H. Fitzhugh dear Aunt's Brother by Peal a Capt. in the American army.³⁹ The one over the large room in light blue with a Tulip[.]

Wednesday [November 2]. Uncle said this morning he wanted to go to Marlborough⁴⁰ to purchase two oxen at a cattle show and asked me if I would be afraid to stay at Arlington alone. I said no certainly not – not to hesitate about going on my account. He said he thought me quite a heroine in answer to my reply. Selina asked me in the morning of yesterday if I would be kind enough to teach the little girl & my answer proceeded from the wish to gratify her & also to be useful; but, upon reflection, I thought I ought not to teach Uncle's servants without his permission therefore, I determined to ask it. In the mean time little Emma came up & I heard her her lessons.⁴¹ When I went into the parlor, dear Uncle met me in the most affectionate manner, embraced me in the warmest manner & kissing me two or three times said "Martha you are a dear, good girl[.]" I was most gratified by this testimonial of my Uncle's affection. ~~When I took my seat~~ I determined to make my intended request. I said Uncle I have been teaching Emma (Salina's little girl) this morning. I hope you have no objection to my teaching the little colored children. No my dear, he said, giving me another kiss – It is not according to my notions, but it was my poor wife's plan & I do not wish to alter any of her plans. I wish things to go on just as she would desire. I have my own notions on those subjects but, she thought it her duty to teach them & most faithfully did she perform it and perhaps it was right – there was one advantage, it made them more capable of understanding the religious instruction they receive on Sunday.

I said I thought it was a great advantage where religious instruction was combined with other teaching. Uncle then spoke of the pains & trouble dear Aunt always took with the Negroes not only in teaching them, but, in attentions to them when they were sick. He then alluded to Mrs Beecher Stow's work⁴² and her entire misconception of things as they really were at the South. Certainly, Mrs Stow has no counterpart of Arlington in her Book or of things as they are conducted here. Uncle very justly says, that there is no comparison between the life of his negroes and the best class of the poor in Europe so far as manual labor & comfort is concerned.

To eat & drink & sleep are the only duties with wh[ich] he has anything to do – with regard to most of them. They have their comfortable homes, their families around them and nothing to do but to consult their own pleasure. Their eating & drinking & clothing is all provided for them. And truly in many instance the master is the only slave. Uncle considers slavery a great curse to the country & says it is his hearty wish that the first ship which sailed from Bristol England with slaves had been engulfed in the Sea[.]

But, I believe Providence has permitted things to be as they are and it is our duty to seek for light that we may do our duty by as christians by them. Having for so many years been reared in ignorance and servility, they have not that keen perception of their degraded situation, that we, differently reared, might suppose them to possess. Hence, the mere fact of their position, is, I

³⁹ William Henry Fitzhugh of Chatham (1741-1809). James Peale (1749-1831) painted him in 1807.

⁴⁰ Upper Marlborough, Md.

⁴¹ Emma Gray (1850-?) later married Ennis Syphax (1844-?) In 1929, she and her sister Sarah were interviewed about their memories of Arlington House. That interview is in the Arlington House collections.

⁴² *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896). Markie read this book while returning from Europe earlier that year.

believe, not a source of pain to them, unless inoculated with those ideas by the whites. Whether they ought or ought not to have been thus degraded from the first, is another question and one exceedingly difficult to solve. It has involved discussions among the wisest of the earth and there is scarcely a hope of its being amicably settled. For myself, I am very doubtful of its propriety. There is certainly no institution wh[ich] admits of more abuses than Slavery.

Thursday morning [November 3.] I was ready for breakfast at 7 o'clock and at 8 the carriage was at the door for Uncle's departure. Uncle gave the servants many charges about doing all I wanted done and told the Puss⁴³ that he must be very affectionate to Miss Martha to wh[ich] the Puss replied with a very expressive look that he would especially at meals. Then, giving me a kiss and paying me another compliment on the heroism of being able to stay at Arlington for two days & a night all alone, remarked as he was going that General Washington's mother at 80 remarked to her son who was expressing regrets at leaving her alone "Thank you sir, I am quite able to take care of myself."

When Uncle had gone I called the little coloured children with a clear conscience wh[ich] I should not have had, had I not asked his permission and taking them up stairs, read to them a chapter in the Bible & heard them their lessons. Dear little Annie & Agnes⁴⁴ have done themselves great credit in their instructions to them & they seem so eager to learn it is a pleasure to teach them.

The remainder of the day I employed in reading Harper the Illustrated News &c – writing & sewing on my darling Orton's flanel drawers. I miss Uncle's agreeable society – it is especially lonely at table. I went to dear Aunts grave & bestrewed it with flowers –

My time was so occupied, that I did not feel lonesome, but, when it got too dark to sew or read I thought Nurse would be pleased with a visit from me, and so I went out to her room & sat some time. She talked in her usual consequential way about "matters & things" wh[ich] is one of her favorite expressions. She is a kind creature and I cannot help loving her because she speaks in such eulogistic terms of my dear Aunt. In her peculiar way & dialect, she says "Now, when you consider all things up & down this side & tother, from the beginning to the endeing Mistress was the greatest Lady and the best in the whole land." It is true old Nurse tho' you quaintly express it! When I had finished my visit my dignified host much to my surprise, accompanied me to the door impressing on my mind all the way that I must make the servants do just what I wanted – there was Mary Anne, my own maid she said, she could do sewing or anything I wished – the knitting she was doing was of no consequence whatever and then calling Perry with an authoritative voice told him to light the candle for Miss Williams directly wh[ich] Perry telling me he had done I bade adieu to my distinguished & condescending companion & came in. I sat down to a lonely Tea-Table, but, soon finished me meal. After sewing about an hour & a half my little maid came in with her knitting for Nurse thought I ought not to be quite alone.

I was however, so occupied with my writing as quite to loose sight of my position except when a sudden gush of wind would whistle through the Portico scattering the noisy leaves & jarring the old door. At ten o'clock Ephraim⁴⁵ Uncle's faithful vallet, according to directions came in to shut

⁴³ Markie is referring to one of Arlington House's cats.

⁴⁴ Annie Lee and Agnes Lee had taught lessons for enslaved children before Markie's arrival.

⁴⁵ Ephraim Derrick, who had been a pallbearer at Mary Fitzhugh Custis's funeral.

up the house & so quite reluctantly I was obliged to retire. I committed myself to God and retired for the evening never at all disturbed by the thought that I was the only white person in this great Hall.

Friday [November 3] – A lovely morning for Uncle. He returned about three o'clock bringing me one of the loveliest bouquets I ever saw from Mount Airy⁴⁶ conservatory – He kissed me so affectionately as he gave it to me & said see what a lovely bouquet I've brought you – I've thought a great deal of you. I thanked dear Uncle & told him he had likewise been the subject of my thoughts. He appeared in very low spirits – said he had not succeeded in getting the animals he had gone for – that he had remained at Mount Airy all night where they had treated him with great care & attention – but, he added these things devert for a time time, but, it is of no use they pass & I find myself as dejected as before. I did not sleep well last night he said – for my mind was filled with recollections of my youth. Mt. Airy was the old Homestead where my mother lived and there I have passed many happy hours – but, they are passed he said with a sigh – I talked as cheerfully as I could during dinner, but it was of no use. After dinner he complained of great depression & soon went out to smoke his segar. He remained until Daniel⁴⁷ came from Town with the mail. He fully expected a letter from Cousin Mary, but, he was disappointed; this added to his low spirits. He looked over the papers in silence. Being most anxious to do something to contribute to his comfort or pleasure, I thought of the piano and immediately resorted to it, hoping it might prove a little diversion, tho really my playing is not worth listening to. I played over all the tunes I could think of & then sung several songs[.] I find it almost an insurmountable effort to sing here where all is so depressing around me, however, I succeeded ~~to~~ passably. Uncle made no remark except once when I stopped he said “play anything you like – anything pleases me.” I continued until tea time.

During tea he looked quite bowed down & so the whole evening. At last he said I'll lie down before the fire – perhaps I shall feel more comfortable so saying he laid himself on the floor before the fire & I put a pillow under his head. After laying for some time groaning & sighing I said Uncle may I read to you in the Bible. I have no objection he said & I took down the green vol containing the Psalms & read a part of the 119⁴⁸ –He moaned every now & then & then after sometime ~~w~~ dropped to sleep. I continued reading & prayed that he might hear to the everlasting benefit of his soul. I asked him several times if he was ill, but, each time received the assurance that he suffered no pain. I earnestly trust to-morrow will bring relief. God grant it for Christ's sake.

Saturday Nov 5 – [*Correct date:* November 4]

When I came down this morning, I found dear Uncle still very much depressed. His mind was occupied however in getting the post ready to go to Town –

⁴⁶ Mount Airy in Upper Marlboro, Md. was G.W.P. Custis's birthplace. It had been the home of his grandfather Benedict Swingate Calvert, and his mother, Eleanor Calvert Custis, lived there much of the time as well. It remained in the Calvert family until 1902.

⁴⁷ Daniel Dotson, the enslaved coachman.

⁴⁸ Psalm 119, which begins, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.”

When this was all done, he went in to his painting room. I went up stairs to hear the children their lessons. They each said a spelling lesson, read a chapter in the Bible & wrote a copy on their slates. When this was done I hurried down & found Uncle still in his cold Studio. I endeavored to interest him in his painting by asking many questions, proposed that a stove should be put up at once & c – He at length became quite warm on his old themes “West” “Trumbull” & Stuart”. West was a Royalist & went to England just before the revolution – he was a quaker & a native of Philadelphia. Stuart studied under him. He excelled in painting heads. Sir [blank] Laurence⁴⁹ said no living artist of that day excelled or equalled Stuart in the human head. His likeness of Gen Washington at Faneuil Hall in Boston⁵⁰ I have often heard Grandmother say was perfect. Stuart however was an unamiable man. Uncle spoke with great indignation of the manner in wh[ich] he treated his daughter who had a great talent for painting. When she would take him a picture of her execution & say “Father will you just look at this – I know you will not teach me for you have said you will teach no body – but, just look at it & pass your opinion.” “Oh! peuh” he would reply “go away, genius is self-taught – study it out yourself.” This daughter is living & persuing the profession now.⁵¹ I was quite amused with another anecdote of Stuart. “Upon looking at one of Trumbull’s paintings of Washington where there is a streak of light behind the head of the General, he said with a sarcastic manner “That head, looks like a bright copper kettle sitting on a snow bank.”

~~My allusion~~ Uncle’s allusion to this, was, in consequence of my having said I thought the Gens’ head in his picture would look better with a back-ground of lighter clouds. He agreed with me, but, it was evident to see that this criticism of Stuart weighed with him in the alteration. He said, looked at it a few minutes – said “well as you say Martha I think that part of the picture wants lightning up – at any rate it does not please me as it is – and after a little more reflection he put a little Naples yellow on his palette and said “when a person has made up their mind to do a thing they might as well do it first as last” and so saying plunged his large brush full of white lead & Naples yellow in the dark cloud. We both agreed that that promised to look better. He then spoke of Horace Vernet⁵² whom he said had a most singular way of making clouds. He dashed the bladder of paint on the canvass & with the palm of his hand rubbed it in & shaded it most beautifully.

Uncle spoke of giving his large picture to the City of Washington – and yet he said after all the labor he had expended on it, it seemed a pity to give it away – but, that it was too large for a private house. “No Uncle, I said, it is not too large for this house – It does indeed seem a pity to give it away. It would certainly be more valued by your own family than by any one else. ¶ and besides, if it remain here, it will ever be identified with you. He then said it might stay in the other room and so saying he called me to see a place where he thought it might be placed. I thought that would certainly be the best place. “And yet,” he said “I have such an affection for the City of Washington[.]” Speaking of West, by the bye, Uncle said he was the intimate friend of George the 3^d. He was buried with great honors in St. Paul’s cathedral by the side of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

⁴⁹ Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), a painter of Regency nobles and royals.

⁵⁰ Faneuil Hall, Boston’s marketplace and meeting hall.

⁵¹ Jane Stuart (1812-1888), who painted historical figures like George Washington and Oliver Hazard Perry.

⁵² Horace Vernet (1789-1863), a French Orientalist painter.

[Sunday] Nov 6. This morning, I had my little safron colored pupils in my room where I heard them read in the scriptures & myself read & prayed with them – I then went down stairs and read until Uncle signified his wish that I should read to him his three chapters in the Bible. He was however not very long my auditor for the arms of Morpheus had evidently twined themselves about him. I hē read on notwithstanding to the end and then most discouraged & disheartened I arose & gently left the room not wishing to disturb him. I must trust in God that he will in his good time & by what instrument he shall see fit send his Holy spirit to regenerate & comfort his sad heart. “Gods’ ways are not our ways.” Nor his thoughts our thoughts.”⁵³

I took my little prayer book & a volume of Castlemans sermons for servants⁵⁴ wh[ich] I found in the shelves & went out to read to poor Mammy – She seemed pleased with my visit – Poor creature she looks as if she was not long for this world. I left her to go to the grave of my precious aunt wh[ich] since my first visit, I have daily sprinkled with flowers. Uncle gave orders for my horse to be brought up & said we will go to the “School House” (as our humble sanctuary is called) this afternoon. As we sat in the parlor a young man with a gun came up & walked before the Portico. Uncle said he is a german & symultaneously with his words I recognized a strong likeness to my kind German compagnon de voyage on the old “Northumberland.” He walked up & down & stood leaning on his gun with his eyes towards the window until I almost began to fancy, by some strange revolution of circumstances, it was veritably Carle Weigel.⁵⁵ When I saw his warlike weapon I felt a guilty conscience in review of the past – but, Uncle viewed him calmly & said “Never mind, he can do no harm, tho he would not dare thus to trespass on ~~his neighbors~~ a gentlemans property in Germany. We both continued our reading without pursuing the vagrant as he p̄ receded from our gaze. Presently Perry entered as I thought to tell me my horse was ready – getting up to go I looked to hear the announcement – but, I saw it was evidently not for me as he made his way straight & sombrely up to within Un an inch of Uncle when he said with the most ridiculous gravity “Marster your woods is on fire sir” “Well Perry, said Uncle, apparently perfectly unmoved & in his slow way “Well Perry you had better go & get the hands & tell them to put it out (his eyes only momentarily take[n] off his book) what part of the woods is it?”

This question being satisfactorily answered he said “Well Perry go down to the farm & tell all hands to turn out directly & put the fire out & you come back as soon as you can & bring Miss Martha’s horse for her to go to Church – “Yes sir” answered Perry making his exit while Uncle resumed his reading. After some moments however he arose & walked in out on the lawn to reiterate the order. I could not help contrasting his deportment on the occasion with what would have been that of a Frenchman.

Perry returned & brought the horse & Uncle set off to walk. It was a lovely fall evening.

Two young devines officiated & never did I hear a more indifferent discourse. I am sure it must have been his first attempt at preaching – I was the only Lady in Church. The

⁵³ Isaiah 55:8-9

⁵⁴ *Plain Sermons for Servants* (1851) by Rev. Thomas Taylor Castleman and Bishop William Meade. The collected sermons include several which instruct enslaved people to obey their earthly masters.

⁵⁵ Markie met a German traveler named Carle Weigel while sailing back to America aboard the *Northumberland* in July 1853. Although she enjoyed his company, the clear romantic interest he expressed in her made her uncomfortable. It is likely that she felt guilty for unintentionally encouraging his affections. All of this is related in the July-August 1853 diary at Tudor Place. The passenger list for the *Northumberland* dated August 13, 1853 lists him as “Chas. Weigal,” age 24. He appears on the same page as M.C. Williams.

congregation was an old white man who std up very primly with a bunch of white chrysanthimums in his hand, two little white girls & the rest negroes.

The poor young clergiman was perfectly overcome with modest – He blushed & stammered & sometimes quite halted to breathe. He quite enlisted my sympathies. I regretted that the sermon was not more interesting – there was much scripture in it however wh[ich] ought to make its due impression on the mind.

This evening I have been reading Burders' Pious Woman⁵⁶ wh[ich] I find in three large volumes in the Library. I wonder if he is related to Mr Burder of Atlantic memory, who by the bye, does not deserve to be remembered, but, as the friend of Mr Bright.⁵⁷

[Monday] Nov 7. To-day I went to Alexandria with Uncle, but, shall not record my visit – My Journal at Arlington is principally to put down the sayings & doings of my much loved & admired Uncle, wh[ich] in after days when he is gone, may be referred to with pleasure.

I can but regret that I did not take some sketches of my dear Aunts' beautiful Christian character, during my many delightful visits y here for further reference but, it is too late now – Thanks be to God they are graven on my heart, more indelibly than with pen & ink. To-day, Uncle was speaking of the ignorance of Irish Overseers & said when his overseer first came here,⁵⁸ "he looked upon & associated with the Negroes as if they were quite on a par with himself." Yes, said he, "he was really as ignorant as that." I could not help smiling at the innocence with wh[ich] Uncle made this remark wh[ich] would in Europe have been thought quite crim[i]nal. I mentally answered I do not at all doubt the fact that he was on a par with them. Evidently, the difference was not in education unless it preponderated on the side of the Blacks – doubtless, the soul of one is not more valuable in Gods eyes than the other – then, where do they so materially differ except in the tint & texture of their complexion? But, I was not disposed for argument. I think it not at all becoming me to oppose my opinion to that of one so much my senior, so, that when I cannot conscientiously agree, I remain silent – I have adopted this course for some years past with regard to my ever loved & revered Grandmother. When I was younger I had less wisdom and I thought it my duty to express my opinion often when it was not at all called for.

During our ride to Alexandria Uncle conversed about Louis XVI & the court of France in his day – Said, that Gen La Fayette told him he was nothing more than a gros cochon a perfect gourmand. La Fayette was no friend at court in those days. Marie Antoinette dispised him. Uncle thinks Marie Antoinette would have been a different woman if she had had a different husband. He spoke of the extravagance of courts & I mentioned having seen it stated that Louis XIV had

⁵⁶ *Memoirs of Eminently Pious Women* by Samuel Burder (1773-1837).

⁵⁷ Thomas Henry Carr Burder (1831-1855) and Henry Arthur Bright (1830-1884) were two Englishmen who visited America in 1852. Markie Williams became a friend of Henry Bright in September 1852 when they were both traveling to England aboard the *S.S. Atlantic*. Burder was awkward and accident prone, leading Markie to say he was not worth remembering. A portion of Bright's journal was published. See Anne Henry Ehrenpreis, ed., "A Victorian Englishman on Tour: Henry Arthur Bright's Southern Journal, 1852," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (July, 1976), 333-361.

⁵⁸ G.W.P. Custis hired several Irish-born overseers. The last of these was John McQuinn, who was still living on Arlington Plantation when the Civil War broke out. It is unclear when he was hired, but local newspaper advertisements suggest it was not before 1854.

spent \$8,000,000 dollars on the palace of Versailles – They considered & do still consider the extravagance of the court a better policy, than the ~~economy~~ of personal or individual economy.

On returning from Town a carriage drove up & a gentleman came in to see Uncle. A tall, thin, very inelligent looking Virginian entered & taking his seat before the fire chewed his tobacco & spit in the hearth at intervils – each seemed to be musing – for my part I was a mused. After about 15 minutes he said he had come to ask Mr Custis if he would go with him to Mt. Vernon. Uncle positively, tho' politely declined.

He again looked at Uncle – then looked round the room – then at me & then fell in to another reverie. Uncle was fatigued & hungry and I never knew him so little interesting. In fact, his expression was that that of the most heroic fortitude. The man spent an hour or more and did not & am almost sure say more than two dozen words. Whether he was awed at Uncle's presence or not, I do not know, but, he certainly seemed to find his utterance very difficult. I really pitied him – & longed to assist him. Uncle said when he had left – Now was not that the greatest bore that any one could have imagined – persons ought to be more scrupulous about occupying the time of others. He said scarcely anything – but, what could I do. "I could not answer questions before he asked them. I had to sit & bear it." I noticed when the man left – tho' he said not many things he said one good thing – "God bless you Sir" & gave him a hearty shake of the hand. Poor fellow I could not help feeling as he left the room that he had had a great deal of trouble without accomplishing what he desired. I felt almost disposed in the absence of Uncles loquacity, to start up some of my reminiscences of Uncle's & Grand Mothers's tales & entertain the guest. I fear he went away with an unf[av]orable opinion of Arlington.

[Tuesday] Nov 8. To-day, just before dinner Uncle came in with a gentleman. When I went down he greeted me very warmly as an old friend & said he believed he had once been enable to render me very important services in extricating me from a very embarrassing position & introduced me to himself as Dr & Mr Stuart of the Navy (Revnd).⁵⁹ I had some faint glimmer of a recollection of such a person but, could not at all locate his reverence, until he told me he was in New York or rather on board the North Carolina when I made my visit to Fort Hamilton just after leaving school, and was the person who had heard the history of my adventures & had taken my note from Mr Mordica to Mr Chandler.⁶⁰ He said the circumstances were such as to excite a great interest in me at the time & he had never forgotten them. Had he been a young knight errand he did not know what he might not have done – as it was, however, he did all he could do. I thanked him kindly & assured him it was the first time I had been aware of my obligations, but, was most glad I had had an opportunity of expressing them.

He said he had also met me on board the North Carolina & at Fort Hamilton. I felt quite mortified not to have remembered it. It is pleasant & yet sad to have those early days recalled. Since then we have both crossed the ocean & visited foreign Lands. He spoke of Louis Napoleon as having been an intimate friend of his while in this country & of having introduced him to his friend Washington Irving & others. He had also dined at the Tuilleries with Louis Philippe & his

⁵⁹ This might be George Hay Stuart (1816-1890), who later served as the chairman of the United States Christian Commission for the Army and the Navy in 1861. He was a Presbyterian lay minister from Philadelphia

⁶⁰ Possibly Alfred Mordecai (1804-1887), a Jewish officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Lt. Daniel Thomas Chandler (1820-1877). Chandler had served at the Battle of Monterrey and wrote to his mother about the death of Markie's father.

family and with many of the the ministers of his court among whom was Marshal Soult.⁶¹ In fact he had been all over Europe & seen & known the most distinguished people & had just come from a three years cruise on the Brazil station. Uncle & I found him extremely agreeable & invited him to stay & spend the evening & night, but, he said he had an engagement with the Secretary of the Navy, wh[ich] would prevent – he had been here before in by gone days – while in Washington, he had heard of Uncle’s affliction & had come to see him & express his condolence. I received two most affectionate letters from my darling brother Orton to-day wh[ich] make me most uneasy about him & with Uncles’ permission & the help of Providence I shall go to see him to-morrow.

I earnestly pray for Divine assistance to do what is right – I know not what is his very great dislike to the school, but, I hope I may be guided aright in my decision – The whole of this morning, I have been at the grave of my dear Aunt having Ivy, Roses & violets planted. Alas! how soon shall we all be brought to occupy such a narrow space. It is good to dwell upon our last end & pray that when our bodies shall be laid in the cold earth, our spirits may rise to realms of eternal happiness.

Thursday [November] 10. I prepared with a mind filled with anxiety to go to visit my dear Brother at Howard.⁶² It was a long ride of ten miles, & my heart was praying nearly all the time to be directed rightly with regard to taking Orton away or leaving him at school. When I arrived, Mr McGuire⁶³ was out I sent for O & was shown in Mr McG’s study. There I had a long conversation with the dear child & was glad to find from his calmness, that his letter was written in a fit of impetuosity – He asked me if my mind was made up with regard to his remaining at the High school. I told him it was – that I had prayed for Divine assistance & it seemed to me the indications of Providence were all in favor of his remaining. He said then with a sweet expression of resignation – then, “Sister, I will say no more. I will remain.”

I was much touched by his manner, for I felt that it was God’s grace wh[ich] had enabled him so to resolve. I called at Dr. Sparrow’s⁶⁴ & asked him to come to see dear Uncle Custis – or rather asked his daughter for I was again disappointed in seeing that good man whom I have so much admired for his inimitable sermons. After a visit at Mr Packard’s⁶⁵ I returned to Arlington – arrived quite late & found Uncle quite wearied with waiting. I was so much fatigued that I was obliged to lie on the sofa all the evening & Uncle to-wards the end of the evening after reading until he is tired ~~as~~ throws himself down on the rug before the blazing fire & with the pillows under his head takes a fine nap tho’ he always says when he lies down “ I have not the least intention of going to sleep – not the most remote – only want to rest my eyes a little.” “Old Tom” is an unending source of amusement to him & I condescend to pay him a great deal of attention for his master’s sake. This evening he said that Walter Scott ~~was~~ had a favorite cat for whom he

⁶¹ Louis Philippe I (1773-1850), king of France from 1830 to 1848; Jean-de-Dieu Soult (1769-1851), a French general under Napoleon.

⁶² Alexandria’s Episcopal High School was originally known as the Howard School. Local newspapers continued to refer to it as “the Episcopal High School, at Howard” throughout the 1850s.

⁶³ Rev. John Peyton McGuire (1800-1869). In 1857 he was the rector of Episcopal High School in Alexandria.

⁶⁴ Rev. Prof. William Sparrow (1801-1874). He was a minister in the Episcopal Church of Virginia who also wrote *A Memoir of the Life of the Rt. Rev. William Meade*.

⁶⁵ Joseph Packard, D.D. (1812-1902) was a faculty member at the Virginia Theological Seminary. He wrote an autobiography in 1902 entitled *Recollections of a Long Life*.

left the winter open at night, that he might come in his bed room. He also had a favorite dog – Washington Irving, he said during his visit to Arlington⁶⁶ said admired his Tom very much & said he would very much have liked to have had a Puss, but, living with two maiden sisters or neices – or they living with him, he is obliged to resign the pleasure out of their disregard to the race. Washington Irving is a short stout man of pleasing address – This is the only discription I can get from Uncle. I hope some day to have the honor of seeing him.

Friday 10 [Correct date: Friday, November 11]. To-day, I had the extreme felicity of going over to dear old Tudor. ~~to see~~ Dear Grandmother Aunt B & Markie⁶⁷ being the only members of the family at home they soon dressed for a ride & we all went over to see old Mrs Taylor at the Octagon⁶⁸ – an old Lady of more than 80 – one of Grand Mothers earliest associates & friends – She sent for us to come in her room, where we also saw Mrs Lewis her daughter. The old Lady seems very feeble & they think she will not last long. We next called on Mrs Dr. Thornton⁶⁹ another Lady of the same date, but she was not at home. We then wended our way to see Mrs Gen Hamilton,⁷⁰ who told me that yesterday the 9th of Nov she was 94 years & three months. She sat up straight in the chair as do the Ladies of that time of day & talked as vigorously as possible – her locks are perfectly silvered & she told me she remembered Washington when there there [*sic*] were but two houses in it. She was knitting & upon our remarking her work she asked me to bring her a little parcel off the sofa wh[ich] doing she showed ~~me~~ us a pair of blue & white worsted slippers she had knit for her daughter. She said it was the only work she could do. She could not read write or sew, but she deemed it a great privilage to be enabled to hear reading – especially the Bible & indeed she thought at her great age she ought to deem it a blessing to have her senses so perfect & to be enabled to occupy herself in any way – for she said I have out-lived every one I see. She spoke with great enthusiasm of our Country & its freedom – its superiority to other countries & then she added “all it wants now is to be more christian – let the scriptures be read by all – in all schools – and let the Sabbath be kept – there are three Sabbaths she said – The day upon wh[ich] our Savior was born – ~~the day upon which he was cruci~~ wh[ich] is “Christmas” – the day on wh[ich] he was crucified wh[ich] was “good friday” & the day on wh[ich] he arose from the dead wh[ich] is Sunday – all those ought to be remembered. I let the Bible be read in all asylums & school[s] – you ladies she said speaking to Aunt B & myself who were sitting by her ought to attend to that – I heard of a school – Grace school⁷¹ – where they had no bibles & prayer books & I sent for one of the Trustees & told him the Bible ought to be read there” – afterwards it was done.

⁶⁶ Washington Irving likely visited Arlington for the first time in March 1840. According to the *Alexandria Gazette* for March 25, 1840, presented Irving and the poet Lydia Sigourney with slips from his weeping willows, which were descended from the willows that the poet Alexander Pope had in Twickenham, England.

⁶⁷ These are Markie’s relatives: Martha Custis Peter, Britannia Peter Kennon, and Martha Custis Kennon, who was also nicknamed Markie.

⁶⁸ Anne Ogle Tayloe (1772-1855), widow of John Tayloe III, original of the Octagon House in northwest Washington, D.C.

⁶⁹ Anna Maria Thornton (1775-1865). Her diaries, which are housed at the Library of Congress, mention Markie multiple times. She was the widow of Dr. William Thornton (1759-1828), who designed Tudor Place and helped design the U.S. Capitol.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (1757-1854), widow of Alexander Hamilton. She rented a home from Britannia Kennon on H Street, NW.

⁷¹ This may be the Sunday school of Grace Episcopal Church in Georgetown.

The old Lady spoke with so much true piety & has so sweet & peaceful & expression that I could but think that she was prepared for her ~~transept~~ transit come when it would & that long life had indeed been to her a blessing – It did my heart good & yet I gazed on with reverential awe & sadness as I saw dear Grandmother & her self sitting hand clasped in hand talking of days gone by – those better days wh[ich] n'er will come again they say – They recalled the time they spent at Mount Vernon. The old Lady spoke with profound admiration of the great & good Washington. Grand Mother said she remembered well, that when she arrive in Philadelphia on her wedding tour,⁷² that it was the day of a court dinner at the Presidential Mansion where of course, they were going to stay, and that Gen & Mrs Hamilton were present & so they each called up pleasant memories of the past. Ah! even I know a happy past and it was with intense interest that I witnessed the stability of early impressions.

It must be sad, indeed, to out-live the whole circle of ones early friends. It was not three weeks ago that Mrs H visited Tudor Place & I witnessed a similar treat: It seems such a bond of sympathy [*word scratched out*]. There were so many commissions to execute for myself & others that it was long after candle light when I returned home. A letter from Aunt Margaret⁷³ & one from my dear friend the Dr.[Austin Flint]⁷⁴ to-gether with the pleasure of seeing them all at home was a delightful treat to me. One alone of these would have been enough to make me happy. I have noticed in my life an unfailling rule that joy & grief follow each other just as inevitably as light & shade. Hence my joy is always moderated or tempered with the belief that it is but the prelude to an equal degree of sorrow & if I deeply greive I am consoled by the thought that my portion of joy will follow in counteracting proportion. As my feelings tend to excesses I believe my Heavenly Father has taken this way of modulating them.

[Saturday] Nov 12 – Spent the morning with Uncle in his ~~state~~ studio & the evening cosely by the parlor fire as usual – Uncle says much of interest that escapes my mind –

This morning he was admiring his large picture (or his smallest) over the mantle place in the parlor & he said he wished it ever to remain in that place & throughout each generation & then looking down & the Puss, he said that picture & a yellow Tom I desire to go down as heir looms in my family – they must always have a yellow Puss – He then said that General La Fayette was very fond of cats & that when George La Fayette⁷⁵ came over the first thing he did when he came in the room was to take up the Puss & kiss it. How very characteristic this is of the french. I do protest whatever may be their faults, they are very warm hearted. Uncle told me apropos of La Fayette that my dear father visited La Grange & spent several days there when he was in France. How much I wish I could have done so. The next topic of conversation was Trumbull's Sortie from Giberalter⁷⁶ a superb picture wh[ich] Uncle said he saw in New York many many years ago. Trumble was offered an immense sum for it then, but, supposing that Sir [*blank*] would b[u]y it as the principle figure represented his father he declined disposing of it to any one else – this gentlemand, as Mr Trumbull told Uncle, said he fully appreciated its merits, but, a

⁷² Martha Parke Custis and Thomas Peter were married in January 1795.

⁷³ Margaret Jane Williams Orton (1799-1865), Markie's aunt on her father's side. Markie stayed with her when she was in Paris.

⁷⁴ Austin Flint, Sr. (1812-1886), a founder of the Buffalo Medical College. He was a close friend of Markie and they frequently corresponded with one another.

⁷⁵ Georges Washington La Fayette (1779-1849) was the son of the Marquis de Lafayette.

⁷⁶ *Sortie Made by the Garrison of Gibraltar* by John Trumbull, 1789.

man with eleven children could not buy pictures. Uncle was often at [Gilbert] Stuart's Studio in Washington & was with him at Rivers-Dale⁷⁷ where he went to see some superb painting brought from Antwerp by Mr Steer (Aunt Calvert's father).⁷⁸ He told several anecdotes about Stuarts raptures while looking at that splendid collection of paintings.

Sunday [Nov 13] – This morning I awoke to the sound of a pouring rain wh[ich] at once drowned out all ideas of going to Church. Uncle as he always is in gloomy weather was dreadfully depressed. He was or seemed in no spiritual frame of mind, but, persued his pleasures as in the week – I went up stairs & sent for the children & read a sermon & prayed with them then I came down & Uncle said he would like me to read three Chapters in St. Luke – wh[ich] I did with a prayer that whilst I read his spiritual eyes might be opened. I brought down a book wh[ich] I had found at home “the bow in the Cloud”⁷⁹ wh[ich] had been a comfort to myself & many others in affliction & laying it on his little table beside him said “Uncle, when you feel disposed for reading there is a book wh[ich] I hope will interest you.”

He looked at it, but, did not put down the Book he had in his hand – I sat about twenty minutes in conversation on different subjects & then retired to my room when I came down again to my great delight Uncle was reading my book, apparently interested[.] I took up a vol of Burders Pious Woman & sat down to read also.

When next we spok Mrs Sigourney was the subject.⁸⁰ Uncle has several times spoken with the greatest respect & affection of Mrs Sigourney. Uncle told me, & I also saw in the papers, that Cousin Robert Lees Father Gen Harry Lee was the author of that inimitable paragraph ‘with regard to Gen Washington – “first in peace, first in war & first in the hearts of his countrymen.”’⁸¹ It was worthy the Father of such a man as Cousin Robert. ~~Monday~~ I was sorry to hear Uncle say he was going to get a new carriage & would then go over to the Theatre & to concerts & lectures this winter. I observed that concerts were pleasant occasionally & that I was fond of Lectures & doubtless they would be very fine at the Smithsonian if Mr Silliman⁸² came on this winter, but, I said nothing about the Theatre for I was sorry to think of his wishing in this way to drown[e]d his grief rather than turn it to his spiritual benefit.

Monday [Nov 14] this morning at Table I was admiring through the glass door the little picture of Uncle by Pine⁸³ – He told me that he was four years old when it was taken & it was a very fine painting. Chapman⁸⁴ admired it so much that he took a copy of it to take to England. Between 11 & 12 o'clock a carriage drove up & Mrs Gen Hamilton, her son Mr James A.

⁷⁷ Riversdale was one of the Calvert properties, located in Prince George's County, Maryland.

⁷⁸ Henri Joseph Stier (1743-1821) was the father of Rosalie-Eugénie Stier Calvert.

⁷⁹ Possibly *The Bow in the Cloud: Fifteen Discourses* (1846) by George Ware Briggs, which discussed finding hope in a time of mourning.

⁸⁰ Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865), an American poet known as the “Sweet Singer of Hartford.” She published her works with her married name “Mrs Sigourney.”

⁸¹ Henry “Light-Horse Harry” Lee III, Robert E. Lee's father, made this remark as part of his eulogy of George Washington before Congress on December 14, 1799.

⁸² Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864), a prominent American scientist and educator.

⁸³ This painting of G.W.P. Custis was produced by Robert Edge Pine at Mount Vernon in 1785.

⁸⁴ John Gadsby Chapman (1808-1889), another painter.

Hamilton & two Granddaughters were announced.⁸⁵ We were very glad to see them & gave them a hearty welcome – I took off Mrs H’s cloak & took her in the other room. She said this is the old Ladies room – alluding to dear Aunt Custis. When she came out, ~~the young~~ I got some bread & butter & some preserved ginger wh[ich] was all my bad house keeping afforded. ~~These the~~ & had wine handed. The young Ladies asked to go in the garden & I left the old Lady to Uncle & Mr Hamilton, promising to bring her a beautiful bouquet – The Ladies were enraptured with the garden, the flowers, & above all the exquisit view – When we returned – I found Mrs Hamilton sitting by Uncle’s little table admiring my workbasket & when I came up & gave her the bouquet, she said if there is anything in the world I envy you, it is this little work basket. When I remembered, that it was the last gift of dear Lolo⁸⁶ before I went to Europe & that ~~I h~~ it had been my constant companion all over Europe & was associated with so many pleasant hours, I hesitated however, it was only for a moment & immediately I turned out all my spools of thread and begged the old Lady to accept it – She seemed very grateful and said what can I do for you? I will work you something – I told her not to trouble herself about working me anything but, she insisted & said yes, she would commence it as soon as she got home. I then said I should most highly value a piece of her work. She begged me very cordially to come to see her – I said to her granddaughter that I had given the little basked to Mrs Hamilton as long as she lived & when she was done with it I would value it the more – I filled it with flowers wh[ich] ~~she~~ seemed to delight the old Lady very much – They all pressed me to come & dine with them & the Miss Hamiltons urged me to make them a visit on the North River or to let them know if I ever came to New York & they would come down & call on me & take me home with them to stay –

Miss H gave me her address Mr James A Hamilton Dobbs’ Ferry North River & said it was the place where General André crossed.⁸⁷ ~~So ended the pleasant visit of Mr G~~ Uncle took them in to the Painting room & showed them the Surrender of York Town – “The Gen” on the White Horse. Gen Knox beside him Gen O’Harrow offering the Sword wh[ich] Cornwallace sent out of his Tent. On the right general Lincoln, leading out the British troops and Count de Noel just showing himself on horseback at the edge of the frame. On the left the most conspicuous officer is Count de Rochambeau & the Duke de Lorzen in a Lancier uniform just behind him (he was after wards Duke de Bironne & was gillortined) Next to him is Dumas – then, St Simon, Le Val de Monmorency. Next to Count Rochambeau is the Baron Viomneille second in command. The American officers are La Fayette, Gen Nelson, Tilman & Cobb (adjutants).⁸⁸ Uncle told me that La Fayette was wounded at Brandywine & was made Major General at Monmouth. Although these little incidents may all be gleaned from history, still they impress themselves on the mind

⁸⁵ James Alexander Hamilton (1788-1878) was the third son of Alexander Hamilton. James A. Hamilton had four daughters, any two of which might have been with him on this visit. Because Mary Morris Hamilton (1818–1877) sent Markie a letter around this time, it seems likely she was one of the granddaughters present.

⁸⁶ Lawrence Abert Williams (1833-1879), one of Markie’s brothers. He eventually became a major in the Union Army.

⁸⁷ Dobbs Ferry, New York. The British spy Major John André (1751-1780), crossed the Hudson River at this point before he was captured in 1780. The Hudson was also known as the North River near New York City.

⁸⁸ G. W. P. Custis featured the following military leaders in his Battle of Yorktown painting: George Washington; Henry Knox (1750-1806); Charles O’Hara (1740-1802) ; Benjamin Lincoln (1733-1810); Jean-Baptiste-Donatien de Vimeur de Rochambeau (1725-1807); Armand Louis de Gontaut (1747-1793), duc de Lauzun and later duc de Biron; Guillaume-Mathieu Dumas (1753-1837); Claude-Ann de Rouvroy, Marquis de Saint-Simon Montbleru (1743-1819); Anne-Alexander-Marie de Montmorency, Marquis de Laval (1747-1817); Antoine Charles du Houx, Baron de Viomenil (1725-1793); Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), Thomas Nelson Jr. (1738-1789), Tench Tilghman (1744-1786), and David Cobb (1748-1830).

far more coming from the mouth of one who was partly a cotemporary & who knew personally almost all whom he represents.

This evening after reading the news papers as usual, until half past ten (during wh[ich] time I read the news & in Washington Irving's sketch Book)⁸⁹ Uncle took his usual place on the floor before the fire. After playing some time with the puss he commenced to speak of his affliction – Said that he took no interest in anything – that though some thing diverted his mind for a brief season, when it was past, his spirits were as bad as ever. I would fain have said “Yes, dear Uncle, there is nothing true but Heaven” but while I mused as to what to say & how to say it with due respect & defferance to his age, he went on to tell of his trip to the North – to Niagara⁹⁰ &c&c & how he had longged to see it for years, but how it was at last a mere passing enjoyment. He then said Martha I read in the Book you gave me “Blessed are they that mourn” and “the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth”⁹¹ Oh! I hope it may be so! – “God's will be done”! but, this has been to me a great calamity – if it had come in my youth, I could have born it, but, now I shall never rise above it. Now, said he, I ought not to be so depressed when I look around me & behold my blessings – There are my children as devoted & kind to me as they can be, my health is being restored[.] I have gained a good deal of flesh, my appetite is good, I sleep much better than I did and my worldly affairs were never so prosperous and yet I am not happy & I feel as if none of these things would make me happy. I said in a firm voice “No, Uncle, it is not in any of these things to make one truly happy. He paused for [a] minute & then went on as if he had not heard my words. I felt discouraged I longed to say something for the good of his soul and to the glory of God, but, I knew not what to say. It seemed such a good opportunity. I felt that if I let it pass, I might never have another – But, what, of all I could say, must I say & how must I say it so as not to do an injury to the cause I espoused? Alas! my heart beat, I could have burst into tears – Oh! God teach me what to say was on my heart; but as I mused, Uncle had passed on to the resources he had in his painting & to his getting a new carriage & attending the Theatre, by way of diverting his mind. I would have said volumes, but Oh! I could not. Never, have I felt such difficulty of utterance – my lips were sealed – Oh! if I have erred forgive me my savior. Thou knowest how I would have said Oh my Uncle “Earth hath no sorrow wh[ich] Heaven cannot heal”⁹² – Turn thy grief in the channel wh[ich] God has appointed – “Cast thy burden on the Lord and he shall sustain thee”⁹³ There is nought save the love of God wh[ich] can fill the void of human longing. God's Spirit is the only comfoter – Christ our only Savior God the Father our High Judge. But I was perfectly silent with the exception of the few words I've written, and I fear Uncle thinks that my christianity has not given me words of consolation for the afflicted but, perhaps, ay, it is God who has ordered even this – [“]God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts.”⁹⁴

Uncle then went back to his early days & spoke of the time when General La Fayette visited Arlington. He dined with him at the Presidents & at half past nine o'clock he left the President's saying that he had been invited to Arlington, he was obliged to leave the next morning & this would be the only opportunity he should have of visiting the relative of the Great Washington. Uncle even when he saw how late it was begged him not to go, but, he ~~said~~ insisted

⁸⁹ *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819) by Washington Irving

⁹⁰ G.W.P. Custis took a tour of Niagara Falls with Robert E. Lee in September 1853, before Markie arrived.

⁹¹ These verses are from Matthew 5:4 and Hebrews 12:6.

⁹² A line from the hymn “Come, Ye Disconsolate” by Thomas Moore (1816).

⁹³ Psalm 55:22.

⁹⁴ Isaiah 55:8.

& Uncle & himself got in the carriage followed by two other carriages containing his suit & ear were conducted from the farm to the house by a torch light procession.⁹⁵ The House was splendidly illuminated & the family with invited guests awaited their arrival. There was a sumptuous colation spread, but, he only took a cup of coffee.

After remaining some time Uncle again escorted him back to Washington & returned to Washin Arlington about two o'clock and arose the next morning at five & went over to join General La Fayette on his trip to York Town – A Steam boat was chartered by the State of Virginia & Uncle was invited to form one of his suit. He said he was much affected when he arrived in sight of York Town where he had been so victorious. He said to Uncle “The people of your Country will kill me with their kindness.”

In Baltimore, they gave a superb dinner to him at wh[ich] Uncle was present – the Toast was “To the old Maryland line – who are like that excellent Bird called the Wood cock – because they can bear a cutting” or if not precisely these words, very nearly. None were present but the old Maryland line. The subject then changed to the Hamiltons who had been here to-day & mentioning that their address was Dobbs’ Ferry, Uncle remarked, that there was where Gen Washington crossed to New York on his way to Yorktown to gain his laurels there & it is I think also, the place where Gen André was captured. Some years after his execution his remains were taken up & carried to England & there is now a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey with a flaming eulogium.⁹⁶

Arnold went to England where he died friendless & unknown. Uncle mentioned Cousin Robert & himself going to what is called Robinsons farm Beverly House⁹⁷ where Arnold lived & where the treason was discovered – Arnold then commanded at West Point. Uncle said his feelings were altogether inexpressible when he was shown in the room where the treason was discovered by Gen Washington. He spoke with the most patriotic enthusiasm of the feelings wh[ich] must have animated our troops when two regiments under General Lincoln marched down from West Point to New York at the same time the British in their great Ships were evacuating the Harbor of New York after a seven years occupation of the city. Mrs Hamilton told Uncle that she was in New York at the time & saw them march down Wall street.

I received a most beautifully written letter from dear Orton, to-day. I quite dreaded to get it lest he should be continued to express himself dissatisfied with the school, but, on the contrary he writes in a sweet christian temper & says he will not wound my feelings any more by his complainings. He is a dear Good child I think this great trial may be sanctified to him. God bless him.

Tuesday [Nov] 15. It is a common saying at home, that if company comes on Monday, they continue to come every day in the week. Hence, being very slightly tintured with this superstision myself & as the day was most tempting in its mild atmosphere & sunny brightness, & there was no reason why company should not come & every reason why they should, I

⁹⁵ G.W.P. Custis’s undated account of Lafayette’s 1824 visit, contained within the Custis-Lee Family papers at Tudor Place, reveals that the torches were carried by enslaved people.

⁹⁶ The memorial to John André was erected in the nave of Westminster Abbey in 1782. It depicts a lion and a woman with a shield bearing the Union Jack sitting on a sarcophagus. The scene below shows the moments before André taken away and hanged.

⁹⁷ The Beverly Robinson House was where Arnold was nearly captured after switching sides.

arranged my toilette so as to prevent the necessity of a hurried exit from the parlor just at the time when I ought to be ~~em~~ making my entrée; Uncle seemed also, convinced of the idea – not that he breathed a word on the subject – but, he came in the parlor just at the time when he usually goes to the farm, and taking a Book seated himself before the fire, looking ever & anon at the fire or out of the window, or at the clock. After waiting for at least an hour, he got up & went out recommending me also to take a walk. I was much interested in a french History that I was reading so that it was some time after that I sallied forth and gathering a few sweet roses, sought the narrow secluded path wh[ich] lead to the grave of my dear, dear Aunt. I remained there a few minutes to meditate & after looking at the little plants wh[ich] I had placed in the vicinity, I turned my steps again to-wards the garden where I gathered a bouquet of flowers, partly to rescue them from an impending shower & partly to gratify my love for these beautiful gems of nature. I returned to the house & had just arranged part of them in the glass goblet in the parlor & taken the rest to my room when hearing the voice of a stranger (for ordinarily, we hear nought but the little birds building their nests in the roof of the portico or a stray hen luxuriating in the sand below or the crack of the cow-boy’s whip as he drives home the cattle to their evenings duty.) I went to the window & perceived two Ladies dismount from their horses – I hastened down stairs & found that Uncle had not in vain sighed for a visiter to enliven our loneliness, two Ladies had come & he had them in full possession in his studio expounding as I supposed the beauties of the great picture – I entered and [a] jaunty (as Phillie⁹⁸ would say) foreign, sprightly little Lady in a black riding dress festooned across the bosom with black plaited braid & french frogs and a most becoming ~~blue~~ dark blue riding hat & feathers, immediately sprung forward & saluted me with a shake of the hand saying that she remembered seeing me on her last visit to Arlington when she was Madelle Jagella – now, Madame Tochman⁹⁹, but, that she did not recall my name. I introduced myself & expressed my recognition of her & my pleasure at meeting her again. She then introduced “Miss Gaines – the daughter of Mrs Gaines”! wh[ich] vague introduction, gave me an idea that she was the daughter of Mrs General Gaines wh[ich] turned out to be correct – rather a pretty languid looking southerner dressed in Black.¹⁰⁰ While I conversed with her Mrs Tochman appeared to be carrying on a most animated conversation with Uncle with regard to the Laws respecting slaves in the State of Virginia. She s[t]ood with whip in hand looking somewhat like a “fille du regiment” whom I saw in Paris. Uncle seemed to be giving her very little satisfaction when in a few minutes a constable came in bringing two negroes a man & a girl – then, the affair was further discussed poor Mrs Tochman was in great tribulation & was excited even to tears. I could not amidst the confusion exactly understand at the time what was the matter, but, I heard the decree go forth from Uncle that they must go to jail – He was mild & firm in his manner & said that he regretted the circumstance, but, he was obliged to carry out the law – Mrs T protested that they were “excellent people – that they had never done anything wicked that indeed, they were very good,” but, Uncle was inexorable. I could but admire the earnestness with wh[ich] she pleaded for them always commencing “But, my dear Sir” and then ~~where~~ she asked if there was no place they could go, but, to jail – Oh! Heavens it is dreadful she said & with a face suffused

⁹⁸ Philadelphia Sarah Jane Orton (1825-1888), one of Markie’s cousins on her father’s side. Markie stayed with her family while she was in Paris.

⁹⁹ Markie was trying to say “Mademoiselle Jagiello,” referring to Appollonia Tochman by her maiden name.

¹⁰⁰ Edmund P. Gaines (1777-1849) was a veteran of numerous American wars from the War of 1812 to the Mexican-American War. Markie probably believed she was the daughter of the general’s third wife, Myra Clark Gaines (1806-1885), who was involved in a lengthy legal battle from 1834 to 1891 to gain recognition as the sole heir of her father’s estate in New Orleans. Edmund and Myra were married in 1839.

with tears she said as she turned to me “Oh! I love freedom too much! – Oh! this is dreadful & I am the innocent cause of it. I knew nothing of this. I had not an idea of such a thing and going to the servants again she said to the girl who was crying, Oh! do not cry I will do anything for you – I will take every means of getting you out of jail. I will come to see you myself & bring you some money & anything you want – Tell me what you want – where are your relations I will go & let them know why you are in jail and I will do everything –do not fear – do not fear Ellen and the same she said to the Boy who was sitting on the railing of the little porch, looking as indifferent as if he had not a thought or a care for anything in the world.” It seems, that these servants were free & had been hired by a Pole a friend of their’s (also a relative of Kosciusko’s¹⁰¹) who lived in Maryland. This friend had lent them to Mrs Tochman, all of the parties being ignorant of the fact that free servants negroes living in the state of Virginia were liable to be taken & sold as slaves (it seems a hard law and yet I can see the possible necessity of it.) These servants while in her employ were apprehended by the constable & brought before Uncle who is the Justice of the Peace. In fulfilment of the law, he was obliged to consign them to jail until the Court would set to decide their case, wh[ich] would not be for three weeks. When they were brought before Uncle he at once enquired if they had their free papers they replied in the negative. Uncle said kindly – “You ought to have known them.” The Boy replied with a brightness which quite belied his appearance “We ought to no [know] a great many things sir, that we don’t know” upon wh[ich] we all for the moment changed our grave countenances into a smile of assent. When he added “We don’t know how to read sir and so we could not see the law in the paper & no one ever told us about it.”

The case did indeed, seem a very hard one. I truly sympathised with the whole party. I knew how Mrs T— as a foreigner viewed the case, knowing as I do by personal experience, how slavery is viewed in Europe. I admired the noble spirit wh[ich] she showed. She is the celebrated Hungarian exile Mademoiselle Jaghella who came over to this country with Governor Uhazi¹⁰² & his party who it was said was a great heroine in the Hungarian Revolutions – another Jean D’Arc, according to the papers at that time. Then it was also said that she acted the Sister of Mercy in the Hospitals at that time – at all events she was a great patriot. After a short time in this country she married Mr Tochman a Pole – After her marriage a great slander was brought against her by some hungarian I believe, & Mrs Tochman brought a suit against him wh[ich] continued a long time – The papers & gossips were full of it, but, it has now died away and she is living the matter of fact Life of a farmers wife at a lovely place called “Summer Hill” near Arlington.¹⁰³ She begged me to come & see her & said she would come in her carriage for me. She told me that it had been seven years since she had seen or heard of her Mother or any of her relations. As she quaintly expressed it “I am death to them & they are death to me.”

¹⁰¹ Thaddeus Kosciuszko (1746-1817), a Polish officer who served in the American Revolution. In his will, Kosciuszko had set aside money to purchase the freedom of enslaved African Americans and provide for their education. Sadly this request was never fulfilled. It is unclear how this Polish person was related to Kosciuszko since he had no children and those of his siblings do not appear to have followed him to America.

¹⁰² László Újházy (1795-1870), a prominent Hungarian emigrant.

¹⁰³ In September 1851, a Bavarian army captain named Henry Ahus accused Jagello of being a fraud. According to him, her real name was Julia Eisfeldt and she was not the least bit Hungarian. In October of that same year, sixty-seven Hungarian emigrants published a statement in the *New York Tribune* supporting her claims. Ahus was later charged with libel. The 1860 census lists the Tochmans among the inhabitants of Alexandria County.

Wednesday [Nov] 16. Soon after breakfast or rather while at breakfast a man called on Uncle in his office as justice of the Peace. When his business was ended & he gone another rap at the door & Perry ~~issued~~ ushered in as he said three gentlemen, who after sitting about twenty minutes listening to Uncle's always interesting conversation (and this was one of his particularly loquacious days) they made know to us that ~~the~~ their visit was a fulfilment of an intention they had long had of coming over to ask permission of Mr Custis to take a Daguerreotype of Arlington House – From their manners & conversation I recognized them as citizens of the Empire State – and from their card I discovered them to be Mr Roots Daguarian Establishment from Washington.¹⁰⁴ Uncle took them into his Studio & when they came out they went out on the lawn & unwrapping their instruments made preparations of the commencement of operations.

One of them came in & asked me if I would come out on the Portico as my likeness would be a great addition to the picture. I suppose he meant embelishment for I cannot think that my small frame could be “a great addition” to a House – tho' by the bye, frames are generally some addition to pictures. I rather hesitated about ~~accepting~~ complying with the request, but, it was made in so modest a way that I might appear wanting in courtesy if I refused so ~~down~~ out I went with my Book in hand & a wreath of Ivy wh[ich] I snatched out of the Flower vase as I passed. I stood leaning against the pillar with the sun shining brightly in my face all the time wh[ich] made me wink & blink & frown, too, but, as the plate was not very large, I fancy I shall not bear so large a proportion to the house as they thought & therefore the only desernable thing will be the form of a Lady. One view was with only myself standing on the steps – the next view was uncle leaning against one pillar and myself against the alternate one. They then took three more different views. And when this was finished they said they would like to take a Portrait of Uncle & myself sitting together on the portico. I declined saying that I thought it would look better if only Uncle was taken but they insisted that they would be much pleased if I would do them the favor to sit. I said no quite positively at first but, they really seemed desirous of my doing so, so at length I consented to stand thinking & intending to place myself in the back ground, but when I took my position (with a bunch of flowers taken out of the goblet in the Hall on the old Harpsichord) the artists came up & begged that he might ask me to stand forward & place my hand on Uncle's shoulder wh[ich] I did in compliance – They were but a few minutes & it was over[.] Uncle, looking as he does out of a past ~~age~~ century could not help commenting on the wonderful inventions of the present & it will be well if the picture is not marred by his moving lips – tho' he only said “Wonderful invention” It is not often that our commendation is thus rewarded. The operatives gave my Uncle & myself a very pressing invitation to come over as soon as we could to see them finished wh[ich] invitation of course we cordially accepted & after a little more conversation, they took their departure about 12 o'clock – Uncle after conversing with me a little about our departed visitors resorted to his painting room & thence to his farm while I endeavored to settle my mind by a continuation of the “Sketch book” wh[ich] I am enjoying for the second time but, finding my mind too disipated for reading, I remembered some autumn leaves, wh[ich] I had pressed with the intention of varnishing (for the sake of preserving their beauty) This was just the occupation suitable to my feelings so going in to Uncle's Painting Room & purloining a brush wh[ich] I had, however obtained his permission to take some time ago, I ran up stairs opened my varnish bottle & taking my music books from under press, I paraded my beautiful leaves all over the bed in one of the spare chambers – the one too most

¹⁰⁴ “Root's Daguerreotype” was located at No. 290 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at the corner of Eleventh Street. The store produced an advertisement in 1855 which is in the collections of the Library of Congress. Marcus Aurelius Root (1808-1888) and his brother Samuel (1819-1889) were both prominent daguerreotypists.

generally occupied by strangers. As I varnished each leaf, I put it on the window sill until it was quite covered. I had just become thoroughly interested in my work, when, I heard ~~a ear~~ the wheels of a carriage & upon looking out I saw an elegant euepage drive up containing three elegantly dressed Ladies. I did not feel at all disposed to go down, but when a thing is to be done, it might a well be done at once, so, tearing myself away from my autumn glowing leaves, Je decendais au salon, & introduced myself as Miss Williams saying that my Uncle had gone to the Farm. The Lady of the equippage advanced, introduced herself as ~~Miss~~ Mrs Pendleton, & her companions as her sister Miss Mills & Mrs Smith.¹⁰⁵ It turned out, that Mrs P— and Miss Mills were daughters of the archetect of the Washington Monument (Not the same Mills that designed & executed the Jackson monument.) and Mrs Smith was as she told me the great grand-daughter of General Morgan of the revolution. While Mrs Smith was conveying to me this important piece of information Mrs Pendleton was making a set speech to Uncle wh[ich] I p turned to hear, tho she gave me the first edition before Uncle entered – Tho’ I fail to give her tone & gesture I think I can remember in part her words – at any rate the pith of them – “Mr Custis, The especial object of my visit this morning was to invite that young Lady (whom, my dear Lady you did not know was here) & yourself, to be present at a presentation of a silver trumpet to a certain fire company of Washington. My object is to elevate the office of Firemen by my encouragement – No class of men sacrafice so much for the publick good as they do – at all hours of the night & day they risk their own Life for the benefit of others. I think sir, it is a noble office, and sir, it has not been sufficiently appreciated. The company wh[ich] I have selected to aid, Sir, is a disabled company. I have before, presented them with an elegant Banner & with money to reestablish themselves & now sir, I shall on the occasion on wh[ich] I invite you & your neice to attend, myself present them with a silver trumpet (wh the Ladies said in a parenthesis was a superb thing). Tho’ I select this company sir, it will reflect through this company to all the fire companies (Bright Trumpet, indeed!) On this occasion Mr Custis there will be a great number of distinguished persons present & four gentlemen will deliver speeches – Sir, it is at Carrousi’s saloon¹⁰⁶ & shall take it as an especial favor if your neice and yourself will honor me with your company. Uncle bowed expressed his interest & appreciation of the objects of her charity, as I did, but, we did not accept the invitation.

When words were quite exhausted on this subject I thought poor Mrs Smith who had scarcely opened her mouth ought to have a chance, so, turning to Uncle, I said “Uncle, this Lady is the grand-daughter of Gen. Morgan of the Revolution.” Indeed, said Uncle, I knew him very well. He was the commanding officer at the Battle of Cowpens – and then, he went on to relate several interesting anecdotes with regard to the old general, wh[ich] highly delighted ~~his~~ said, Mrs Smith. Her face flush & her eyes sparkled and I sat in quiet delight at having afforded her so much pleasure. She who had sat so mum in a corner before this, was now quite illuminated. Mrs Pendleton, now, burst out with a very audible “Aunt!” as if she would remind the company that she had some claim of connection with this renowned hero. Uncle then, proposed to take the

¹⁰⁵ The ladies were Jacqueline Smith Pendleton (1814-1859), Anna Smith Mills (1819-1864), and possibly a maternal aunt (their mother’s maiden name was Smith.) Robert Mills (1781-1855) designed the Washington Monument. While he submitted a proposal for the equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson at Lafayette Square, he lost out to Clark Mills (1810-1883). It does not appear that Daniel Morgan’s had any great-grandchildren with the last name “Smith,” even considering name changes with marriage.

¹⁰⁶ Carusi’s saloon was operated in Washington, D.C., by Gaetano Carusi, a former member of the U.S. Marine Band. The ceremony in question occurred on November 22, 1853, for the benefit of the Columbia Fire Company. As the following sentence states, G.W.P. Custis was absent. Details of the event were published in the *Washington Sentinel* on November 23, 1853.

Ladies into his studio & thither we all repaired. Great eulogiums were passed on the Painting – Uncle went over for the dozenth time the names of all the heros of the piece – told how astonished Heally¹⁰⁷ was when ~~st~~ he told him he was a self-taught artist & how still more astonished he was when he told him the model of that horse originated in his own brain. Now, lookin at the form of O’Harra, he said, he presents the sword – he does not come bowing in a servile manner, but, in a brave noble manner – as if he would say “~~Here is the~~ I deliver to you this sword sir – it was mine, now ‘tis yours.”

The Ladies now retired – After dinner I went to take my evening walk – & got home just in time to escape a rain. Uncle mentioned of Gen Morgan that he was very religious and very reluctant to die – He desired to live only one day longer. A circumstance wh[ich] weighed on his mind very much was that during the Battle he had marked out a general officer of the British troops & he had thus been killed – Uncle said he expressed this grief to him. Towards night Daniel came with the Mail Bag wh[ich] gave us great pleasure as it contained a letter from dear Cousin Mary. When this was read Uncle went to smoke his segar, leaving with me a partridge wh[ich] he had shot for our breakfast – and wh[ich] I thought so pretty that I had brought my paint box & was making preparations to paint his likeness when I heard the wheels of a voiture & at the same time Perry marching with long & hurried strides to the front door – I heard a strange voice ask if Miss Williams & Mr Custis were at home & in a minute my hand was kindly pressed by that Christian Minister whom I have so long loved & admired from the pulpit – Dr. Sparrow,¹⁰⁸ the renowned schollar & theologean. Having only heard his voice from the pulpit before, I did not know it modulated to the tones of a parlor. He said his friend Mr Howard¹⁰⁹ one of the Senior Class at the Seminary kindly brought him over, but, would not come in. I found the Dr. in conversation just what I had been led to anticipate by his sermons – I was peculiarly struck with his mild, unobtrusive, unostentatious manners – Tho’ so learned a man he has no more pretention than a mere boy & not half so much as half the Boys one meets. These latter, think because they are acquiring a few ologies they are surpassing all the world in intelligence. How true is it that knowledge puffeth us, but, wisdom only is humble. [*Word scratched out*] As Cowper beautifully says

Knowledge & wisdom far from being one
Have oft times no connection,
Knowledge means a mind replete with
Thoughts of other men –
Wisdom a heart attentive to its own.”¹¹⁰

I believe I have this wrong –

¹⁰⁷ George Peter Alexander Healy (1813-1894), a Boston-born artist who painted portraits of presidents and other prominent Americans.

¹⁰⁸ Rev. William Sparrow was not born in Ireland as Markie thought but rather Charlestown, MA. However, his father took him to Ireland in 1805 and he remained there for twelve years.

¹⁰⁹ There was a C. R. Howard at the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1853.

¹¹⁰ The passage is from *Extracts from the Task: Meditation in Winter* by William Cowper. As she suspected, Markie had the quote slightly off. It should read: “Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,/ Have oftentimes no connexion./ Knowledge dwells/ In heads replete with thoughts of other men,/ Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.”

This good man possesses that rare & beautiful combination Knowledge & wisdom combined. I remember my dear Aunt Custis telling me that she felt quite awed when she came first in his presence having heard so much of his erudition, but, was soon put at ease, by his affable manners. It seems the Dr is an Irishman by birth & education. He told me he ~~was educated~~ went to school in the sweet vale of Avocha.¹¹¹ He had travelled a great deal in England, Ireland & Scotland & likewise, in Germany & France & related much of interest concerning these countries & we interchanged our views on the countries mutually known to us – While Uncle was as ever full of anecdote. I had asked the Dr to have some conversation with dear Uncle on matters relating to his eternal welfare, so, when, I found that conversation had taken such a turn as might lead to its suggestion, I took my candle & went up to my own room, where I earnestly knelt & prayed that, that man of God might bring his mind through the instrumentality of divine assistance to contemplate Life in its true light – as merely a pathway to the Portal of Heaven or Hell. After a half hours absence when I knew it was time for tea I returned to the Parlor & found them deeply engaged in conversation. I was glad to hear the manner in wh[ich] Uncle talked. He spoke with so much pleasure of Cousin Mary's Piety & of Cousin Robert & Annie's having joined the Church –¹¹²

I do not encourage him in his idea of going to Europe in the spring, much as I know he would enjoy the tour, because I feel that his eternal salvation is of far more importance than his present enjoyment and if he were to go to Europe, his mind would probably become more than ever absorbed in the things of this world & consequently the only opportunity for spiritual improvement passed forever.

But, God's ways are not our ways & he might even in that case, make things work together for Good.

We have had a delightful evening – a real treat and it was concluded by family Prayer. Uncle got Annies new Bible & placing it before the Dr on the centre table asked him to read. The Dr. selected the 77 Psalm wh[ich] he read with great expression and made a long & beautiful prayer. He prayed as one acquaint with heavenly language. His words flowed in natural strains, and then Uncle & his valet Ephraim accompanied him up to his room. When Uncle returned to the parlor he expressed himself much pleased with his guest & told me that during my absence from the room he had had some very serious conversation in wh[ich] he had felt much interested.

[Thursday, Nov] 17. A misty English morning but mild as it has been for some days. The Dr had family Prayers in wh[ich] he read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Mr Howard did not come till half past nine so we enjoyed Dr Sparrow's company for a short time after breakfast. Mr H came in for about ten minutes. He has a good face, but, looked very sad. I am sure he was thinking of his last visit here and of my dear dear Aunt. – E'en strangers feel it sad,

To miss the ancient Lady of an Ancient House

When she adorned that place so perfectly –

¹¹¹ The river Avoca in County Wicklow, Ireland. Sparrow attended the boarding school at Arklow, near the river's mouth.

¹¹² Robert E. Lee was confirmed on July 20, 1853, along with his daughters Annie and Mary. Markie was in Europe at that time.

But, what must they, who, bound by stronger ties,

See her departing shadow at each step? [*Two words scratched out*]

Uncle called Dr Sparrows attention as he does every one's to his yellow Tom, observing that Dr Johnson¹¹³ & various other learned men had had a penchant for Pusses – upon which Dr S__ said it reminded him of “Barrette of Dublin¹¹⁴ a man quite burried in literature had a cat & also a kitten and being much annoyed at those pets crying at the door & not wishing to incommode himself by getting up to open the door had a large hole made in the door for the cat to come in & a small one for the kitten – he was an Irish man!” We all laughed hartily – tho’ I have heard the anecdote in my younger days – I think dear Papa used to tell it.

It was with very regretful hearts that we bade adieu to our guests, for they would have been a charming acquisition this gloomy day – indeed, any day.

To night I received a letter from my dear Bunnie – Surely, I have much to be grateful for, in the health & well-being of those I love, as well as for my own health and opportunities for enjoying so much that is beautiful in the kingdom of nature. The scenery from the old Portico at Sun set or moon rise is ravissant.

Hiram Powers was the topic of conversation this morning at the Breakfast table & Uncle said, that Thawalsden's¹¹⁵ eulogium on Powers Statue of Eve (he thinks it was Eve) had immortalized him. Upon beholding this beautiful work of art, he asked by whom it was done – the reply was, by an American[.] What do you think of it – Think of it him! Said he “I think he is the best artist living or that ever will live.” His plan is a new one – that of using a chisel in place of a rougher instrument. Powers is anxious to have his family educated in america & proposed to the Government to give him work wh[ich] would employ him in his own country.

Dr Sparrow & myself were talking of the ignorance of ~~amerie~~ foreigners with regard to America wh[ich] drew forth the following anecdote from Uncle “When the first Ambassador was expected at Vienna from the United States, Prince Meternick¹¹⁶ was in great tribulation & sent for Sir Wm Gordon, British Ambassador¹¹⁷ & told him he was very much annoyed that an American Ambassador was to arrive in a few days & there was no interpreter – ~~The~~ Sir Wm carried on the joke saying yes it was indeed an annoying circumstance. When the day of his presentation arrived, the Court was crowded expecting to see an Indian in Feathers with his Tomahawk in hand when to their inexpressible surprise – the doors were thrown open & his excellency, ~~the~~ General Mulenburg¹¹⁸ Ambassador from the United States of North America was announced & a tall handsome man six feet two, speaking the German language with perfect fluency.

This is I should think what the Sailors call a yarne, tho’ doubtless Uncle told it as he heard it.

¹¹³ Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), an English literary critic, poet, and dictionary writer.

¹¹⁴ Possibly Eaton Stannard Barrett (1786-1820), an Irish poet and satirist.

¹¹⁵ Hiram Powers (1805-1873) was an American sculptor famous for *The Greek Slave*. “Thawalsden” is Bertel Thorvaldsen, a Danish sculptor. He produced a statue called “Venus with Apple” which could have been mistaken for the biblical Eve.

¹¹⁶ Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773-1859), Chancellor of Austria and influential statesman.

¹¹⁷ Markie may have meant Sir Robert Gordon (1791-1847). He was the British ambassador to Austria 1841-1846.

¹¹⁸ Henry Augustus Philip Muhlenberg (1782-1844) was the first U.S. Ambassador to the Austrian Empire, serving from 1838 until 1840. He was not a general, although his relative Peter Muhlenberg was one in the Continental Army.

[Friday] Nov 18. I heard the children their lessons this morning & after dinner asked Uncle to let me have the horse to go down to the Quarters to see one of the servants who was sick – The order being given for the horse to be saddled, I equipped myself & was soon off on my ride, Perry professing to be my escort, but, in fact only ~~æ~~ appearing mysteriously every now & then in a side grove, he having always taken a short cut across – I was quite amused at the manner in wh[ich] he obeyed the order to “take good care of Miss Martha[.]” The path through wh[ich] I rode, was bordered on either side with cedars & the fields covered with waving broom sedge interspersed with these bright ~~green~~ ever-green, had a charming effect. I saw in front of me a little elevation of ground & riding up, I paused to gaze around me at the entrancing prospect. Beneath and ~~æ~~ for a vast extent of field around me was the luxurient broom sedge, wh[ich] the autumn blasts had tinted a superb salmon – no, it was even richer – it defied the painters art and dotted here & there these beautiful little cedar trees like green monuments in a desert – then far beyond the rich maroon colored oak leaves & the glowing ~~history~~ gold & brown hickory – and then the great placid river with her white sails – some fully in view & others peeping over the tops of distant Trees – and beyond this silver flowing stream lies the beautiful Capitol of our nation with its majestic buildings, like a grand panorama – and the whole landscape illuminated by the resplendent rays of a setting sun.

I could have sat for an hour gazing at that lovely sight but, it was getting late & I was obliged to accomplish my errand & return home – I went around to all the Quarters & the old servants some of whom I had not seen since my childhood came out to greet me. Since my tour to Europe all these things seem invested with a new interest to me. Uncle told me to-day that he had on this farm, seventy negroes and I fear more than half of them live in idleness.

[Saturday] Nov 19. A nice long letter from Cousin Mary to day quite cheered me for I have been suffering from cold and over exercise in my ride yesterday.

The arrival of the Post Bag on a winter evening at Arlington, is always a peculiar source of pleasure. With what care & anxiety does Uncle open it as he sits in his old ~~three-corner~~ angular seat, the yellow puss extending his beautiful fur at his feet in various graceful attitudes or jumping up on his knee to get a fond caress, as if jealous of the care bestowed on the letters & papers. But, come what may – the most important dispatch does not exclude “this amiable puss” from a fond caress & a kindly word. Often in the midst of a letter he would stop & say “Martha just look at this puss.”

This afternoon, I have been highly honored by receiving a little present from Mrs General Hamilton – A little worsted bag knit by herself for me & accompanied by a very polite note from her Grand daughter, Miss Hamilton[.]¹¹⁹

A peice of work done by a Lady 94 years of age! And a Lady of her distinguished position! & so good & pious a Lady! I do most highly prize it and “it shall (as a Lady said upon being granted a lock of President Polk’s hair) be handed down as an heir-loom in the family.” Miss Hamilton renews her pressing invitation to visit them on the North River.

¹¹⁹ Note from M. M. Hamilton to MCW in Folder 3, Arlington House Archives.

I am quite unwell this evening & Uncle has been amusing me by recounting Ghost stories, to wh[ich], not being a favorite style of mine, I've only given half a ear. I am surprised to find Uncle's character so large an ingredient of superstition.

My observation has convinced me that “credulity” is a characteristic quality of the Custis branch of our family. I partake of it myself, but, as to Ghost Stories, I am rather dubious. Uncle concluded by saying in the words of some one, I forget who “Ah! yes my dear, “there are more things in ~~our~~ Heaven & Earth than are known to our Philosophy.”¹²⁰

Sunday [Nov] 20. This morning, I was so unwell that I did not arise till late. Dear Uncle sent me up for breakfast my partridge wh[ich] he said he shot expressly for me last evening. It was so kind in him[.] About ten o'clock, as I was dressing, I heard a strange step upon the portico & looking from my window saw my friend Abel Upshur.¹²¹ I was glad & I was sorry to see him – sorry because it was an evidence to me that his heart was not ~~write~~ right with God when his feet were straying away from his Holy Sanctuary on this Holy Day. It is a pain & grief to me to see this day desecrated and yet, I feel that I do not in thought and word keep it as I ought, particularly since I have been here. [D]ear Uncle talks of so many worldly subjects and it is but, reasonable that he should for one whose mind has so long been wholly engaged in worldly pursuits, cannot all at once become disenthralled, however, much he may desire it; therefore, I yield to this as his infirmity & converse with him tho' endeavoring to show less of interest than on other days – Mr Upshur & Uncle talked of all kinds of things foreign to the Day, while I sat earnestly wishing myself capable of turning the current of ideas. But, God alone, can deal with the hearts of men. ~~Th~~ At length my attention was some what rivited by Mr U giving a history of his visit to what he denominated a slave warehouse in Richmond¹²² (Shocking words!) where the poor slaves were brought up & sold like horses or cattle – made to walk up and down to show the strength of their limbs &c &c and the women too treated with quite as little delicacy. I said “I wonder Mr U— how you could have gone to such a place.” “Well, said he, “Miss Markie, it was very revolting & I came away quite disgusted. I said Mrs Stowe's pen could not be employed too severely on this ~~subject~~ despicable inhumane practice – Uncle also agreed that it was very offensive. Alas! Alas! the evils of slavery – Where will they cease?

The subject of slavery was then discussed. Uncle spoke of some Guinee Negroes who were at Mount Vernon one of whom lived to be one hundred & ten years of age – He said that at that time, there were constant wars among the Africans and their own Kings made a practice of killing the older portion of his subjects and selling the younger ones to the traders – these traders brought them to America and here they became servants in respectable families, were taught to be useful and many of them were taught religion wh[ich] they would have died in ignorance of, had they ~~hved~~ remained in their own country – These, said he, are some of the apologies for slavery. The slaves themselves were anything but displeased with their fate for Uncle said they would laugh in their silly way & say Ah! Massa if we had not come here, we would ha[ve] been

¹²⁰ “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” *Hamlet*, Act I, scene 5

¹²¹ Abel Brown Upshur (1821-1895) married Markie's sister Columbia Williams. During the Civil War, he served in the Confederate Navy.

¹²² The “slave warehouse” in Richmond was located around Broad Street and Wall Street (modern 15th Street). The English painter Eyre Crowe documented the misery of enslaved people at this site after he visited it in 1853.

killed.¹²³ Abe bade à dieu about 12 o'clock not without a private lecture from me on sunday visiting, wh[ich] he himself broached by saying he was afraid he would incur my censure.

Mr. U has so long been the subject of my solicitation, that I sometimes think he never will be good. Uncle monopolised the whole conversation without having an idea that the visit was partly, if not wholly mine, and I was not displeased at his hospitality. Just as few sat down to dinner a carriage drove up and some more visitors made their appearance[.] I however, disappeared, feeling that I ought not to dishonor the day by entertaining any more visitors, so retired to my room.

When they had gone Uncle went off to the little church in the woods. I regretted I could not have accompanied him but was not well enough – This morning I was much surprised & impressed with a remark wh[ich] he made. Said he, I wonder if old Mr Ayre of the Eastern Shore of Virginia is living – I wish I had asked Mr Upshur –¹²⁴

I often think of what Bishop Meade¹²⁵ told me of him – He said that the was a man of about 85 years of age & he did not seem to have an idea on the subject of religion – that he trusted entirely in his own works to get to Heaven – Bishop M said he was perfectly in despair about him – that he had never seen a man so perfectly obdurate – he said he told him that ~~he~~ if he had nothing but his works to trust in he should never hope for Heaven, but he hoped by his faith to get there – Then said Uncle “I thank God, I am not like Mr Ayre – I do not trust in my works – I have faith in God.[”] But, he continued, “It is really a melancholy circumstance, to think of a man advanced in life as he is, not turning his attention to the things of another world. “Yes, I said surely they are most worthy our thoughts. Now said he the young – if he were twenty five or thirty – he might think he had time enough – he might put it off – but a man of his age who may expect every day to be summoned – and then too, of course, the older he gets the harder it will be.” H Uncle then spoke of Bishop M & how he had talked with him when he was so ill.

His mind evidently dwells much on religion, but, I fear it is not quite right yet – God grant him the aid of thy Holy Spirit – Tonight after Church he came in & talked in the same way.

He often sighs & utters ejaculations such as Oh God! Oh God help me! &c &c This eve he said as he has done before Well, I am greatly afflicted – but, I have much to be thankful for – God’s will be done – I have had my portion of enjoyment in the world. I have had a long reign of prosperity – The Lord gave & the Lord hath taken away – Blessed be the Lord[.] The things of this world (speaking of the view &c[)] are very beautiful if we could live forever, but, we cant & so we had better think of things of another – but, this affliction comes very hard on me now I am such an old man. Uncle had been walking some time before the ~~door~~ of portico on the Lawn apparently meditating. After tea, I asked him if I sh[oul]d read to him in the Bible he said yes he had commenced reading but had been interrupted I must read three ch[apter]s in St. Thom¹²⁶ wh[ich] I did & then taking the Bow in the Cloud, asked if I should also read a chapter in that. He said he had no objection, but, I fear he did not hear much for he soon fell to sleep –

¹²³ Pro-slavery writers often claimed that African kings had sold their own people into enslavement rather than captives taken through wars with other tribes and kingdoms.

¹²⁴ John Eyre (1769-1855) was in fact still living. He married Anna M. Upshur, a relative of Abel Upshur, in 1800.

¹²⁵ William Meade (1789-1862) was the third Bishop of Virginia. He served in this role from 1829 until his death in 1862.

¹²⁶ Likely St. Thomas à Kempis’s *The Imitation of Christ*. After the Bible it is the most printed Christian text.

I retired earlier than usual and left him reading the Southern Ch[urch]man – My heart has rejoiced to see my dear Uncle’s heart being brought to see Life as it is and seek a Savior on whom to rely in death.

Oh! if I could see him once lay aside all secular employments on the Lord’s day & go to Church, I should then indeed be encouraged. [*In lighter handwriting*] This evening, Marsellina¹²⁷, my little, femme de chambre, came up with me as usual when I retired, Mary Anne being ill. After reading to her in the Bible & a few hymns I asked her about the state of religion among the servants at Arlington. She said to my astonishment that many of them were members of the Baptist communion, but, none of them members of the Episcopal Church – that they had preaching & exhortation among themselves at home in the morning – The girl observed that the Baptists did not think it right to sing songs – and before they became members of the Ch they were for five or six months looking very serious – that they “held down their heads and did not say anything to any body scarcely” —

Monday [November 21] – Nothing particular happened – ni mardi, non plus –¹²⁸

Wednesday [November 23] Mr Richard Rush Sr¹²⁹ an old school mate of Uncle’s came over to see us accompanied by our relative whom I had never seen before Mr John Calvert of Mount Airy –¹³⁰ They say he is to be married to Miss Julia Rush –¹³¹ Mrs Fitzhue & Jane Loyde came to spend the day & a very pleasant day we had. Tomorrow ~~will~~ I expect to go home to spend Thanksgiving day with the dear ones at home & to accompany them to Church – It grieves me to leave dear Uncle – & he also expresses himself much regretted at my departure & begs me to come back & stay as much with him as I can –

The morrow will close a month spent in the seclusion of Arlington, but, this journal will show that each day records some pleasant incident – Uncle tells me that the Custis coat-of-arms is three Parrots – No wonder the family are so renowned for their loquacity. The Parke coat-of-arms which is graven on a seal hanging over the parlor mantelpiece, is a spread eagle surmounting a bald eagle’s head.

I shall be two weeks or less at home & then return to spend the winter with my poor Uncle. It is with great & a holy pleasure that I look forward to going to Church in our own little Sanctuary to morrow & visiting with my loved family in thanks giving & prayer to our Heavenly Father for all his blessings & mercies during the year past. How numerous have they been!

¹²⁷ Marcellina Parks, an enslaved servant at Arlington House.

¹²⁸ “Nor Tuesday, neither.”

¹²⁹ Richard Rush (1780-1859), the son of Dr. Benjamin Rush, was Secretary of the Treasury under John Quincy Adams. He attended Princeton from 1794 until 1789, thus making him Custis’s classmate.

¹³⁰ John Calvert (1809–1869) was a distant cousin of G. W. P. Custis, both being grandsons of Benedict Swingate Calvert (1722-1788).

¹³¹ Julia Stockton Rush (1826-1858), Richard Rush’s daughter, married John Calvert on June 1, 1854.

1854

January 1854

Arlington House – Jan 8 – 1854 Sunday

So accustomed have I always been to attend Church three times on the Sabbath, and have almost every hour of that sweet day engaged in religious exercises, that, I find a Sabbath day in the country a great an occurrence wh[ich] gives me but little far less pleasure – and yet it ought not to be so – there are duties here – and my time may be as profitably occupied if not as pleasantly.

This morning, I read as usual, two or three chapters in the Bible to Uncle Custis; but, I had the mortification & regret to see him fall to sleep before I had half completed – I however, read on with a feeling of despair – and the sweet verse “Come Holy Spirit, Creator come[”]¹ – inspire these souls of ours,” was on my lips – Uncle said he did not feel well to-day and so must be excused – my tone must be very soothing. I went over to Selina’s House and had several servants assembled there to whom I read a few chapters in the bible and a beautiful sermon by Revnd Mr Nelson² of Annapolis from the text “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”³ Margaret⁴ was present – She is a very nice servant & seems very piously disposed. While I read the tears streamed down her cheeks several times & she seemed much affected by the Gospel truths. I trust she will seek & find “the pearl of great price”⁵ – This eve, I gave Uncle “the Philosophy of the plan of salvation”⁶ a Book I told him, that was much celebrated. He asked by whom it was written rather in an indifferent manner & went on reading a monthly magazine. I laid it open on the little table before him & saying “I think you will find it very interesting” went back to my seat & commenced reading – He also, went on with his Book taking apparently no notice of the one I had placed before him but, I knew he could not altogether resist. After some time I was so overcome with sleep from my horse back-ride to Church this afternoon that I threw myself on the sofa[.] A little while after I did so, Uncle got up & placing his chair just in front of the fire & opening my Book – he commenced reading[.] He read for some time apparently much engaged – I at last, made some little motion wh[ich] induced him to think I was awake & he turned to me & said – “I’m reading y[ou]r Book, my dear, I think it very interesting – very much so indeed.” How happy I felt at that moment[.] Oh God! grant that its perusal may induce my Uncle to care more for his souls interests.

I have this evening made a resolution to retire to my room every evening at twilight to pray especially for his conversion.

It grieves my heart to see him going down to the grave without a saving ~~kn~~ belief in his Savior – Often, too, I think of my Brothers & other members of our dear family who are yet without our Holy Communion – They too, shall have my warm, my fervent prayers[.]

¹ An English translation of the Latin hymn “Veni, Creator Spiritus.”

² Cleland Kinloch Nelson (1814-1890) was the rector of St. Anne’s Church in Annapolis, Md.

³ Romans 10:17

⁴ Margaret Taylor, an enslaved woman.

⁵ A reference to Matthew 13:45-46

⁶ *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation* by James Barr Walker (1805-1887). The book was published in numerous editions from the 1840s through the 1880s.

[Monday] Jan 9 – Arlington

This afternoon Uncle gave me permission to go up in a little loft over his Paint Room to look for a Drawing Book – Such a place as it is – The floor strewed with manuscript Books of his own Drammas & other writings. Antlers of Deer & various other things – Lumbering with the papers I saw a little glass bottle wh[ich] I brought down & he told me it belonged to Gen Washington’s Dressing case.

While in this little room I found among Uncles papers in a snug little corner a freshly laid Egg – the Hens have absolutely imbibed a taste for literature & go up to lay on cla[s]sic lore.

I heard presently while there a voice at first I thought in conversation, but I perceived it was the voice of prayer. I went to the head of the stairs and thought the voice was that of George the cook – I got there just in time to hear the close of the pray wh[ich] was long & plainly enunciated but, I could not distinctly hear its purport. I heard “may the grace of our Lord Jesus Ch be with us now & forever more.” I was surprised & delighted & hearing whoever it was open the little door & go out of the little room into Uncle’s painting room I came down stairs & to my still greater surprise saw old Ephraim of whose piety I had never before suspected. He is an Uncle Tom.⁷

February 1854

Arlington House Virginia

[Thursday] Feb 23 1854

To-day, tho the ground was covered with the deepest snow we have had for many, many years, Uncle went over to Washington & sent the carriage f to Tudor for me – They all at home expressed much surprise and were hardly willing for me to undertake the ride in the old carriage & over such terrible roads – I was sorry to leave them all not quite well at home, but, knowing ~~wh~~ how lonely Uncle was with out me, I determind to go without hesitation.

When I met dear Uncle at Adam’s Bookstore,⁸ in Washington (his customary rendezvous) I was rewarded for the exertion ~~to~~ I had made, by his warm & welcome reception & the delight he evinced at seeing me. He said “he had missed me very, very much – indeed, he could not have born my absence much longer – he had become quite desperate for some one to converse with – some one to comfort him.” I felt pleased with these words as an evidence that my mission to Arlington was not altogether fruitless – & mentally thanked God, that I was permitted to be a comfort to the heart of the old man. This eve, after Aunt A went to bed, ~~we~~ Uncle & I sat up till near 12 o’clock, conversing on matters & things. First, Household matters, then affairs of State. He reiterated, several times, his pleasure at having me “back home” safely – spoke of his afflicted state of mind & of what a comfort I was to him – Then, I almost reproached myself for having gone to Tudor even for ten days & felt as if I ought not go away from him again.

⁷ Though the term “Uncle Tom” is often used pejoratively to convey racial subservience, in this context, Markie was using it primarily to compare the piety of Ephraim Derricks to that of the enslaved protagonist of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

⁸ William Adam ran a bookstore near at 438 Pennsylvania Avenue, near the modern National Gallery of Art.

Uncle showed me this evening his last “recollection” wh[ich] he was writing for the “Intelligencer”⁹ when I left. I read it and asked some explanation wh[ich] he gave me and as his little narration was so interesting I will put it on paper – Said he I have alluded very delicately to a subject, in my “recollections,” wh[ich] is one of great importance & has long agitated the public mind. This subject, ~~was~~ is the “lost Letters” of Gen Washington.

Said he, I shall never allude to it again unless pressed to do so, because it is a very painful subject to me.

“The incident, was this (but do not mention it) Gen Washington had copied into a book, by a Clerk named R [*Blank*]¹⁰ all letters of interest written by himself to various individuals of distinction in this & other countries. After the death of Gen Washington, Mr Tobias Leah¹¹, being his private secretary, was intrusted by Mrs Washington with the key of the General’s Library – He, being the Tutor in the family – a Literary man & one in whom the Gen always manifested an interest. (My Uncle said he was his Tutor, from the time he was 4 years old.) Some time after the Gen’s death the R [*Blank*] Letters were looked at & found minus two or perhaps more, letters, wh[ich] Mr R a very upright and reliable man, protested, that he had copied in the book – These letters, were a correspondance between General Washington & Thomas Jefferson concerning a letter that Jefferson had written to Mazeiz¹² an Italian, throwing a slur on the character of the Gen – sarcastically calling him “a solomon in counsel, – a sampson in the field.”¹³ This letter was taken Uncle said (tho I do not quite understand how) at sea, by a British Privateer & taken to London, where it was published & thence transferred to the American papers much to the chagrin of Mr Jefferson, who never imagined that it would have met the eye of any one this side of the water. Gen Washington wrote a very polite letter to Mr J referring to ~~their~~ the friendly terms they had always entertained toward each other, while associated in their public careers & asking him if the person referred to, in the Letter above mentioned, was himself. Jefferson wrote an evasive answer to wh[ich] Gen Washington in his turn wrote a most stinging reply – These were the “lost letters[.]” It is suspected, that Mr Leah destroyed them – Uncle Custis does not doubt it & the facts, as he stated them to me, seem conclusive – He thinks, that Mr Jefferson wrote to Mr Leah and bribed him to suppress the letters, or to destroy them; because, he felt, that they would, coming from such a source, ruin his political career – Be this as it may, Mr L was, or became a thorough Democrat and Mr Jefferson from that time, heaped upon him, honors & offices under government. When the acquisition [accusation] was brought against him he did not deny it, but, became very much offended at the suspicion & shortly afterward left Mount Vernon – Before he went, called Uncle Custis out of the room – in the Portico (and said Uncle C – I could point to the very plank on which we stood

⁹ Published as “Last Days at Mount Vernon,” *National Intelligencer*, February 22, 1854.

¹⁰ Albin Rawlins served as George Washington’s clerk in 1798 and 1799.

¹¹ Tobias Lear (1752-1816), George Washington’s personal secretary from 1784 until Washington’s death in 1799.

¹² Philip Mazzei (1730-1816), a Florentine merchant who corresponded with Thomas Jefferson.

¹³ Criticizing members of the executive branch who were siding with British commercial interests over French revolutionaries, Thomas Jefferson wrote to Philip Mazzei on April 24, 1796, “It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England.” Custis was incorrect in saying that the letter was published after a British privateer captured it. A New York newspaper which Noah Webster edited translated it into English using a French version published in a Paris newspaper. Though Jefferson did not mention Washington, Federalists interpreted his words as an attack on the president. The letter earned Jefferson criticism that followed him for the rest of his life and damaged his legacy. See “Editorial Note: Jefferson’s Letter to Philip Mazzei,” founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-29-02-0054-0001

& said to him – merely these words “There were letters my dear Washington”. He waited for more, but, he made no further communication. Previous to this, he had been much depressed – Gen Washington’s friends all changed to-wards him – particularly – Mr Lewis, Mr Stuart & Dr. Craig¹⁴ – and so he left Mt Vernon – Uncle said he remained his friend to the last & he spoke with great feeling of his conduct. Uncle evidently, thinks this affair somewhat connected with his ~~awfful~~ awful & mysterious death.¹⁵

I told Uncle I was glad he touched so lightly on the subject in his publication, for it would be a pity to distress his poor wife by any disclosure. He said, “nothing, but duty, would have induced him to have alluded to the subject[.]”

[Saturday] Feb 25 – A gloomy day & poor Uncle has seemed unusually gloomy, this evening, he rallied and conversed very cheerfully. After Tea – He seemed quite interested in telling me of a new picture he had just put on the easel ~~to be~~ the subject to be “the storming of the redoubts at York Town.” The idea he told me was taken from a picture of Trumbull’s “the Sortie at Gibraltar,”¹⁶ ~~taken wh[ich], he told me~~ he saw about 65 years ago – The impression made by that picture, he said, had never been efaced from his mind, tho he was at the time a little child. I loved to hear Uncle talk of the way he intends to paint the picture, what collors he is going to use & how put them on most effectively – I quite enter into his enthusiasm.

Sunday Feb 27 [*Correct date: Feb. 26*] – A dreadfully gloomy day – the ground covered with snow and a keen east wind blowing, previnted the inmates of Arlington, from resorting to there little chappel in the woods.

I read several chapters, commencing at the 22nd chap of Acts (Paul’s defense,¹⁷ wh[ich] I found had a mark in it, doubtless, left there, by my dear Aunt) to my dear Uncle – during the last part of wh[ich] he dozed a good deal much to my grief – He aroused himself after I had been reading until my throat was sore and said “Now, my dear, read me something in the Gospels” – “the gospel of St John” I was too willing to comply, but, he seemed heavy & dull, & little interested, in what I read. O! that the spirit of God might breath upon his heart, its soothing influences & enlighten his eyes to see the beauty of religion.

In the afternoon, after having been absent from the parlor some time, I returned[.] Uncle was also, out – In a little while however, he came in & coming up to me putting his hand on my head in the most affectionate manner & kissing me over & over, said, “Well Markie, dear, have you been reading the Bible to poor old mammy?” No said I, not mammy because she was not well enough to come out in the rain, but, to the other servants[.]” “Do you know, said he in a half serious half playful manner, that it is my duty [to] confine you a month in jail, in accordance

¹⁴ Likely Howell Lewis (1771-1822), one of Washington’s nephews; David Stuart (1753-1814), the husband of Nelly Calvert Custis; and Dr. James Craik (1727-1814), a friend of George Washington who treated him during his fatal illness.

¹⁵ Tobias Lear committed suicide on October 11, 1816. The reasons why are unknown.

¹⁶ “The Sortie Made by the Garrison of Gibraltar” (1789) by John Trumbull.

¹⁷ The chapter relates Paul’s explanation for his Christian faith after he was accused of starting a riot in the Temple of Jerusalem.

with the laws of the state?¹⁸ – but, surely, he continued, it can never be wrong to teach them that Holy Book. No, Markie, I wont put you in jail – I want you here with me too much. I am sure I could not spare you.”¹⁹

He took up the Bible during the evening and read a little and at night he asked me to read a sermon aloud.

Monday [February 27] – At the Table to day, something occasioned Uncle to remark, that he did not wish to trouble me more than was necessary – he thought it was trouble enough my staying with, indeed, he considered it a most charitable act to consent to live with one so wretched as he was. I said it was a great pleasure to me to feel that I was a comfort to him. He replied, indeed Markie you are a comfort, a great comfort – had you not returned, I should have packed up a suit of cloths and started off for Liverpool in very short order. This was so characteristic in Uncle – only, to think of taking one suit of cloths.

Aunt Anna²⁰ made some allusion to the Mount Vernon silver, when Uncle said that his set of silver from Mt Vernon was not anything like as large and not intrinsically, as valuable, as that, wh[ich] he inherited from his Father, wh[ich] last, he said, was General Park’s²¹ – and was a part of a grand set, composed, even, of silver plates & dishes – costing £6,000, wh[ich] was presented to him (Gen Park) By Queen Anne for bringing her the despatches of victory from the Battle of Blenheim. He was a great favorite of Queen Anne’s & received from her, also, her miniature set in diamonds. These were also rendered for services to the Duke of Malborough. Gen Park was a Virginian, born in V—a but went to England very young. Que[e]n Anne made him Governor of the Leeward Islands. On the Island of Antigua, his palace was plundered & he was dragged through the streets by horses until he expired – Such of his silver as remained, was taken to England – remodded with his coat-of-arms on it & sent to this country, to his heiress and daughter, Mrs John Custis,²² on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. It decended from her, to her son, Daniel Park Custis – the first husband of Mrs Washington – from her to her eldest son (according to English Law) who was, again, John Custis and the Father of my Uncle Custis.

During this conversation Uncle remarked, that, this was the only thing in wh[ich] he was aristocratic – the entailment of property & he wished the Mt. Vernon Silver to go with this place to his oldest grandson Custis Lee.²³ The other silver, he said, I shall leave to Mary, as long as she lives & at her death to be divided as she may think best.²⁴ My darling Brother Orton came to-

¹⁸ “If a white person assemble with negroes for the purpose of instructing them to read or write, or if he associate with them in an unlawful assembly, he shall be confined in jail not exceeding six months and fined not exceeding on hundred dollars.” See *The Code of Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: Ritchie, Dunnavant & Co., 1860), 810-811.

¹⁹ Following Alexandria’s retrocession to Virginia in 1846, Arlington House would have been subject to the 1831 act which prohibited teaching African Americans to read. The rule was frequently broken, and several other women in the Custis and Lee families (e.g. Agnes Lee, according to her journal) also taught enslaved people how to read and write. G.W.P. Custis had been selected as a justice of the peace for Alexandria County on July 26, 1852.

²⁰ Possibly Anna Maria Fitzhugh (1796-1874), G.W.P. Custis’s sister-in-law.

²¹ Daniel Parke (1669-1710) served as aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim. Queen Anne appointed him governor of the Leeward Islands in 1706. His conduct as governor was so deplorable that after efforts to peacefully remove him failed, in 1710, a mob dragged him from his home and murdered him in the street.

²² Frances Parke Custis (1685-1714).

²³ George Washington Custis Lee (1832-1913), the eldest Lee child.

²⁴ Notably, on March 26, 1855, G.W.P. Custis recorded both of these promises as part of his will and named Martha Custis Williams as one of his two witnesses.

day. This evening at ~~T~~ Tea, Uncle chatted on his favorite theme of George Morland,²⁵ the British artist, whose life he seems to have read with great interest. Painters & their pictures is always a favorite theme with me. Uncle has been so kind this evening in repeatedly looking at my drawing & praising it. He thinks this Roman Soldier my best piece.

March 1854

[Thursday] March 1. When my soul is sorrowful I seek my pen and so, seem to find a little comfort, in tracing out my feelings on the page before me; and yet, I know not, if this is a profitable occupation. —

This evening, after a week's most anxious suspense, I received a letter from Dr Flint telling me that he could not arrange, so as to come on to make me a visit, ere he departed for Europe – and that he sails with his wife to-morrow March 4, in the Ship Mercury, for Havre.²⁶ Dear Uncle was so kind as to ask me to invite Dr & Mrs Flint to make us a visit, and my disappointment at not seeing them, is in proportion to the pleasure it gave me, to be able to extend the invitation. My own heart knows best the pleasure & and the pain. And yet, I did not expect the Dr – He only spoke of our meeting as a long cherished hope & strong desire, but, there were reasons contrary to the fulfilment of our wishes wh[ich] we mutually acknowledged. I would not have had him leave the path of duty, to follow that of inclination. He would not have done so. But, still, as long as there was the faintest ray of hope, I clung to that hope – Day & night have my thoughts been thus engaged. Now, in imagination, I go over to the Cars for him – I await in the carriage until he comes out – then, he salutes me as his Sister – we mutually gaze at each other to see the changes that time has made in seven long years – for some moments it is “the language that's mute, the silence that speaks,” but, it is enjoyment beyond expression. Then, wh[ich] of all the myriad topics of mutual interest will we choose as our as our first theme – Ah! Here, imagination is baffled – I should not wonder if the weather or something quite as trivial engaged us for a few moments and then, during the whole ride over, what a world of mutual pleasure. But, perhaps he comes unawares – While I'm walking on the Portico, I see the carriage with trunks behind it – Oh! What ecstatic joy. I run to receive him as he alights from the carriage and take him in the House – but, now, commences general conversation, wh[ich] appears thoroughly uninteresting. I feel jealous of every word – of every moment, for I know they must be few – And then, the pain of parting – Oh! Brother – I wish we had never met, we both reproach ourselves. But, thanks be to Providence, we have nothing, now, with which we can reproach ourselves – I fully see the wisdom of God's appointment; though, I am very, very sad –

God bless thee – God bless thee – my dearest earthly friend – and she, to whom thou'rt bound by the most sacred of earthly ties.

Speed swiftly o'er a stormless ocean, ye noble Ship – Sustain oh! God their drooping heads & saddened hearts, in hours of mortal danger –

And bear them onward to the Haven of their destiny. Unharm'd by the myriad perils of the great deep – and with a heart most grateful – for their rescue.

²⁵ George Morland (1763-1804), an English painter.

²⁶ The *Mercury* was a sailing ship which served the Boyd & Hincken line. It made frequent trips from New York to Le Havre throughout the 1850s and 1860s.

My heart has been so sad this evening that I have found it impossible to cheer or be cheered, notwithstanding my darling little Brother's efforts. He has been with me for some days & in my anxiety & disappointment (if I may call it such) he had deeply sympathised.

He is so like dearest Father, in his gentle ways. I could not help smiling at his philosophy, this evening – as he sat in the large square chair, in loving embrace. “Sister, said he, now really, I think it a very Providential circumstance, that the Dr did not come, because, if the old carriage had gone for him, he might have been thrown out & killed, perhaps, that is the very reason Providence would not let him come.”

Then, when he saw me still sad he said so severely – “Sister don't look so sad – You can always cheer every body but yourself but, you are perfectly uncheerable – I wish I could cheer you but, I never had that faculty as you have.”

To-morrow, I must send the dear Boy back to school, and then, I will be “uncheerable” indeed.

[Saturday] March 4 – To-day, my dearest earth friend will leave the Shores of his Native Land. How feelly do I sympathise with him in all the emotions incident upon leaving one's native Land, for the first time. In spirit, I go with him – We see ~~my~~ our native Land recede – we think only of those we've left behind – We dreamily enjoy the present – the think of much that has been left undone in the past – We reflect on the uncertain future – This morning I prayed earnestly for ~~the~~ Divine protection of those I so much love & this evening I retired especially to pray for their prosperity and safety. ~~How to~~

I gazed at ~~the~~ a little vessel on the river this evening, as it glided gently thro' the moon beams and hoped that thus might “the ~~me~~ murcury” wend her way. I stood watching that little vessel as if spellbound – and I loved to watch it and I wept. How timely came dear cousin Robert Lee's kind little note & Hearts' Ease.²⁷

My darling Orton left me to-day & the servant returned from Alexandria, with the mail bag, containing a letter, wh[ich] diverts my thoughts for a time, from this sad channel, but, to cast them into another. This letter, would seem to assure me, that, although I am deprived of one friend, there is another, who, will by the warmth of his devotion, make amends; but, one friend can not supply the place of another with me – each occupies his separate place in my esteem. It is sad not to be loved, at all, but, to be loved by one, whose love, must not be reciprocated, is, also, sad. I cannot be cold to-ward one, who exhibits an intensity of devotion to-wards me, if I believe him to be sincere – especially, if our sympathies are in unison — And yet, — something must be done.

Ah! It is only a continuation of a life of Romance. How true, is it, that pain must ever follow earthly pleasures.

[Monday] March 6.

²⁷ This letter is one Robert E. Lee wrote to Markie from West Point on February 28, 1854. He concluded it by saying, “I enclose you a hearts ease, that I have had since last spring—Faded as it is, it will still whisper Comfort & hope to one who careth For the flower, will much more care for the bountiful Giver.” See <https://leefamilyarchive.org/9-family-papers/53-robert-e-lee-to-martha-custis-williams-1854-february-28>.

Dear Uncle & myself were out this morning by times, superintending the getting ready of the great picture to go to the Capitol. Uncle said, last night, "Markie as you write such a bold hand, I must ask you to write a card to accompany it my picture. Just write, said he "Surrender of York Town Oct 19 – 1781 – Designed and executed by G.W.P. Custis of Arlington" – "Let us have an early Breakfast to-morrow, my dear and Cesar & his fortunes will go to the Capitol." "Yes, I replied, I will write it with pleasure, Uncle, if you" wish – I smiled mentally and appreciated, as, I fear, few others will, the artistic pride with wh[ich] my Uncle spoke – Ah! dear Uncle, how I hope you will only hear the praises that will be bestowed on your picture. Genius is blind – how Blind! – and yet it must have way. I like to humor it when principle is not involved. Poor Uncle! he has so few sources of pleasure, now – and altho' this joy is in its nature chimerical as other earthly pleasures – still it seems innocent[.] Would that he had treasures in Heaven or that Heavenly things were more valued by him, then, his heart would be less set of these vanities.

[Tuesday] March 7 – Uncle went to Washington to-day and in consequence of my reminding of it just before his departure, brought the new coffee-pot – I gave him many cautions about getting a pretty one – When he returned as he came in with a large bundle in his hand he said "Well, Markie dear, I brought you a coffee-pot & I think you'll be very much pleased with it – here it is." – and here is your frame and your port-folio from Mr Gibson's²⁸ –

Dear Uncle! It is so kind in him to have thought of all my commissions –

This evening it is mild & balmy as May – how sweet, to watch the first dawning of spring – to see the brown grass, assuming from day to day & emerald tint and the Trees wearing that indefinite hue, which comes just before ~~they burst~~ the little leaves burst from the Brown sheath of winter.

Yesterday I gathered the first flower – a little yellow crocus, wh[ich] I sent in a letter to dear Cousin Robert Lee²⁹ – It will be a souvenir to him as it was to me, of my precious Aunt. When I went in the garden & first saw the little crocuses blooming a sweet surprise – my dear Aunt came so forcibly [forcibly] before my mind – her sainted image was so life like – by the strong power of association, that, for a moment withdrew, as tho' the spot was sacred, but, in a moment, I went up & stooping down, with tearful eyes, pulled the little golden flower.

Ah! How many sad moments there are in Life, apart from our manifest affliction.

This evening, Uncle came in, as usual, about twilight, in a loquacious mood – & in his wonted affectionate manner said, "Well Markie, dear, I don't know anything that has made me so happy for a long time as getting those flags from the Alexandria Museum³⁰ – or rather seeing a clear prospect of getting them – To-morrow morning, by times, I shall go in to Alexandria and bear off

²⁸ These items may have come from the "Fancy and Staple Dry Goods" store which J. C. Gibson owned between 7th and 8th Streets in Washington, D.C.

²⁹ Agnes Lee mentioned receiving this in her diary. She wrote on March 9, 1854, "Cousin Markie sent me some crocus' the other day, she has been staying with Grandpa all winter."

³⁰ G.W.P. Custis wrote two letters to the President and Common Council of the City of Alexandria in December 1853 asking for the return of the flags which George Washington took from the surrendering British at the Battle of Yorktown. Following Martha Washington's death, her executors sent the flags to the Museum of Alexandria for safekeeping. Custis's two letters regarding the flags are in the collections of Alexandria Public Library, MS240, Box 17.

the dear old Collors – I shall bring them home & we can look over them & dust them up and then I will write a letter to the President and ask him how he will receive them.” Those dear old Collors! said Uncle, enthusiastically – When I last saw them they were at Mount Vernon – they used always to stay in a tin case.” What makes these flags most valuable, said he, is, that they were the British & Hessian Collors, taken at the Surrender of York Town – the very close of the war – and presented to General Washington by the Old Congress – I think there were two presented to Count de Rochambeau & two to Count de Grasse at the same time.” – “Ah! continued dear Uncle warmed with enthusiasm at the very ~~thought~~ mention of the subject – what a glorious time that was! – how they all must have felt, when it was announced that we had gained our freedom. I’ve often heard it described. I knew, personally, the old Dutchman, whom it was said was a watchman in Philadelphia & walking his Post when he saw Col Tillman³¹ riding through the streets with the dispatches to the government – what is the news, said the old German in broken accent – “that Cornwallis is taken & York Town surrendered & the war at an end” – Ah! goot, goot said the German ‘den, I vill say give it to night, – “Past one o’clock & Cornwallis is taken” — Uncle said this old man was the watchman before the Presidential Mansion, when Gen Washington resided in Philadelphia & that he often saw him warming himself by the fire or drying his coat while the Steward got him some refreshment. This story completed Uncle goes out to smoke his segar as usual in the company of his faithful vallet Ephraim. In the evening, after Tea – the news is read and Uncle finding his eyes two [too] bad to read the fine print of “the Sun” said to me “Markie, will you please to read “Napoleon’s Letter” to me – his letter to the Czar of Russia.³² You seemed to speak of it with so much interest, that I would like to see it.” I must really get a p[ai]r of new spectacles – these are ~~two~~ too young for me – For a half hour before retiring, I play & sing at the request of dear Uncle who as usual, towards the end of the performance, is lulled in the arms of Morpheus. ~~Uncle thinks~~ Uncle made no comment on Napoleon’s letter merely a sarcastic smile. His Imperial Highness is by no means a favorite with him – indeed, Kings & Queens find no mercy at his hands. He verily believes that no good thing can come out of a crowned Head – even Queen Vic– the universally beloved, shares the fate of her associate-Monarchs, in his estimation and Prince Albert and his moustache are the subjects of his unrelenting contempt. It is easy to see why Uncle is so violent in his feelings against Royalty. He was nursed in the cradle of Freedom – Being, from the earliest youth, intimately associated with General Washington and those noble officers of our Army, who fought for their country’s Freedom – he naturally imbibed their spirit.

In proportion as one loves one set of principles, they must hate, what is diametrically opposed to them. The English, then, were our bitter enemies. Monarchal inst[it]utions, thoroughly opposed, to our free institutions.

Now, dearest Grandmother, with all her veneration for Washington & all her enthusiastic patriotism, has still remaining, a little Tory blood in her veins, I think – Uncle on the contrary, has scarcely a drop of it remaining. He is thoroughly democratic.

³¹ Tench Tilghman (1744-1786), a lieutenant colonel in the Continental Army.

³² The article “Louis Napoleon’s Letter to Nicholas” appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* on March 9, 1854. It is possible that Markie added to her entry after she started it on March 7. Napoleon III of France wrote to Czar Nicholas I of Russia asking him to withdraw his troops from the Danube provinces which the Ottoman Empire claimed. Nicholas’s rejection of Napoleon III’s ultimatum brought Britain and France into the Crimean War as Russia’s enemies.

[Friday] March 10. A perfect tornado, all day, but, the air so warm & balmy as to require us to sit with the doors & windows open. Uncle has been expecting Mr Ben Perley Poore,³³ all day as and as usual was much disappointed at ~~th~~ his not coming. Dear Uncle seems to exist, but in excitement – he seems never so happy as when he has some one to entertain and if there is an appointment made, either with himself or any one else, in the House or out of it – whether it is of vital importance, or no importance whatever, he is equally bent on its accomplishment – like dear Grandmother, he will be there an hour before the time and nothing but, an insurmountable obstacle would prevent either of them from fulfilling an engagement. Gen Washington, they tell us was always punctual. This is the fruit of his good example.

Uncle received a peice of poetry addressed to him the other day. After he had enclosed it to Cousin Mary, I regretted not having coppied it. Last eve, he found it published in the *Intelligencer* & cut it out & gave it to me.³⁴

No letters this evening – After making a visit to old Mammy I came in & found a kind little note from my unknown Cousin Eugène Webster³⁵ – How he writes like his Father! He doubtless possesses some of his good qualities & I want to know him.

As I walked out in the Portico, I heard someone call me in the kindest of tones “Markie, Markie! Is that your step I hear?” – Yes, Uncle, I said, where are you? & I ran out on the steps, but, could see nothing of him. Extending my search a little further, I found him seated on the top step of the portico at the south end, behind one of the great pillars. He seemed in wretched spirits, so, I stood conversing for some time – He asked me what I thought about the jasmine arbor – had it not better be renewed & proposed that we should go in and see it. It seemed so strange to be going in the garden with Uncle – It was the first time in my Life. As I opened the gate what should I see, but, a row of beautiful Johnquills [jonquils]. I was much surprised as delighted. We proceeded to the arbor & went in, but, in the midst of the discussion on the subject of the arbor it commenced raining & we turned our faces toward the House, after my first going to get a few crocuses to enclose to the dear ones at West Point. Dear Uncle said as we were going out, I wish the garden always kept in order for the sake of those who are gone he said sadly – I do not take an interest in such things myself but, for her sake, I wish it all cared for.

During all my sojourn here, I have not had morning & evening prayers – In the first place, when I first came, the recollection of my dearest Aunt was so vivid, that I did not feel as if I could conduct the service. Then, I felt that if it was agreeable to Uncle he would ask me to do so, especially, as I had so often had Prayers, when dear Aunt was ill, at her request. Morning & evening have I looked longingly at the Books, and my conscience has at times smote me for neglecting this duty – but, then, a feeling of delicacy, prevented my making any suggestion. For several days past I have been meditating how I should broach the subject. To-night, just as I was coming to bed, while arranging the Books, it again occurred to me – Shall I ask now, I thought, or put it off till a more convenient season? The answer came to me “Put not off for to-morrow

³³ Benjamin Perley Poore (1820-1887) was a journalist with Whig political leanings. He traveled to Washington, DC in 1854 to serve as a correspondent for the *Boston Journal*. His friend was probably Ainsworth Rand Spofford (1825-1908), a journalist and future Librarian of Congress. Spofford was a fierce opponent of slavery.

³⁴ This untitled poem was printed on the front page of the *Daily National Intelligencer*, March 8, 1854. It praises G.W.P. Custis for addressing the United States Agricultural Society, calling him “The last link of chain that binds us unto WASHINGTON.”

³⁵ William Eugene Webster (1831-1862) was the son of publisher William Greenleaf Webster and grandson of the dictionary writer Noah Webster.

what can be done to-day.” The impulse was strong and I knew it was good & I obeyed. Uncle, I said, I miss our morning & evening prayers – wont you have Prayers as we use to have? He sighed and said “Ah, my dear, I do not feel like doing anything of that kind. I’m in no spirits for that – or anything else” – but, I have no objection to your having them.” “Well, may I commence to-morrow? I said. I think as to-morrow [is] Saturday, you had better wait till Sunday – you ought never to commence anything on the last of the week. I could not help smiling at the originality of the idea & yet it was a sad smile, for it convinced me that he looked upon it only as a duty & not a pleasure. Ah! I thought, Uncle, we may not live till Sunday – we may put off other things, but not God’s bidding. But, I only answered – very well, then, Uncle, Sunday morning! and giving him a kiss on his venerable Head, said good night & retired with a light conscience. Oh! that I had done this sooner – This is now my self-reproach. Procrastination thou art my crying sin! God forgive me and bless my future efforts.

Sunday – March 12 – This morning, it was not without much emotion, & many conflicting feelings, that, I conducted for the first time, ~~more~~ since my dear Aunt’s departure, ~~the~~ Family Prayers. Mammy & ~~Nurse~~ Nurse were very prompt in coming in – They, with Mary Anne, my little fille de chambre, Uncle & myself, formed the assembly. I read the 22 ch of Acts, where I found one of dear Aunt’s marks and Family Prayers, from the Prayer Book³⁶ –

I could not help going up & thanking the old servants for coming in so promptly – They said they were very glad I was going to have prayers again – They had missed them mightily. How my heart reproached me for not having had them before. What I said, I might have said two months ago. The day was so lovely that I made another venture in the old carriage, to Church. Heard a good sermon from Mr Dana at old “Christ Church.”³⁷ Saw for the first time, my Cousin Eugene Webster. He brought me a little Pocket Dictionary – a perfect little gem, ~~from~~ to-gether with some music from his dear Father – Les gages d’amours,³⁸ wh[ich] I shall most highly prize – and more especially, for the little words written on each –

This reminds me so of myself – I always like to hallow my little gifts to those I love, by an accompanying sentiment of my own. However brief the sentiment, it is to me, at least, more than half the value of the present.

Well, really, I am provided against all Lexicographical errors. Two, beautiful new Dictionaries, ~~and~~ from the same friend, in the course of two months. It quite startles me! My orthography must be shocking. But, now that Dictionaries are so pleasantly associated, I shall certainly improve.

J’ai vu le portrait de mon oncle Guillaume, au jour d’hui – Oh! que c’est ressemblant – c’est lui même! Il me lui repelle, tout à fait.³⁹

³⁶ Being Episcopalian, she would have read from the Book of Common Prayer.

³⁷ Charles Backus Dana (1806-1873) was the rector of Christ Church in Alexandria. He participated in Robert E. Lee’s confirmation.

³⁸ Tokens of love

³⁹ “I saw the portrait of my uncle William, today – Oh! How it is lifelike – it’s truly him! It reminds me of him, absolutely.” The “Oncle Guillaume” in this case is William Greenleaf Webster, Eugene Webster’s father.

On my return home, met Mr Bush and Cousin John Calvert, who had just made a visit to Arlington. The latter, alighted from his Buggy & came up to the carriage to speak to me—whereupon, I took occasion, gently to upbraid him for visiting on Sunday.

This evening, I was disappointed in going to Ch[urch] in the woods after dinner. [“]The spirit was more than willing, but, the flesh was weak” I was perfectly exhausted by my morning ride. When Uncle returned, he brought me a letter from my darling little Bunnie, through our kind Post-man and Preacher, Mr Rodman.

This eve, I tried to turn the conversation on religious topics. Uncle spoke with enthusiasm of Whitfield the celebrated English Methodist, whose life he had read. Said that he found among other relics, belonging to Gradmama Washington, a piece of the cossack of Whitfield, ~~sent to her by the Countess of Huntingdon, who was a patroness of the Sect~~ He gave it to the Methodists in Washington, he said—I think. Uncle spoke of Bishop Hobert⁴⁰ being Professor in Princeton College, while he was there at school. I was surprised to hear him speak so lightly of his piety—Said altho’ he was a clergiman he was so merely, by profession, for no one ever accused him of piety then.

Uncle, spoke with great contempt, of the superfluity of English clergimen, in their living &c—and quoted the verse from Scripture “The Son of man had not where to lay his head.”⁴¹

He continued to laud the eloquence of Whitfield & quoted some passages from his sermons. I think he wants an awakening Preacher. He says, he likes Dr. Sparrow better than any one else, whom he hears.

March 12 [*Correct date*: Monday, March 13] – This evening after ~~after~~ the endurance of one of those sad days, when, I’m sad yet scarce know why – I resorted to the garden and gathered my hand full of lovely little purple and white crocuses & jonquills and went out to lay them on the grave of my dear Aunt – when I returned, Uncle was sitting on the front steps of the Portico reading a letter. “Ah! said I, approaching, Daniel has brought the mail” – ~~Yest~~ “Yes, and there are two letters for you” – “Indeed, I said, hastening in to the House. I did not expect to get a letter this evening – ~~but~~ who can they be from? but, the answer was soon given as I took up, from the window-sill, beside the Mail Bag – an envelope directed in the familiar hand of my dear Cousin Robert Lee⁴² – How soon he has answered my letter I joyfully tho’ mentally exclaimed – and another letter from my very agreeable correspondent, in New Haven! – tho’ I have not answered his last or acknowledged his kind mementoes. How kind in him to write again, I thought, as I ran up stairs to find a spot quite secluded, that I might have the full & entire enjoyment of my letters, unmolested, even by the sound Aunt Anna’s footfall. But, I found my room so darkened by the shades of evening, that I could not read satisfactorily; so, hastening on my sombrero, & shawl I came down & ensconsed myself behind one of the great pillars of the Portico & there, enjoyed my letters.

⁴⁰ John Henry Hobart (1775-1830), third episcopal bishop of New York

⁴¹ Matthew 8:20.

⁴² Robert E. Lee wrote this letter on March 11, 1854. In it he said that he would be returning from New York very soon to speak before a Congressional committee. The letter was published in Avery Craven, ed., “*To Markie*”: *The Letters of Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 41-42.

[Thursday] March 16 – The Randolphs are here. This eve, we, Cornelia & Mollie⁴³ walked through the Park down to the large gate. On our way we met two gentlemen, but, not knowing who they were, I did not make any hospitable advances – but, on our return, they were standing on the steps of the portico. As the Hostess, I advanced & said do you want to see my Uncle – yes, they replied, we are quite disappointed at not seeing him. “Would you like to see the picture?” Yes, replied Mr Sprofford – for this, I learned was his name – but, his companion Mr Poore seemed rather reluctant, however, Mr S – persuaded him & they both came in – We soon found ourselves launched in a most interesting conversation – Col. Poore had been to Europe & seen much that I had seen – being a Literary man had recorded it, as Mr Sprofford listened with interest[.] Then, we all conversed together upon various topics of interest[.] Mr Ben Perley Poore told me he had several thousand autograph letters – and that he had given \$60 for an autograph letter of Mary Queen of Scotts – He spoke of his literary pursuits – said he wrote for Gleasons’ Pictorial⁴⁴ – a copy of wh[ich], by the way, Mr Webster gave me – We had a pleasant evening Uncle came in & conversed with them. I had cake & wine handed & they left very much delighted, they said with their visit and with a promise to renew it at an early date –

March 17 – St. Patrick’s Day – Uncle went to Alexandria to the celebration. I was practicing in the parlor alone, when, a carriage drove up & a gentleman came in. I arose from the Piano prepared to meet a perfect stranger, when, what was my inexpressible delight, to see my dear, dear Cousin Robert Lee – The scene, wh[ich] followed, was quite over-powering! – What extacy to meet one so much loved after so long an absence – My love for Cousin Robert is perfectly unique. It is almost the love of a child for a Father. He is so associated with my dear Father & with my early youth.

Sunday eve [March] (19) – Cousin Robert & myself rode into Church this morning & heard a good sermon from Mr Dana – In the afternoon, I went out as usual, to read to poor old Mammy and when I returned, dear Cousin R who had been reading the Bible during my absence (Uncle having gone to the church in the woods) and myself prepared to take a walk – We went first to the garden & gathered a few flowers for my dear Aunt’s grave and we then wended our steps to that sad spot – I had been there so often, that I did not feel that intensity of emotion, wh[ich] my dear cousin experienced. But, I deeply sympathised with him – as he wept by the grave – it was a scene for pity to behold, to see that strong man weep so bitterly – As he walked around the grounds, I sat beneath the little arbor and wept too. When we

[The next page and half of the page after that were torn out. A few words on the front and back of the first page are legible. From these, it is clear that the entries cover Markie’s conversations with Robert E. Lee. The word “duty” appears several times. There is also an apparent allusion to the Capitol, where Lee had been called to testify.]

⁴³ Cornelia Jefferson Randolph (1799-1871) and Mary Jefferson Randolph (1803-1876). They were grandchildren of Thomas Jefferson who lived in Alexandria.

⁴⁴ Benjamin Perley Poore related his experiences at Arlington House in his “Waifs in Washington” column in *Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* on March 19, 1853.

Cousin R left at three o'clock. We employed the morning out at the grave, where he superintended the making of some beautiful flower-beds, wh[ich], when the weather becomes warm, I will take exquisit pleasure in planting with flowers – [*sentence scratched out*] its being at my precious aunt's grave. When we returned he packed up his trunk, and after a little sweet conversation, we remembered that we had not gathered the flowers from the grave for dear cousin Mary, as we intended – so, we went again & procured them. Alas! This is a sad, sad day. While we sat thinking of parting moments, Uncle, regaled us by an anecdote of his school days in the collage at Philadelphia where a certain Scotchman by the name

[*The top half of the next page is torn away.*]

[Tuesday] March [28] My Birthday. [*Rest of line torn away*] have been a day of deep [*two words scratched out*] reflection for the future; but, alas! my poor heart has been preoccupied and I have not passed it as I would have wished. My last Birthday, I was in Paris – now, I am safely back in my own dear country with a heart full of gratitude for my many mercies & blessings. [*Three and a half lines scratched out*]

Today, Uncle went to Alexandria and at last obtained, from that old Museum, the Revolutionary Standards – & has written a letter to ge

[Wednesday] March 29 – This morning Uncle sent a letter wh[ich] he wrote & read to me, to Gen Pierce the President to inform him that he desired to present them to the the Government.

[*Top of the next page torn out*]

[*Torn*] I took [*torn*] some jagged atoms to keep as a souvenir of the flag surrendered by Lord Cornwallis – the flag of the 7th Regiment of the Line. Then I unrolled with dear Uncle's assistance, the Hessian Flag – taken from Col Niphausen,⁴⁵ who commanded the Hessians at Yorktown. This is a beautiful Flag – of white brocade silk – on one side, is a bald head eagle with extended wings grasping in his talons a ~~sp~~ branch of palm and one of – I know not exactly what – perhaps it is intended for Laurel – over this is a scroll in wh[ich] is "Principe et patria" all worked in gold. On the other side a crown & some letters wh[ich] I do not define. I have however taken a copy of both flags for my remembrance.

To-day I am not less sad than yesterday why should I be? – when will I be free and light-hearted again?

[*Top half of the next page torn*]

⁴⁵ Wilhelm von Knyphausen (1716-1800), a Prussian officer who commanded Hessian troops throughout the Revolutionary War.

I pray [*torn*] aright

This evening, when the mail bag arrived I seized it and found not altogether to my surprise a letter wh[ich] I took to my room to read, seeing, it was one wh[ich] would cause some little emotion – I read it & dashed it to the floor and exclaimed Oh! the trials of the Heart! – [*sentence scratched out*] – I could have burst into tears, but, it matters not what all this is about – Les affaires du coeur sont bien extraordinere.⁴⁶ My heart, however, is not in this affair – I had just closed the letter when, a rap at my door announced Margaret⁴⁷ to whom I had promised to read a sermon one night this week, and of all nights, she had chosen this. Why was it?

My heart felt so unprepared, but, she had come a long way, through the snow this cold night & could I deny here the simple, sacred boon – no, I could not – I went to my toilette took up the Book at the same time raising my eyes & heart to Heaven, in a prayer for strength to perform my duty. The Letter had diverted my thoughts from one sorrowful channel into another & these feeling were in conflict when I was thus summoned.

I opened the book mechanically, put my chair before the fire – said in as kind & cheerful a tone as I could – How are your children? – I hope you are all, quite quite [*sic*] well – and commenced to read a Sermon from the Text “grow in grace” It seemed a monitory word to me – I desired its counsel and prayed it might benefit the reader, as well, as the Hearer –

The tea bell rung in the middle of it and I was forced to leave off –

The ways of Providence, seem past our comprehension – When I went down into the parlor I found a note from Eugène Webster, giving me a synopsis of a Lecture on “Woman’s Rights” delivered by Mrs Rose.⁴⁸ I smiled – even indulged a momentary laugh, but, it is hushed now[.]

April 1854

[Saturday] April 1. Uncle, in speaking of his aversion to letter-writing, to-day, said when he was a child in Philadelphia he used to be made to write a letter to his mother every sunday afternoon and tell her he had been to ch[urch] in the morning & heard an excellent sermon from Bishop White⁴⁹ – Thus, he seemed to insinuate if he did not say, he imbibed a distaste for church & for letter-writing. I wonder at Grandmama Washington!

This evening Uncle was telling me some of the incidents of his younger days. Among others the time when he first got his new Phaton.⁵⁰ Grandmama Washington, he said gave him the Mount Vernon Fisheries for a year & he made by it a thousand dollars –

With 600 of this, he determined to get a [*blank*] He wrote to some friends in Philadelphia who procured an elegant one – Kings yellow & black was the body & the wheels were scarlet – & so the part underneath – The equipage arrived in Alexandria & Uncle with his servants & horses went up from Mount Vernon – “Never, said he shall I forget the joy of that day, nor the

⁴⁶ “The affairs of the heart are truly extraordinary.”

⁴⁷ Margaret Taylor, an enslaved woman.

⁴⁸ Ernestine Louise Rose (1810-1892), was a Polish-born Jewish feminist. According to local newspapers, she delivered a series of lectures at Carusi’s Saloon in Washington, D.C. on the political, legal, and educational rights of women during the final week of March 1854.

⁴⁹ William White (1748-1832), Bishop of Pennsylvania.

⁵⁰ A phaeton is a type of open carriage with high wheels and a single seat.

great to do, that was made, when I arrived at Mount Vernon in it – they all came out to see me – I sent to England to know what were ~~my coat of arms~~ Livery & got for answer blue & white – so, Phill my servant⁵¹, in his blue & white livery trimmed with white worsted lace, all of wh[ich] was procured in England, was sometimes mounted by my side and I drove four horses. Oh! those were happy days my child, that will never come again!

Sunday evening April 2 1854

As I decided to remain at home to-day and give Daniel & the horses a respite, I expected a dull and as I have several times before had a profitless Sabbath – but, it has been otherwise.

The early part of the morning, I spent in reading & meditation. Aunt Anna ~~when~~ went to her room – after a short while, Uncle came in. I was just preparing to go out to read to poor Mammy, but, he commenced conversation, wh[ich] detained me. He talked of the servants – and spoke with particular approbation of those who were members of the church. Said how much good the gentlemen at the seminary had done – that many a wretched character had been reformed in that little meeting House – that he had sometimes thought of enlarging it. I said what I thought admissible in favor of the plan. I mentioned that Margaret Taylor, one of the servants were going to join the Ch[urch] on Sunday next. Well said he I'm very glad of it – It is a very good thing – I am always pleased to see that. Religion is the best thing – Yes, I said it is the only good thing. It is much better than the temperance society – for that is a cold pledge to man – but, religion presents love for God, as the motive for action[.] S† “Yes” he replied, “it is best if the heart can be affected – Every one, ought to take the communion whose heart is prepared for it, but, I think it is too sacred a step to be taken lightly” – I fear we can never feel altogether prepared, I said, for such an act, but if we have faith! – and I would have said more, but, while I mused, Uncle talked on & the train of thought was broken – he talked long in this strain – said that religion was the greatest earthly good – that it was a thing all should attend to while young – then, said he it grows with y[ou]r growth and strengthens with your strength and when you become old, it gives peace – “As the twig is bent, so doth the tree incline” – youth is the time for such impressions but, it is very hard when one grows old, to become religious – I have no belief in these sudden conversions.” I sighed & felt too sad to speak & mentally breathed a prayer for my poor Uncle. He evidently feels deeply the want of the comforts of religion. – he is always casting reproaches on himself[.] The conversation changing to subjects less profitable, I arose to go on my mission to poor Mammy; but, Uncle detained me and said “if you are going to read to me my dear, you had better do it now ~~an~~ Read two or three chapters of the gospel, one of the Epistles and some of the prayers if you like and think it necessary.” I was glad that dear Uncle manifested more interest than usual in the sunday services as this was the first time he had suggested prayers with the reading in the Bible on sunday – With a heart full of spiritual pleasure, I commenced to read the Psalms for the day; but what was my consternation, at the end of them, to look up and find that my soothing voice, had had its wonted effect – and Uncle was fast locked in the embrace of Sleep. I sat for some minutes waiting for him to awake but, it seemed needless, and I determined to waive the long catalogue of religious exercises wh[ich] he

⁵¹ Philip Lee, an enslaved man whom G.W.P. Custis subsequently took from Mount Vernon to Arlington. The *New York Commercial Advertiser* reported on January 31, 1829, that \$121 had been collected to buy his freedom. In a letter published in the *Alexandria Gazette* on February 27, 1832, G.W.P. Custis wrote of Philip Lee, “He will not be my slave much longer – he has been my friend for two-and-thirty years.” It is unclear if or when he freed him.

had marked out, until I should ~~his~~ have his audience – and taking my prayer-book & Sermons, I went gently out of the room, to the little chamber of poor Mammy – There she sat before her little fire – so ematiated & so old – she looked as if she could not be long for this earth – I read a sermon and the commandments and then prayed with her – when I arose she said “Miss Martha was that the catechis[m] that you read?” It was a part of it I said, it was the Commandments – “who taught you your ~~eha~~ catechism Mammy?” I said – The old people at Mount Vernon she replied – who, I said – Grandmama Washington? No, oh! no she said, she never taught any of the servants anything – none of the white people ever did but, there was two old black men, that used to know something and they used to teach the rest of us, the little they knew – Oh! how I sighed at this sad recital from poor Mammy. “Yes, she continued, I was old enough to remember all about it – for, when Mrs Washington died I had my first child.”

I came in the House & soon after dinner was ready – Uncle was reading Col Trumbulls’ Life⁵² & so, I of course made no proposition about reading only kissed ~~fore head and~~ his venerable forehead and said “you fell to sleep while I was reading & I thought I would defer it until you awoke” – At dinner poor Uncle seemed in a desperate mood – wished himself dead said he was not fit to live – something was said about letter-writing – Uncle deprecated it in toto as the greatest waste of time – Said he[,] I hate letter-writing, because, in Philadelphia I was always made to write a letter to my Mother every sunday afternoon and tell her I had been to Church and heard an excellent sermon from Bishop White – not a word of wh[ich], by the bye, I ever did hear –

Oh! how strange does it seem that so sensible a woman & so religious a one as Grand Mama Washington is represented should have pursued such a course. A sort of cold propriety in education seems to have been the regime in those days instead of the heart teaching of our own time.

The afternoon was cold & chilly & Uncle rather advised me not to go to the School House[.] It was certainly a physical effort, for I did not feel well – but, it had been some time since I had been there and I thought my going would be an example & encouragement to the servants[.] I therefore told Mary Anne I should want her services to escort me the long way by the Quarters, as it would be too muddy to go with Uncle through the woods – After a long muddy walk, we arrived – Mr Pete & Mr Rodman officiated I hope to the profit of all present. Uncle & myself were both in time. Margaret walked home with me – She spoke with an unreserve wh[ich] gratified me of her satisfactory state of mind since she had made up her mind to join the Church – The first thing, she said wh[ich] led me to think seriously was mistress’ death – I thought after she had taken so much pains to bring us up, to know something about religion, what a dreadful thing it would be, now that she’s gone to Heaven, for none of us to follow her there. I was deeply affected by this and knew what joy it would give my precious aunt if she could hear these words – I talked much to poor Margaret and gave her such advice as I thought her circumstances required & such as I was capable of giving – It was a pleasant a happy walk – “we talked of Heaven & learned the way.” The sun was setting beautifully & I enjoyed unseasonable as it was the fresh breeze on my cheeks as I ascended the hill to the garden fense [fence] – I went in to get some flowers – those ~~be~~ lovely bright bright *Pieris japonicas*⁵³ – they will always remind me of cousin Robert Lee, now! I plucked a hand full of them.

⁵² *Autobiography, reminiscences and letters of John Trumbull, from 1756 to 1841*, by John Trumbull (1841).

⁵³ *Pieris japonica*, sometimes called the Japanese Andromeda

As I went to the house, I saw Daniel just come from town with the mail bag. I rushed to the House, with beating heart to see if there was a letter from West Point. There was – from Cousin Mary – Cousin R arrived safely. A prayer of gratitude to God!!!!

Monday – [April] 3 – Another sad day. This evening Mr Ben Pearley Poore – made us a second visit. Brought us his life of Napoleon[.]⁵⁴ We had a charming conversation about Paris &c &c – He recommended his friend Mr Sprofford as “a most moral, decent respectable man” & private secretary to General Cushing the attorney general.⁵⁵ I could not but smile at the eulogy – it was so like Mr Poore. He said what a charming time Mr S— had during his last visit & was soon coming again – For himself, he agreed, before he left, to come over & take breakfast with us one morning ere long – and when he left, he begged me to remember the Poore, wh[ich] I told him I would be charitable enough to do.

[Thursday] April 6. The days pass off in sadness, & yet there are, sometimes, interludes of pleasure. –

Another visit this evening, from Mr Ben Perly Poore & his friend Mr Sprofford – that “decent, moral, respectable man.” While Uncle conversed with Mr Poor, Mr S asked me if I would accompany him in a walk, this lovely evening. I consented and we strolled through the cedars and over the Park, back Home again – we saw the blue forget-me-not – that sweet little wild-flower, wh[ich] I love so much – blooming on the Knole. Mr S— & myself by mutual consent, stooped to pluck them & very naturally, offered what we had, to each other – making them more valuable, by means of exchange. This little peice of sentiment ere we had proceeded twenty paces from the House, was only the commencement of a series of delicate little attentions during the Promenade – After our return to the Hill, I went with him in the garden & made him a pretty bouquet as a Trophy of Arlington which he seemed to prize beyond measure.

I see nothing in him wh[ich] would lead me to doubt Mr Poore’s fine eulogium – and added to this he is sentimental in the extreme – and I fear, too susceptible for his own happiness. He is not however, tout à fait, à mon gré⁵⁶ even Mr Poore, with all his rough exterior, seems much more congenial. ~~But, of course~~ and he, too, seems quite to show a penchant for me – strange to say – no, not so very either – for, our tastes & pursuits are the same – & having both travelled in Europe – we can compare notes & thus enjoy the past – [*Next five lines, seemingly relating to Benjamin Perley Poore, scratched out*] Uncle received a kind letter from Mr Lossing⁵⁷ this evening, wh[ich] with his consent, I have taken possession of – as it is very interesting. Mr Poore announced that we were to have the pleasure of a visit from the President to-morrow, to consent [consult] with Uncle, as to the most proper mode of receiving & ~~presentin~~ the Revolutionary

⁵⁴ *Early Life, and First Campaigns, of Napoleon Bonaparte* by Benjamin Perley Poore (1851).

⁵⁵ Caleb Cushing (1800-1879), the Attorney General under Franklin Pierce.

⁵⁶ “Entirely to my liking.”

⁵⁷ Benson Lossing (1813-1891) visited Arlington House in March 1853 when he was in Washington for the inauguration of Franklin Pierce. The letter referenced here, dated April 4, 1854, is in the collections of the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon. In it, he thanked Custis for writing to Franklin Pierce about the surrender flags, adding he was “grieved to see them hang covered with dust and cobwebs, in the Museum at Alexandria.” He also discussed a recent exposition of paintings depicting George Washington. See Benson Lossing to George Washington Parke Custis, April 4, 1854, Historic Manuscript Collection, George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon.

Flags – If His Excellency had been a little more courteous in replying to Uncle’s letter⁵⁸ & not so condescending about coming over I think it would seem more Presidential.

This evening poor Margaret came up to my room at my bidding & I ~~rea~~ endeavored by suitable portions of the prayer-book & scriptures, to-gether with fervent extemporaneous prayer, to prepare her mind for the more comfortable reception of the Lord’s supper, on sunday next. She seemed to enjoy the little service & it was a spiritual pleasure to my own soul – but, the Tea-Bell, unfortunately ~~read~~ rung too soon – and Perry, whom, dear Cousin R used to say, “always wants me at the wrong time,” came up to my room, to say he wanted me to get out Tea.

[Friday] April 7. I cannot help being amused at the true democracy of President Pierce. His want of courtesy is positively disgraceful to his office – What would an European Potentate say to the following fact –

Some days ago, Uncle wrote a ~~n~~ very respectful & courteous letter to His Excellency the President, saying he now had possession of the old Revolutionary flags and wished through the medium of His Excellency to present them to the archives of the government, to be preserved – and thinking after the old fashioned style, that it would be more elegant to send the letter by his own servant posted Daniel off with it. ~~It~~ Instead of the president writing a reply he sends word ~~that~~ verbally, that “he will decide about it & write him word.”

This, is certainly, etiquette for a ~~stran~~ President! I felt indignant to think that our executive officer was so ignorant of common politeness, but, I was still more astonished when Mr Poore said yesterday, that he had called to see the President in the morning & the subject of the Flags being mentioned, He (the President) asked Mr P— if he was going to Arlington if he would tell Mr Custis, that he had contemplated submitting his letter to Congress, to decide where the Flags ought to be placed, but, that he would take no steps until he ~~sa~~ consulted with him & he would come over for that purpose, to-morrow or next day.”

All day, have Uncle & I been sitting up Uncle with his new brown vest on, (wh[ich] is the only change he ever makes for company[]) & me with my black velvet spencer on the tip toe of expectation. Uncle has been so preoccupied with his visit, anticipated, that he has not been enabled to settle himself to anything – The President has been canvassed & weighed & found wanting – at least in the manners which belong to his station. I presume he will be here tomorrow – I suspect he is a very uncertain character – not like Gen Jackson – This evening Uncle informed me that Gen Harrison was my fifth cousin through the Bassetts⁵⁹ & gave me another piece of information with regard to family connections. Our first ancestor who came to this country was Henry Custis⁶⁰ ~~pr~~ a Major General (Governor of the Leeward Islands[]) – originally from the County of Ulster Ireland. He is burried at Arlington on the Eastern Shore.

⁵⁸ The letter from Franklin Pierce to G.W.P. Custis, dated April 5, 1854, is in the Custis-Lee Family Papers at Tudor Place. In it, he promised to take the flags from the Surrender at Yorktown, though he admitted that the government had yet to find a way to preserve them.

⁵⁹ The connection may be as follows. Burwell Bassett, Jr. (1764-1841) was the nephew of Martha Washington. He was the first cousin of William Henry Harrison

⁶⁰ G.W.P. Custis has recounted the family history slightly incorrectly. Henry Custis was an Englishman who emigrated to the Netherlands. He never lived in Virginia. The statement that he served as a major general and was governor of the Leeward Islands I probably rooted in a conflation with Daniel Parke, another of Custis’s ancestors. His son, John Custis II, relocated to Virginia and owned Arlington on the Eastern Shore. There is a painting of Henry Custis at Washington and Lee University which was once displayed in Arlington House.

Uncle walked with me in the garden this evening to see the new w Jasmine Arbor. The flowers, I know remind him, as they do me, of dearest Aunt – He says he does not care for flowers, but, he cherishes them for his poor wife’s sake & for Cousin Mary[.]

[Saturday] April 8. To-day, I had hoped to have received a letter from Cousin Robert – but, as is the fate of many of my hopes, it ended in disappointment[.] How I long for that letter – We expected the President to-day & again, Uncle & I, were costumed in court dress to receive him. Uncle’s court dress being a brown vest, wh[ich], with a clean pocket handkerchief is all the addition he ever makes to his wardrobe – The same old brown coat, wh[ich] he has worn for two years, at least – perhaps three or four – is worn on all occasions and not changed even when he speaks in public – Soon after breakfast, a servant on horse-back rode up and brought a despatch from the President in allusion to the Revolutionary Collors & inviting Uncle to dine with him on tuesday at 4 o’clock ½.⁶¹ So, that we shall not see “the great man” as Uncle calls him under our roof. To-day, we’ve had quite a Levee of uninteresting people – but, I’ve exerted myself to entertain them all hospitably.

When one is particularly absorbed in any one thought, it is an effort not inconsiderable, for one to come out of oneself; but, it is an effort that I often have to make – and it is well for me, or I should become even more selfish than I am. Uncle was giving some gentleman, to-day, a discription of a scene to wh[ich] he was witness, when General Washington received the letter from Gen Sinclair,⁶² saying that the army in the West was cut to pieces. Another Gentleman asked him if Sparks Life was considered a good one, to wh[ich] Uncle replied that the world might be indebted for his labors – for they had been immense – The gentleman said it was very much censured Mr Sparks having altered some of the lines in Gen W—s letters.⁶³ Uncle observed that some of his letters were very hurriedly written & consequently carelessly & such as he would himself have corrected, had he been here to see them published, therefore, it was but justice to him that it should have been done.

[Monday] April 10. ~~Life’s dark shadows reflect a deeper shading~~ There are days, in this mortal life, when earth dark shadows, reflect a deeper hue – this, has been one of them – ~~the~~ my soul has been incontrollably depressed to-day and what is still more rare, with me, my eyes have been oft dimmed with tears.

Sad experience, has been gathering up old leaves from the Journal of my past Life and comparing them with those of more recent date and teaching me hard lessons for the future. Oh! this “Life of mortal breath,” is full of trials & care. I long to flee away & be at rest – and yet, I seem to be living such an unprofitable Life, that I dare not wish to die – I would wish to do something more for God, ere I go hence from this probationary scene – not, that by my own works, I would merit Heaven, but, that I might the more, fulfil my duty.

⁶¹ The note mentioned here, dated, April 6, 1854, is in the Custis-Lee Family Papers at Tudor Place. In it, Franklin Pierce invited G.W.P. Custis to a family dinner on Tuesday, April 11, 1854, at 4:30 P.M.

⁶² Arthur St. Clair (1737-1818), a Revolutionary War general who was later suffered a catastrophic defeat against American Indians at the Battle of the Wabash in 1791.

⁶³ The unnamed visitor is correct. Jared Sparks altered the spelling and grammar of the Washington letters that he published in his *Life of Washington*.

We fully expected letters from West Point this evening, but, none came – We generally receive one on Saturday or Friday. What can have caused this delay? – My mind is filled with anxiety – I know not why – I have an undefined presentiment of something – God grant it may be, but, the effects of my imagination. I expressed my astonishment to Uncle, that we had no letter and was struck with his reply – “Ah! Markie stranger things than that will happen – we don’t know what a day may bring – I have always had a presentiment that something would happen – some event in my Life, wh[ich] would make a great change in my affairs – and that I should be happier again – some how, I think I shall leave Arlington & at last, die away from home somewhere” – said he, “I have strange thoughts on this subject – I don’t know what will come of them” – So, he talked on, as we sipped our coffee, after dinner – He had often referred to this subject before – but, now, he said more than usual and recalled the subject so abruptly – and at such a time, that it positively startled me. It surely admitted of much discussion but, I had not the heart to breathe a word. Yesterday, I went to the little Ch[urch] in the woods & partook of the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. I ought to have been happier to-day after that holy privilage, but, I am not – Yesterday, I seemed to feel a peace of mind. While reading the Bible to Uncle in the morning, Mr Beverly Randolph & his son James⁶⁴ came over & spent the day – I so regretted Uncle’s not being able to go to Church –

April 11 Tuesday. I have often thought of the striking similitude between ~~Life &~~ a chess board and Life.

So checkered, is it, with darkness & light.

Yesterday, ~~wa~~ my heart was crushed beneath a weight of suffering – to-day, even the smile of pleasure, has played upon the features of my soul, as on my face. I made preparations to spend the day at Tudor Place – and accordingly sat out quite early – ~~on~~ my way over, I called at the Conservatory, to get a “Pansee” for dear Grandmama and then stopped at the Aberts – to visit them & Kate, who was there. While there, who should come in, but, my friend, Capt Walker⁶⁵ – The meeting between us, after so long an absence, was mutually agreeable – we had little time, however, to enjoy the present or refer to the past, which is always a melancholy pleasure, to those who have the sentiment to feel Life’s changes. I hope, however, but, a short time will elapse ere we meet again in accordance with his promise. When last I saw Capt Walker, it was at dear Arlington – in April or May, two years ago – What vast many changes since then – my poor Aunt was here then – how well I remember her sitting on the sofa as we entered the parlor door. How little we thought when we parted then, that, when we next met, I ~~h~~ should have been to Europe – spent a winter in Paris – and returned to be the hostess at arlington and she whom I so loved & whom all so honored, then, now, gone to her long home – across the great waters of eternity.

Saturday evening [April 15] – Little of interest has transpired except within the sanctuary of my own heart. On Thursday, I received a letter from Cousin Robert — Uncle Washington Peter⁶⁶ &

⁶⁴ William Beverly Randolph (1790-1868), son of Mary Custis Lee’s godmother.

⁶⁵ William H.T. Walker (1816-1864).

⁶⁶ George Washington Peter (1801-1877), Markie’s maternal uncle.

Grace Totten⁶⁷ dined with us, & little Mary – We had a pleasant day – My precious Orton arrived, while I was seated on the steps, sadly musing, about the hour of sun-set, to pass with me, his Easter holy-days. “Ah! Sister he exclaimed, it is no use, for Cousin Robert & I to come to arlington & pet you, for it just makes you more sad, when we go away.” – I could not help smiling, tho’ I felt the truth of his remark.

Dear Uncle told at the table this evening for the – I think two dozenth time – the story about the Light House on Smiths’ Island.⁶⁸ It is now, time, that this should be recorded. It appears, Uncle sold to the government a piece of Land on Smith’s Island, on wh[ich] to build a Light House – The Virginians immediately went into “Committee,” to consult about contracting to build the Light House for the Government – after being what they deemed, a reasonable time in committee, they sent in their petition & received for answer, that “the Light House was built, the Light in it & the Yankees gone home with the money.” This story, is one of Uncle’s especial favorites, & it always recalls another wh[ich] he tells with equal gout – about the Parliamentary gentlemen, who, on just coming from Richmond, rub their hands, look consequential and ask if you are unanimous in your part of the country, in planting corn.”

These stories are invariably related, when the conversation turns on internal improvements in our vicinity – Poor Virginia finds no mercy at Uncle’s hands – He says while they are in Committee in Washington, Georgetown & Alexandria, about laying a rail-road the rails would be nearly worn out with use, in New York. C’est vrai! – in a certain sense.

[April 16 and 17] Easter Sunday & Monday, my darling Orton remained with me – On Good Friday, I was in bed all day, with neuralgia. My little Brother was so gentle & considerate in his attentions. He read to me ~~three~~ morning, noon, & evening in the Bible and some of the Hymns in our Prayer-book & with such sweetness and amiability of manner. He read from his own choice the chapter about “St. Cornelius the Centurion”⁶⁹ & remarked that it was a favorite. I parted with him reluctantly on Tuesday morning, but, it was best for him to go back to school. What a snow storm & what cold bleak weather for Easter.

Friday [April] 21 – This morning, I spent in my room writing a letter. Just as it was completed, I heard a footstep & looking from my window, I saw a romantic looking y[oun]g gentleman just entering the portico. Supposing that Uncle had gone to the farm, I thought I should have to be presentable, so made my toilette in the shortest space of time within my power, and went down[.]

Uncle, however, was seated in his corner chair as usual entertaining this visitor, who seemed almost too modest to open his lips and was in his general aspect, the picture of sentiment & romance – I soon learned from Uncle’s conversation, that he was conversing with an artist, though the said artist, did not emit a breath that would lead any one to believe he was anything – indeed, he shrunk back in his chair, & looked thoroughly overcome with modesty. I was silent

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Grace Totten (1822-1902). She was the daughter of Joseph Gilbert Totten, Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers. During the Civil War she married a Lieutenant Henry Kennedy Stevens who served in the Confederate Navy. He was killed at Bayou Teche, Louisiana, in 1863. She later married Charles Hinman Graves in 1873.

⁶⁸ The original Smith Island Light was located at Cape Charles at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. It was completed in 1828, but being inadequate in size, another lighthouse replaced it in 1864. Robert E. Lee visited this lighthouse while stationed at Fort Monroe and wrote a description of it for G.W.P. Custis on May 22, 1832.

⁶⁹ Acts 10

for a long time – becoming one of Uncle’s audience while he spoke of his favorite Col Trumbul & Stuart, with both of whom, he had a personal acquaintance. In referring to the picture of “Col Washington” over the door, in the Hall, Uncle said, that, was the first painting ever taken of him & it was taken at the age of 40, while he was Col in a colonial regiment of Virginia, as his red uniform designates.⁷⁰

Uncle decided to go to the city and while he went to make preparations, the young artist & myself became quite cosey – Upon perceiving that I was also an amature of the art, he entreated me to allow him to see some of my productions. He put on such a gentle look and seemed so interested in my humble efforts, that I could not withstand his request, and with modesty wh[ich] almost equalled his own, I opened my Port-Folio, wh[ich] already lay before him. I then excused myself, to prepare a little lunch for the artist and on my return, found that all my peices had been scanned – except my last – a Ladys head, wreathed with a grape vine – which I then placed on the Table – Ah! said he, his placid countenance somewhat illuminated with a smile of enthusiasm, this, was my first peace [piece]! Indeed? I said and our artistic eyes met, as if by the mesmarism of sympathy. He did not breathe a word of praise, but sat with the peices, first one & then the other, in his hand, looking intently at them. What he thought, I do not know, from the expression of his face – he looked very

[On the next page, Markie began a new entry before scratching it out and resuming her last sentence.] ~~Sunday—a most long day—Aunt Anna moves like a silk specter, up & down the Hall or rooms—or looks on the pure snow with wh[ich] she seems to find a congeniality~~

sad and I thought pityful, as if he was sorry I could not ~~paint~~ do any better. The Poet says it is “the silence that speaks,” but, certain it is, that silence is not as definable in some cases as in others. At length, I remarked, that, I had not as he would see, made a correct copy, but, that I found it quite impossible to do so – and was very fond of exercising my fancy – upon wh[ich] he sagely replied, it would be better, as a study, for me to make a correct copy at first and afterward when I had acquired practice, I might exercise my own taste. “Yes, I said, I do not doubt y[ou]r theory” and I felt enthusiastically pleased with the simplicity of manner & sincerity of expression, with wh[ich] he gave the advice.

I confess, I did expect him to say something a little flattering – not, that anything I’ve done is really worthy of a glance – but, as Uncle says – “Your humble servant, is a self-taught artist” as as [*sic*] gentlemen always flatter – or nearly always – I rather expected it – but, I like him better for his silence, if he did not see anything worth speaking of, and shall endeavor to profit by his advice. I told him, I had seen so many fine paintings & drawings, that, I should never become vain of anything I could do. He made no reply, but, looked at me sympathetically. We then went to the Table, to partake of some Lunch & while there, he spoke modestly of the Paintings at the Louvre. I did not at first think of his having been in Paris but when I first saw him from the window, I thought he had been in Italy. After he had made a repast as modest as himself, he again drew near the center table & taking up a very sentimental little sketch I had drawn & wh[ich] he had especially laid by asked if it was an original idea. I answered “No.” He mused on it but, said nothing. He then commenced speaking of the general principles of drawing and when Uncle moved to depart, made his adieus saying that he should be very much pleased to show me his pictures, if I would do him the favor to call at his room in the Capitol & was very much

⁷⁰ This is the 1772 portrait of George Washington by Charles Willson Peale, depicting him in the uniform of a colonel in the Virginia militia.

obliged to me – for something – I am sure I don't know what – ~~but~~ for the rest of the speech seemed to die away on his tongue & he vanished. He told me his name was Mr C.R. Alexander & that he was a Virginian. So much for the Young Italian-looking artist.

During Uncle's absence, four gentlemen arrived – four moustashed messeurs! I opened the parlor door quite abashed at their august presence; but, asked them to walk in. They asked if Mr Custis was at home & I replied, he had just gone to the City. They, however, came in and took seats and I endeavored to make their time pass agreeably by replying to their interrogations about the Pictures, and showing them all that I thought interesting. Then I had cake & wine handed. Two of them, had been to Europe & we were glad to converse upon what we had seen and experienced abroad. They remained about two hours – each making some gallant speech about the agreeableness of their visit. That their visit to Arlington, should ever be ~~asse~~, among their most delightful reminiscences &c &c – They then took out their cards & gave them to me. As I looked at them & read them out, each one, answered to his name, that I might individualize. One of them, Mr Draper, with whom I had most conversation & whom I thought most convenable said, with a very complacent bow – “And, now, Miss, may I ask your name?” They then said “Miss Williams, I am most indebted to you for your kindness & for our charming visit – and leaving compliments for Uncle – bade adieu.

Their visit was an agreeable little episode & I will here record their names. “Wm. B. Draper 28 Bond St. New York” “W.B. Chase” “Theodocious O. Fowler New York” (whom, I think they said was a grand-son of Count de Grasse) and “George W. Quintard of New York.”⁷¹

I liked Mr Draper's appearance & deportment particularly. They asked me how old Gen Washington was, when the crayon likeness over the mantle piece was taken. I was not sure, but, said I thought, late in Life. Uncle has since told me it was taken four years before his death 1785.⁷² One of the gentlemen asked me if Uncle was at the Battle of York Town. I told him no, that his father was on that occasion aid to Gen Washington. He had been very ill, but, said as he had seen the first of the war at Cambrige, he must see the last of it. Uncle was at that time, 6 months old. ~~Tomorrow, the 29th of April, is Uncle's Birth-day & he will be 73 years of age.~~ His spirits seem worse & worse – on the 22nd the anniversary of dear Aunts' death he was dreadfully dejected & has not recovered even his usual degree of cheerfulness.

Last evening, Sunday 23^d I was enabled more fully than I ever did before, to speak to dear Uncle with regard to his soul. It was Twylight, the hour, when all are more or less given to reflection. Uncle sat in his old corner-chair, by the fire and I near him with my feet upon the fender –my favorite winter attitude – He leaned his head upon my knee and groaned in agony of a distressed heart. Uncle, said I putting my hand upon his head, it grieves me to see you so unhappy – “Thank you, he said, my dear child, you are very very kind to me – I do not know what I should do without you.” “Uncle, continued I, there is one thing and one thing only that will make you happy, and that is, the grace of God. There is a “peace, wh[ich] passeth all understanding” and the world can never give it – religion is the only thing that can give it – He made some sound wh[ich] seemed to acquiese & raising his head he groaned aloud clasped his

⁷¹ The visitors were as follows: William B. Draper (1804-1885), President of Flushing National Bank in Flushing, NY; William Beecher Chase, a resident of Rhode Island; Theodosius O. Fowler (1786-1861), great-grandson of Comte de Grasse and a member of the Order of the Cincinnati; and George William Quintard (1822-1913), a partner in the Morgan Iron Works in New York.

⁷² The portrait in question, depicting George Washington in profile, was the work of James Sharples. He produced it in 1796, three years before Washington's death.

hand & putting them on my knee rested his head there. For nearly, a half hour, there was not a word spoken by either of us – I saw him take his handkerchief & once or twice wipe away the tears. I breathed a secret prayer for Gods’ Spirit to come & dwell in his heart – but, oh! my prayers are so weak so faint – but they are earnest in purpose & I trust in mercy, God will answer. Perry came in once or twice about the fire – The first time, Uncle did not raise his head the last time he did so I asked, “how many persons were baptized this evening” to wh[ich] Perry replied he did not know – he asked then if any from here were baptized.” The question seemed to indicate his thoughts and therefore I record it. I supposed he referred to the Baptist association. Many of the negros here are of that persuasion. I asked Uncle if he would not consent to go to Ch[urch] in Washington on Sundays – As it was a means of grace but he said he did not feel disposed to go anywhere.

April 1854 Arlington House – Virginia

Mr. Child’s visit was agreeable and yet there were some incidents connected with it, wh[ich] made it otherwise. Every one has some good quality wh[ich] especially seems to adorn their character – that good quality in Mr C was candor. I dearly love candor, where as in his case, it ~~was~~ is connected with a kind heart and polished manners, and we at once, felt at home in each others society. By way of becoming better acquainted, he proposed a walk – We went some distance in the woods and on our return, visited the grave of my precious Aunt – Our conversation was deeply interesting and I could but feel sorry when it was discontinued, by our arriving at the door of the Portico, where we met Uncle Custis.

Mr Child only stayed a day & night – I was prepossessed in his favor from the good reputation, I had heard from Uncle & from dear Aunt Custis — and then his being a connection of Cousin Robert’s, was at once a bond. But, I have learned by experience, not to form my judgement of a character, by what others say.

All are somewhat biased by prejudice and some have no discernment[.] Each looks through his own little Telescope. [*Last three lines scratched out.*]

May 1854

Arlington [Monday] May 8, 1854

This evening, dear Uncle returned from the City in the new carriage and we are all equally gratified, by the exchange, in one point of view; though, it was with a feeling of sadness, that I saw for the last time, the old carriage in wh[ich] I had had so many happy rides & with which I had had so many sweet associations, roll away from the door for the last time. Just as Uncle was about driving away this morning, with Mr Richard Randolph,⁷³ who had been with us since yesterday, we perceived that. the long Bridge was on fire and he was obliged to decide to take the Georgetown rode & cross in the Ferry Boat.⁷⁴

⁷³ Richard Randolph (1782-1859). His mother, Mary Randolph, is buried in Arlington National Cemetery near Custis Walk.

⁷⁴ According to the *Daily Evening Star* (Washington, DC), May 9, 1854, the steamboat *George Page* served as a ferry between Washington and Alexandria after the Long Bridge caught fire. It is unclear what started the fire,

Spring comes on so beautifully & dear Arlington becomes every day more beautiful.

This evening, I have been listening with great interest, to Uncle's narration of the events of his youth. He tells me, that he organized – so to speak – what he called “a Sheepshearing” – a grand entertainment in the open air – a sort of Banquet, at wh[ich], two hundred guests – members of Congress, foreign Ministers & all the grandees of the Day, were present. This took place at Arlington Spring or near there for nine successive years on his birthday, April 30 – commencing on that Day 1805. The design in connection with the celebration of the day & the enjoyment of his guests, was, to encourage & patronize Domestic manufactories – He therefore, advertised, previously to this event, that those who would produce on that occasion, the finest Ram or the finest p[ai]r of ew[e]s &c – would receive a prize of a handsome goblet with an appropriate inscription – also, the same prize would be awarded to one who would produce 5 yds of the best homespun cotton and wool. Two hundred dollars were expended in prizes. On the occasion of the first celebration, the five yds of domestic cotton wh[ich] received the prize, was presented by Uncle in person to President Jefferson in person, who gratefully acknowledged the present & had it made in to a waist-coat which he wore on the fourth of July following. Uncle added, that this act of the President, brought into vogue the wearing of home-made manufactures, & gave an impetus to [*entry ends here*]

[Wednesday] May 17 – Cousin Mary has been with us several days – with Mary & Milly & Miss Hellen Peters.⁷⁵ Even with all these familiar faces Arlington does not seem what it once was. On the contrary, I miss more than ever, my dear Aunt – those who are here, only recall those who are not.

And other past associations are constantly before me to sadden my heart – though, when with the gay, I too, seem light-hearted.

I laugh, but, feel no pleasure and my smile is followed by a sigh.

To-morrow, my duties at Arlington end and I return to dear Tudor. My feelings are mingled – and I know not regret at parting or the pleasure of meeting them all at home – will have way –

October 1854

[Monday] Oct 23 –1854

~~On the~~

Again, after an absence of nearly-five months, I return to dear Arlington, at Uncle's earnest solicitations, to comfort his solitude.

During this brief period of absence, I have drunk deeply of the cup of human sorrow — my beloved Grandmother,⁷⁶ whose Parental care and whose interesting character, I had begun,

although a brief paragraph in that newspaper refutes the idea that a resident of Georgetown was responsible for it. The Commissioner of Public Buildings ordered repairs to begin immediately.

⁷⁵ Mary and Milly are both daughters of Mary Custis Lee and Robert E. Lee. Helen Frances Peters (1835-1914) was the daughter of John Rogers Peters later married James Truman Taylor in 1862. Her brother DeWitt Clinton Peters Sr. was a surgeon in the Union Army.

⁷⁶ Martha Parke Custis Peter died on July 13, 1854.

more than ever to appreciate has gone forever, from my earthly vision. & from my warm affection.

November 1854

[Wednesday] Nov 1. Custis Lee left us to day, after having remained with us a fortnight, to repair to Savannah, his first station, under Capt. Gilmour⁷⁷ U.S. Engrs Corps. It was touching to see the affection Uncle manifested for his beloved Grandson, the day of his departure — once or twice, I saw him clasp him in his arms & kiss him tenderly, & the the [*sic*] receprocity of feeling on Custis' part, was not less beautiful. It was a picture I gazed on, with admiration. Youth & old age, clasped in each others arms, each filled with contemplations, in view of their future separation. Custis has seemed much dispirited for several days[.] I do not wonder at it. He is about to leave these scenes of his childhood — now, so extraordinarily lovely — clothed as they are with the most gorgeous & glowing tints of autumn — and associated with a thousand happy memories — and sad ones, too, when he thinks of the blessed being who was here not long ago, exerting a gentle influence on all around her & guiding his young steps. He sees the sometime tottering step of of [*sic*] his venerable grandparent and he thinks of the melancholy visicitudes wh[ich] a few short years must bring[.]

I t was with deep interest, that I marked the manly struggle of feeling in my young cousin's heart & believed that I could trace out the reflections of his mind[.]

[*The following passage is partially scratched out*]

Go forth, my cousin,

The conflicts of a school Boys' Life ~~is~~ are ~~done~~ ended

The Battle fought, the victory won.

Already, hast though won fair Laurels

These with ardent hopes & friendly wishes

Be thy dower —

Tuesday Nov 7 — Arlington

To-day, I made my first visit to dear old Tudor. How it pains me, now, to visit my old home. The dear familiar face of my beloved Grandmother, was not there to greet me with a hearty welcome & press me, when we parted, soon to come again. I so sadly missed her, that I burst into tears, when I entered the dining-room & it was fully an hour, before I could compose myself — Even now, ever & anon, I cast my eyes upon the old chairs, where, with her Bible under her head, she used to lie & doze, after the toils of the day were over. I say the toils, because, she did toil, in mind & Body for others' weal. Such an example of sincere devotedness, to those she

⁷⁷ Jeremy Francis Gilmer (1818-1883), a captain in the Army Corps of Engineers. From 1848 until 1854, he was tasked with improving the Savannah River and constructing Forts Jackson and Pulaski (where G.W.C. Lee was assigned.) He later joined the Confederate Army and constructed the fortifications around Atlanta.

loved & of whole hearted zeal, in any cause which she espoused, I never met before. Such spending & being spent of self!!! Alas! is it indeed so, that she is gone from the earth forever?

On my way to Tudor, to-day, I called by at Col Aberts'⁷⁸ to see Kate & the Baby & there found dear Lolo, who had come down from Baltimore the day before. I insisted on his coming with me to Tudor, & riding back with me, to dear Arlington. He consented & we had a charming ride over together. He seemed to enjoy his visit. When we went up to bed he came in my room & sat with me, until late at night, talking over a thousand different subjects.

In proportion as it was a comfort to me, to have my dear Brother with me, so it is a greif to think how soon we shall be separated, by thousands of miles of Land & Sea – He sails in a few days or weeks to join his Regiment in Oragon [Oregon].⁷⁹

[Wednesday] Nov 8. Lolo, could not have had a more delightful day for a view of Arlington – We walked out to see the flowers & I took him to the grave of our precious aunt which I often, almost daily visit, & strew with autumn flowers.

Sunday [Nov] 12 – Did not go to Alexandria to-day – while sitting in Mammy's room reading to her, I heard that Custis was in the house – It was a gleam of sun-shine for us, for the gloomy weather had depressed both Uncle & myself[.]

Monday [Nov 13] – The arrival of Aunt Rosa & Mrs Webster, was somewhat of an event, & I am, now, reminded of last winter when I first made their ~~appearance~~ acquaintance & of the many little incidents of note, which then occurred to make it memorable. Uncle again tells his old stories – When the subject of spiritualism is broached he always invariably, tells three successive narratives –

December 1854

[Tuesday] Dec 19, 1854.

Dear Custis Lee is still with us & we hope will be all the winter. His presence is a great comfort to Uncle & myself.

Evening after evening when else we would be alone, he comes home to cheer us.

To me, he is a sort of a “Bunnie” on whom I may lavish kind & affectionate offices & petting epethets. So, when I see him about sun-set time, returning through the leafless woods, I love to run down the Hill to meet him & tell him all that has happened in our quiet circle during the live long day.

[Thursday] Dec 21

⁷⁸ John James Abert (1788-1863), commander of the Corps of Topographic Engineers

⁷⁹ Laurence Williams was on his way to Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory, for garrison duty.

Went over to Washington this morn, called to see Mr Burgess, on business relative to the Land (Bounty Land) given to Lolo, Kate & Orton & located in Illinois – Mr B– was very kind – told me of a claim against congress for \$150. ~~of the back~~ Wh[ich] he thought I ought to prosecute – advised me to go to see Mr Havens,⁸⁰ the member from Buffalo & offered to go with me any day – I proposed to-day, he acceded & so we went. After waiting in the House of Representatives for some time, Mr Burgess espied Mr H and took me in the Ladies Gallery for an audience. While waiting there who should come in but, Mr Isic Smith of Buffalo.⁸¹ I was glad to see his familiar face & recall its associations with my early & happy childhood.

[Saturday] Dec 30. 1854

Uncle often recurs to his early days.

I love to hear him do so, for besides the interest with wh[ich] the incidents themselves are invested, I appreciate the pleasure wh[ich] he takes, in dwelling on the past.

This evening, he was speaking of the Theatre, and said, what a delight it was to him, when a child, when his sister Nelly would run to tell him that they were that evening to be allowed to go to the Theatre. He observed, that the Theatre in those days in Philadelphia, was opened only three times a week & that the president & his family always entered by a private door.

Uncle was speaking the other day of Mrs General Montgomery & Mrs Gen. Green & said that altho' Gen Washington did not usually see company who called in the morning, it was his standing order when either of these ladies called, he must be summoned & that he always escorted them out to their carriage. He said, they were both fine intellectual women. Mrs Green a pretty, laughing good natured & with all a fine intelligent woman & Mrs Montgomery as remarkable for a singular personal appearance as for intellect.

Uncle greatly criticises “the Republican Court” & says that Mrs Washington’s especial friend & the generals’ greatest favorite was Mrs Robert Morris⁸² – That, she was on state occasions, always handed in to dinner on the arm of the Gen & sat at his right hand at Table while Mrs Washington was partaker of the same courtesy from Mr Morris. Gen & Mrs Washington always sat on the side of the Table & never officiated.

Uncle to-day answered a letter addressed to him, by Mr York At Lee,⁸³ in reference to some singular errors in that famed Book — wh[ich] letter he is going to reply to.

One of the strangest stories Uncle tells of Philadelphia the old cook in his Grand Mother’s family at Philadelphia. His name was Hercules, but, among the servants was familiarly called “Harkles.”⁸⁴ He was immencely large & was a perfect autocrat in the Kitchen. Wore black silk breeches, black satin waistcoat, a blue cloth coat with bright buttons & a black velvet cape — a black cocked hat – a gold headed cain & silver knee buckles. He presided over the meat

⁸⁰ Solomon George Haven (1810-1861), a congressman from New York and former mayor of Buffalo, NY.

⁸¹ An Isaac S. Smith of Buffalo appears several times in the *Congressional Globe* for 1855. He successfully petitioned for monetary relief after taking care of public property in his city.

⁸² Content Dunham Morris, wife of Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and “Financier of the Revolution.”

⁸³ Samuel York Atlee (1809-1895), a Freemason who lived in Washington, DC.

⁸⁴ Hercules Posey (1748-1812), an enslaved chef whose cooking abilities gained fame while the Washingtons were living in Philadelphia. He escaped enslavement in 1797 and remained free for the rest of his life.

department & as soon as his course of dinner was over he took off his last apron (for he was very neat) & went to dress & when fully arrayed in the costume described sallied forth out of the front door where he was profoundly saluted by old John, the german porter (who was also the coachman) “Harkles” – or “old Uncle Harkles was a most important & notorious character. Was also saluted in the street by every one.

[In lighter handwriting] In reviewing the past year, my heart sinks in unutterable sadness.

I think I usually preserve a cheerful frame of mind, because, I wish to make those around me happy, but, there are moments, when as “Pettie”⁸⁵ says, I have a “giving up sort of a feeling” which is insupportable.

[Sunday, December] 31 – The last day of the year, always brings solemn thoughts, independently, of its being the Birthday of my precious Grandmother – She was born as she often said, with patriotic pride, on the last day of the year 76, at the dawn of American Independence.

This has been the brightest & sunniest of days. It ought to have cheered our sad hearts. Custis from some cause, which I cannot define, has been depressed to a degree which I have never before seen him. After many vain efforts to comfort his sad heart, I seemed myself to imbibe his spirit. It grieves me not to be enabled to comfort the heart of one I feel so sincere an interest in – I pray that he will seek & find consolation from a higher source.

⁸⁵ “Pettie” is Markie’s nickname for her cousin Custis Lee.

1855

January 1855

[Monday, Jan. 1] New Year's Evening

Uncle went over to the President's Levee to day – [*four lines scratched out*]

C– was a little more cheerful to-day, but, I could see that it was not without great effort. All days are sad to me, but, especially one like this & it was with me throughout the day, a constant struggle to be light-hearted. We both relaxed our efforts towards evening & settled down into silent dejection, Why or wherefore with him, I cannot tell.

I wish I could feel that I had spent all the hours of this day more profitably. I went around to see all the servants & to wish them a happy New Year.

Took them each, a little paper of sugar & coffee & then, with my arms full of these sweet & aromatic parcels wended my way through the cedar bowered path, down to the Quarters – Met a gentleman, who looked at my broad brimmed sombrero & bowed. I returned the civility & we each passed on. I visited each little cabin & deposited with the smiling inmate my little package & “a happy New Year.” ~~& re~~ After stopping to take a view of the exquisit scenery – the great dome of the capitol & the beautiful Potomac as it rolled between – I returned by the same little path through the cedars – Met quite as unexpectedly as before, the same gentleman, retracing his steps & we again interchanged bows.

On arriving before the Portico found my gallant ~~hunter~~ sportsman cousin just returned with, instead of the fine partridges he hoped, three little Cedar Larks with wh[ich] he presented me, as a New Years gift. We then walked to the kitchen to deposit them with the cook & then went into the garden to get some Ivy Leaves, to decorate the pictures of our venerated ancestor & her illustrious consort over the parlor mantle –

When Uncle returned he brought me a beautiful tortoise-shell comb & Custis a p[ai]r of gilded uniform spurs & each of us, three apples, for New Years.

[Monday] Jan 8. Dear Custis has finally conclude[d] to remove his Quarters from his quiet home, to Washington. Duty calls him there, so, I have naught to say, but, sadly will we miss him & with what glad hearts will Uncle & I hail his return to us, each Saturday evening.

This was the day appointed, for the meeting of the old Soldiers of 1812 in Washington. I put new broad ruffles on Uncle's shirt, for the occasion & had it nicely done up & plaited in Georgetown. Custis & I, lui mettre en grande toilette¹ & about 9 o'clock this morning they bade me good bye. Uncle brought out his old epaulette & proposed wearing it. He however, concluded to take it in his pocket & be decided by the oppinion of others after he got to the place of meeting. I regarded this relic with deep interest & he spoke of it with emotion & a patriotic pride. The epaulette wh[ich] he received under Gen Washington & wore for the first time at Harpers F[erry]² and bears but a poor comparison to the present Army Epaulettes even, of a second Lieutenant – Custis remarked that even though his were much more grand & stylish. Yesterday, I

¹ “All decked out” or, more literally, “in full dress.” Markie's French grammar is slightly incorrect.

² G.W.P. Custis was assigned to Harpers Ferry for three months in 1798-1799.

accidentally found my beloved french grammar, wh[ich] was so dilligently searched for by Cousin Robert Lee & myself. Uncle did not return, till ½ past ten o'clock – I have had a lonely day & eve. At the hour of twilight, particularly, I missed my dear Pettie, whose wont was to cheer me, then, or sympathise in whatever mood I happened to be in.

He is so domestic in his feelings, so attached to home & so averse to society, that, I fear will not at first be quite happy in his boarding House in Washington.

I pray that God will preserve him from the temptations, into which those around him will be led. His moral courage, has always struck me as a remarkable characteristic; but, my observation, as well as experience, teaches me, that this, however strong, may yield to the power of satan over the frailties of human nature. Oh! the grace of God, which is strong to save, possess his heart.

[Tuesday] Jan 9. Uncle was not well after the dissipations of yesterday, but, roused up this evening as we sat by the cheerful firelight & told me tales of revolutionary days – He said the story of Capt. Molly wh[ich] he so often graphically relates, as he calls the attention of visitors to her fac-simile, as portrayed in his Battle of Monmouth,³ was told him by a man by the name of Thompson from Philadelphia who heard it direct from an artilleryman in Gen Proctor's⁴ corps, who was an eye witness of her heroic deeds at Monmouth. He said she always wore an artillery coat, cocked hat & petticoat. Gen Green presented her to the Commander in chief the morning after the Battle, all covered with powder just as she had come out of action. Uncle says "old Aunt Elsee"⁵ a servant of Grandmama Washington's says, she often came into camp – that she was a neat looking woman, with red hair – a white skin, but, a very freckled face & the General commanded, that she should always be well treated.

[Thursday] Jan 11

I asked Uncle this evening why this Place was called Arlington. He said he named it so, after the Old Homestead of his ancestors, on the eastern shore of Virginia. They ~~doubtless~~ brought the name from England where there is a village of that name – ~~called~~ near the estate of the Earl of Arlington, whose family name was Bennet⁶ – but, whether the Earl was an ancestor of Mr John Custis his Grandfather, who lived at Old Arlington, or not, he does not know, as there is no ~~record~~ family record of the fact.

This, has been a dreary, gloomy day & I have missed more than the three preceeding, my dear Cousin, who has so long cheered our solitude. He, doubtless, feels the change less, & will soon learn to prefer the cheerful scenes of a city, to his quiet country home [*words scratched out*]

³ G. W. P. Custis's painting of the Battle of Monmouth is currently on display in Arlington House's Morning Room. In it, Molly Pitcher can be seen loading a cannon.

⁴ Thomas Proctor (1739-1806)

⁵ This might be Elizabeth Thompson, an Irish woman who worked as Washington's housekeeper during the American Revolution. She was in her seventies at that time

⁶ Henry Bennet, 1st Earl of Arlington (1618-1685).

Wrote to dear Lolo & precious Orton to-day. Lo's last letter is written from the Carabian sea & he expects to Land at Greytown⁷ en route to San Francisco. How are those we love, scattered from our midst!

Dear Uncle has been in wretched spirits to day – as is his wont sometimes, he sat down on the floor by the parlor fire & as I sat in his corner chair, leaned his head upon my knee, while I passing my hand gently over his venerable head, endeavored to sooth his sorrow.

Saturday Jan 14 13. After a ~~visit~~ of week of solitude, we were cheered this evening by a visit from our dear Custis. I walked long on the Portico, to be ready to welcome him, but, at last, becoming very tired, took my seat on the door sill to wait – Soon, I espied his manly form appearing above that little eastern Hill quickly he hastened toward ~~with~~ me, & we looked mutually pleased to see each other.

Sunday – [January] 14. Custis & myself went to Alexandria to Church – & heard very unexpectedly, a delightful sermon, from Bishop Johns from the Text “I have fought a good fight.”⁸ My attention was enchained though the whole service. It was an eloquent appeal to the Christian. Oh! that I may keep it ever in mind & try to obtain grace so to live – I was truly gratified to find, that Custis was much pleased & I hope edified by the sermon.

Monday [Jan.] 15. “Pettie” has gone back to his duties in Washington this morning & it will perhaps be a whole week before we see him. My old friends, Thayer Abert & Capt. Walker called to-day. Two years since I saw the former!

“How calmly we met” after so long an absence — nevertheless many a time during our converse, did his moisoned [moistened] eye, & my sad mein denote that our thoughts reverted to the past.

Dear Aunt Custis was then alive & so was my precious Grandmother –

Times changes! Oh times changes! –

Tuesday [January] 16. Uncle received a letter from Mr Jared Sparks the Historian⁹ today, inquiring the origin of the blue & Buff uniform worn by our revolutionary officers – Uncle says, they were adopted by Washington, because they were the Whig colors of England – the distinctive badge, of the Liberty party, in all popular elections. Its first appearance, was, in - Alexandria, Fairfax County Virginia as worn by a company of Patriots – these, were among the

⁷ Greytown, Nicaragua, a port on the country's Caribbean coast. Before the creation of the Panama Canal, travelers bound for the west coast of North America would land here, cross Nicaragua, and then resume their voyage northward from San Juan del Sur on the Pacific side.

⁸ 2 Timothy 4:7-8

⁹ Jared Sparks (1789-1866) was a Unitarian minister and President of Harvard from 1849 to 1853. In 1853 he published the four-volume *Correspondence of the American Revolution; being Letters of Eminent Men to George Washington, from the Time of his taking Command of the Army to the End of his Presidency*. Jared sparks sent the letter Markie mentioned on January 11, 1855, from Cambridge, Mass. It is in Tudor Place Archive, MS-5, Custis-Lee Family Papers.

élite of the country – renowned for valor, intelligence & worth. The company, was commanded by Col George Washington as Capt, Lieut John Fitzgerald.¹⁰ This was at the time of the troubles with Lord Dunmore in the year 1798.¹¹

Upon Washington's leaving the command of this company they were merged in the Continental Army on the arrival of Gen Washington at Cambridge in 1775 he adopted these colors as his staff uniform, & he never wore any other. Uncle mentioned this evening, that Gen Pinkney¹² had sent the Gen a splendid bunch of Heron feathers to wear in his Chapeau but he never wore them – Gen Hamilton, at one time, proposed an alteration of the uniform – proposed one, very much embroidered with gold lace – but, it was not accepted, the chief not considering such vanities consistent with our Republican simplicity[.]

Uncle was speaking this evening as he often does, with great affection of his grandson Custis & I was much struck with his manner & words.

He said he thought Custis was very serious & that he had a decidedly religious turn of mind – a very rare quality he observed in one so young & just out of a military academy too. “And, I hope he may become religious Markie, he ~~observed~~, remarked, for I am very well aware, that, it is, the only thing which can give him any true happiness, in this world.

He then said “the dear Boy is very sincere, – you see, he does these things entirely of his own accord” (I presume he alluded to his responding in Church – repeating the “Amen” at morning & evening prayers & complying always so willing to my request to read a sermon on Sunday evening – particularly, the evening his young class-mate, Mr Abbott, was here. This showed so much respect for the subject & so much moral courage – All these budding indications of piety, have not been unnoticed by me, but, on the contrary, treasured in my heart, with a holy hope, that his dear lips, may be early dedicated to my God – The Sea of Life, is off times stormy & with out such a Pilot to guide our Barque Alas! How surely, shall we be wrecked & perish hopelessly.

[Thursday] Jan 18. To-day, Uncle wrote a long & most interesting letter to Mr Sparks in answer to his – He gave it to me to read, envelope & seal (as he says he D does not understand these new fashioned ideas of envelopes.)

Uncle spoke ~~for~~ of Mr Sparks with a most affectionate regard & often wishes he would come & make us a visit.

While enjoying the long twilight this eve, I conversed with Uncle about “the times, that tried mens' souls.”¹³ He seemed inclined to doze, but, ~~as soon~~ as soon as that soul stiffing topic, was broached, he was aroused, sat erect in his chair & talked most eloquently. His uniform in 98, he said, was green & Buff – a [*word scratched out*] Hat with white plume & a leopard skin binding around it. Gen W— commanded the Army then from Mount Vernon – John Adams was

¹⁰ John Fitzgerald (?-1799) was an Irish-born merchant who lived in Alexandria beginning in 1773. He fought in numerous battles until he was wounded at the battle of Monmouth. When the British threatened Alexandria in 1781, he assembled a defensive force composed of the city's inhabitants.

¹¹ Virginia's relations with its final colonial governor, John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, began to deteriorate in 1774.

¹² Thomas Pinckney (1750-1828). He was commissioned as a major general in the War of 1812.

¹³ A quote from Thomas Paine's *The American Crisis*, no. I (1776).

President. Gen Washington was entitled to four aids & two secretaries, but one of the latter, was all he had at Mount Vernon.

[Friday] Jan 27 26. ~~Uncle was speaking to day of Whitfield~~ “Selina,” the Countess of Huntingdon so celebrated for her goodness, was a distant relative of Gen Washington. [*The next nine lines are scratched through. The few visible words reveal that the content is identical to the paragraph that follows, only slightly reworded.*]

The Countess of Huntingdon, sent her portrait, very finely engraved, to Gen. Washington accompanied by a letter. This portrait always hung in Grandmama Washington’s chamber at Mount Vernon. Uncle Custis brought it from Mt. Vernon to Arlington where for many years it hung[.]

The Countess of Huntingdon was the great patroness of Whitefield & Wesley.

In speaking of Gen Lafayette this evening, Uncle told me, that the U States had given him \$200,000 in money & 2,600 acres of Land in Florida near Talahassee¹⁴ (that being the most valuable). Uncle speaks with vivid recollection, of going with [*word scratched out*] George Lafayette to the Treasury Department to receive the money & his joy as he returned to the carriage, he says he shall never forget. Monseur Le Vaisseau¹⁵ accompanied them. Uncle says, M. George Lafayette at that time owed \$80 which he immediately paid. This seems a liberal compensation from our government but, not more so, than the services of so great a man deserve.

February 1855

[Friday] Feb 9—1855

I am sad this evening & physically unwell too, ~~but~~ and the weather is so intensely cold, that I am really indisposed to do anything, but, try to keep warm – and yet, it seems almost wrong to sit close to the large blazing fire & think of oneself, when there are in the world so many wretched beings in the depths of misery & suffering. Alas! For the poor Army in the Crimea!!! My heart bleeds to hear of their woes.

To-day, I’ve been reading Sparks’ Life of Washington.¹⁶ Uncle went to the city & on his return, brought me a paper of oranges, saying that he “never forgets Markie.” This evening Rooney¹⁷ having gone to see the President about ~~his~~ getting an appointment at West Point, Uncle & myself are again quite alone. He (Uncle) has just finished ~~his sp~~ writing out for publication, the speech he made to the old soldiers on the 8th of January. ~~This sub~~ He read it aloud to me & I admired it

¹⁴ Custis has the value of the land and its location correct. However, the size of the grant was significantly larger – 23,000 acres. Lafayette never visited Florida and soon sold it to other buyers.

¹⁵ Auguste Levasseur accompanied Lafayette during his tour of the United States in 1824-25. He published a book about their voyage called *Lafayette in America* in 1829. The first chapter of the second volume briefly mentions their visit to Arlington House.

¹⁶ *The Life of George Washington* (1839) by Jared Sparks. G.W.P. Custis provided much of the information for his book.

¹⁷ William Henry Fitzhugh Lee (1837-1891), known as “Rooney” to the family. He did not attend West Point but instead attended 1854-1857, leaving without his diploma to join the U.S. Army.

much. The subject of the speech suggested his Play called the 8th of Jan & he repeated several verses contained in that, to me. He said, this Play was ~~written~~ read to Gen Jackson by Cousin Francis Butler¹⁸ & he wrote the Gen a note inviting him to go & see it acted, but, the Gen he said, had become quite religious about that time & sent him a very polite answer, saying that he highly appreciated the compliment &c but, did not attend the Theatre.

What a noble step for a President to take, in behalf of a good cause.

[Tuesday] Feb 13 — I have been overjoyed this evening, to see in “the Sun”¹⁹ the arrival at New York of the “U.S. Ship Supply.” Grateful indeed, am I, for dear Harrie’s return & for my poor Sister’s return of happiness. Another article from the London Times, describes in heart-rending language the sufferings of the British Troops in the Crimea and all it appears owing to mismanagement and reckless conduct, of the “Higher Powers.”²⁰

So, do monarchical governments, trample down the rights of their fellow men. How does this contrast with the humanity of our own government from its primeval date, in times of war. My Cousin Rooney, returned to Cambridge to-day or rather sat [set] out on his journey there. Dear Custis, left us as usual.

I continue to read with rapture, “Sparks “Life of Washington” and of course, feel more interested than ever, in all that relates to him. Uncle’s “recollections” therefore, as we sit by the twilight fire, have evening after evening, increasing interest for me. Speaking of Washington being a man of strong passions he said that he had never seen him under the influence of intense & incontrollable passion, but once. This was while he was President in Philadelphia – they had a French waiter named, or by them called “French John”. It was his business to attend the Parlor Bell, the instant it was rung. On this occasion, Gen Washington rung the bell, but, there was no response. He rung it a second time, and the ~~Stewart came~~ Steward came – He asked for John & the Steward said he would send him. Presently John made his appearance staggering into the room, in a state of intoxication. Gen W– arose, grasped him in his arms, as he would have done an infant (although, he was a man of about 200 pounds weight) & with tremendous force, flung him out the door – He then called for some one to take that drunken fellow out & told the Steward to discharge him the next morning. Such was his abhorrence of Drunkenness. He never gave whisky or Brandy to his servants, but, ~~gave~~ allowed them a certain quantity of Beer, wh[ich] Uncle mentioned, as a great piece of liberality & a thing which was not generally done by masters in those days.

While this instance, of the Gen’s violent outburst of passion, is the only one which came under Uncle’s personal observation, he says, he has from the lips of Major Jackson & several other officers, who were eye witnesses of the fact, that upon the occasion of our army retreating

¹⁸ No male relative named “Francis Butler” appears in Markie’s family tree. There is only Frances Parke Lewis Butler, one of G.W.P. Custis’s nieces. However, her husband, Edward George Washington Butler, corresponded with President Andrew Jackson

¹⁹ The *Baltimore Sun*, Tuesday, February 13, 1855, reported, “New York, Feb. 12 – The store-ship Supply, A. Sinclair, Lieutenant, commanding, arrived here to-day from Samodi, Japan. Officers and crew all well.”

²⁰ The front page of that same issue of the *Baltimore Sun* also printed an article from the January 25 issue of the *London Times* titled “Horrible Condition of the English Army.” It blamed Lord Raglan and his staff for the bad condition of the army during the Siege of Sebastopol.

before an inferior force at Kips' Bay,²¹ Gen Washington was so enraged at their cowardice, that he leaped from his horse, – threw his hat on the ground & stamped on it – then, hoping to animate the soldiers to courage, he rushed forward in front of them all, exposing him-self to the fire of the enemy.

This fact, Uncle says, is not on record – but, is the only authentic traditionary account, within his knowledge on this subject.

It does not seem remarkable that a man of Washington's mental & physical strength, should have possessed strong passions ~~and~~ The most remarkable fact is, that, he should so seldom have displayed them. It is a true axiom, that the strong can illy bear, with, the infirmities of the weak. What trials, he must have gone through in this respect, when you consider the measure of his mind in comparison with a multitude with whom he had to do.

[Wednesday] Feb 14.

I have just received a note from Kate telling me of Harrie's arrival[.]

A weight of anxiety is off my heart & my prayers, in gratitude ascend to God.

This evening, Uncle has been breathing out memories of the olden time, as is his wont. He says Gen — never was seen walking out (unless it was occasionally, two squares off, to the watchmaker's) ~~except on Saturdays~~ That he never left his study (while in Philadelphia) except on saturday & sunday – On Saturday, he sometimes ~~rode~~ rode on his white charger, with one servant to attend him, out in the country and some times he rode with the rest of his family, in his state coach & six horses.

The Gen's study he discribes as down a steep p[ai]r of stairs – a door opening on the stair case. Here, he says, he was immersed, from morning till night – only with his family during meal time & then, remarkably taciturn. He always ate corn bread for breakfast or a hoe-cake, such as they have at Tudor Place and never took cream in his Tea (this is a circumstance, often told me, by dearest Grandmother). Every little incident with regard to so great a man is to be treasured.

Dear Uncle Custis, with his highly wrought imagination & love for the marvelous is anticipating a tremendous freshet, the result of wh[ich], is to be known to-morrow morning. He says he will get up at day break to look at the Bridge – The deep snow & succeeding rains, with the ice in the river he says must produce some dreadful disaster.

I could not help smiling at the earnestness with which he depicted Georgetown laid waste, by the awful element. "The Ware Houses" he says "on the warf, will all be thrown down like a pack of cards, by an immense embankment of ice, half the size of this house that the inhabitants will be navigating the streets in boats and that the Long Bridge will be entirely carried off."

The energy & confidence with which Uncle dwells on these horrors would induce considerable alarm, did I not know that last winter, he anticipated the same event in vain. Dear Uncle was telling me this eve, as he often does about his wakefulness – Said he, "I did not feel sleepy when I went to bed; but, I blew out the candle & said my prayers & turned over & tried to

²¹ A force of 4,000 British soldiers landed unopposed at Kip's Bay, NY on September 15, 1776. Nearly four-fifths of the 500 Americans defending the position were killed or captured.

go to sleep.” It does my heart good to record this expression “and said my prayers.” – for, it is a comfort to to [*sic*] know that he does pray in private[.] He laid no emphasis on this allusion but, seemed to say it as a matter of course. I think he often enters into the spirit of ~~pr~~ family prayers especially when we are here, by ourselves. Custis Lee is almost his idol now and when he is not here, I come in for a great share of petting.

Nevertheless, my Cousin dear, you are too much a pet of mine, for me to wish your absence on this account.

[Thursday] Feb 22 – This day, I have spent, in the most patriotic occupation of reading the Life of our great Pater Patriae and in doing a little kindly office for my Cousin. Uncle (by special invitation) went to Alexandria being, by appointment, met at the Toll Gate, by twenty marshalls on horse-back, as an escort.

He says he passed a delightful day – made a speech at the Lycium²² with a few remarks at the Table as a response to the ~~many~~ toasts, wh[ich] was tendered him.

Uncle seemed unwell & dreadfully dispirited this morning & I feared would not have a pleasant day, but, every thing seems to have gone off, very much to his satisfaction. He spoke particularly of having an agreeable interview, at the Dinner Table, with our ex-minister to France, Mr Reeves.²³ I was all alone at the Tea-Table, when Uncle came & knocked at the window, to let him in. He greeted me as usual with an affectionate embrace & “Well, my Markie, I hastened home as soon as I could on y[ou]r account, though I told them all, you were a good soldier and not afraid to be by yourself night or day.” He said he did not care for Tea, so, we sat down by a large blazing fire and he recounted all that had occurred. He spoke with extreme disgust, of a little scene of inebriety, wh[ich] took place at the table and said such things had always been inexpressibly disgusting to him. He said he had taken about a half glass of champaign in water and a glass & a half of wine. Uncle said he w[oul]d like me to have been present at the Lycium but, that he did not take me because of the disagreeable time I should have in riding home at night. He then said, “but, we must try & make some arrangements Markie for you to go to ~~my~~ the Smithsonian with me, on Wednesday, when I deliver my Lecture before the Agricultural Meeting. I felt very much gratified by hearing dear Uncle express this wish for me to go with him; for I have had a great desire to do so; but, hesitated to speak of it, lest it should be inconvenient or otherwise, not agreeable.

I shall, however, make arrangements with Custis Lee, who with all kindness, will I know, do everything for the accomplishment of my wishes.

I heard to day, for the first time, that the Engraving & Key to it, over the dining-room mantlepiece, was sent from England by Copely,²⁴ the Painter as a present to Gen Washington.

²² The Lyceum in Alexandria

²³ William Cabell Rives (1793-1868), U.S. Minister to France 1849-1853. Born in Albemarle County, Va, he attended William & Mary, studied law under Thomas Jefferson, and later served in both the U.S. and Confederate congresses.

²⁴ John Singleton Copley (1738-1815), a British-American painter

[Friday] Feb 23 — To-day, we had a visit from Mr & Mrs Henry Seymour of Hartford Con. Friends of Mrs L.H. Sigourney,²⁵ bringing a letter of introduction from that gifted authoress, with her last work (Past Meridian) to my dear Uncle.

It was only last night, that we were speaking of this estimable Lady & Uncle was saying how happy he would be if we could have a visit from here, here in our quiet way – and said he had always intended giving some Mt. Vernon relic to Mrs S — he thought it would be a spoon, with the coat-of-arms on it.

I treated Mrs S — friends, with every kind consideration, for I remembered what a favorite she was with my precious Aunt Custis – how often & with what pathos, she would say “Sweet Mrs Sigourney!!!” By Miss Seymour (the beautiful daughter of Mrs S I ~~brought~~ sent to Mrs Sigourney a beautiful Sprig of the Norway Fir which I know she will appreciate.

Feb 26, Monday

My dear Pet Cousin, came over on saturday afternoon, as usual, glad[e]ning our hearts by his arrival; but, he does not seem well and occasionally wears a shadow on his brow. Next Saturday & sunday, he thinks, will be the last he will spend with us, for a long time —. I know he will feel sad at leaving this home of his early youth but, we will feel more so, when he has gone. Yesterday, I fully anticipated the pleasure of going to Church & had made every preparation to do so; but, “Pettie” did not seem well and said he should not be well enough, to go to Church – Uncle thought it would hardly be worth while for me to go without him, so, I resigned myself to my fate & remained at home, hoping to employ my time profitably[.] I read for some time, then joined Custis in a walk on the Portico where the bright sun and balmy air & occasional shot of a gunner, induced us to talk of Trees & Flowers & Spring Birds. — Next to speaking of God & Heaving, is conversing of his manifold works of Nature. I always feel elevated by the contemplation of Nature.

When we came in, Uncle proposed that we “should have some little religious service” It was with unspeakable delight, that I complied with this request and taking the Prayer Book – I selected such portions as I thought appropriate & proper for the occasion. Uncle remarked that he always liked some service on Sunday, thought he did not go to Church – It had always been the habit in this House, & he wished it always to continue. “It was right & proper, he said and if it could do no good, it could certainly do no harm.”

This last expression rather pained me, because ~~it should~~ it seemed like indifference, but, I trust, that the prayers of the faithful who have passed away as well as those who remain will avail with God & he will, before he is called hence become a Christian.

I was struck with a remark he made the other day, with regard to a gentleman who could not be persuaded to turn his mind to the subject of religion – Indeed, said he it is a pitiable case – it seems incomprehensible at his age – just on the brink of the grave; – little religion, as I have, I would be sorry not to have any.”

²⁵ Lydia Sigourney’s two friends were likely former-Governor Thomas Henry Seymour (1807-1868) of Connecticut and his wife.

After dinner, Uncle & myself walked out to the School House & heard a very good discourse from a Mr Potter²⁶ a son of Bishop Potter of Pen— A very gentlemanly looking man & discourses very well – remarkably so, for a Theological Student.

[Tuesday] Feb 27

Recording as I am all that is remarkable, in the daily life & conversation of my dear Uncle Custis, whose talents & virtues & social position, are so distinguished in the world, I must not omit to note a striking characteristic –

Upon my return to Arlington a week or two since upon Uncle & myself entering the parlor (for he went over to Washington for me.) I saw upon the centre table a large collection of little bundles of business papers, with loose bills &c scattered all about them. What is all this, said I, Uncle?

“Oh! those my dear, he replied, are some very valuable papers – exceedingly valuable. I had a visit the other day, from Mr Nelson,²⁷ from my lower estates & these are the papers he brought me.” There they had been laying for several days – two, at least.

If they are so valuable, I said, Uncle, had you not better put them away – “Yes, my dear, he said I wish you would take them up in your room & keep them for me – I am going to send them to Robert Lee.”

This utter carelessness of business matters, was so perfectly characteristic.

Hereafter, when dear Uncle shall have passed away from our midst, as in the course of nature he must do – tho’ even the thought of so sad an event brings a tear – with what pleasure, shall those of his nearest relatives who remain, peruse these little portraitures wh[ich] bring his life-like image before them.

March 1855

~~Feb 29~~. [Thursday] March 1.

Yesterday, 28th of February, dear Uncle Custis, delivered a speech before the Agricultural society, at the Smithsonian Institute – by special invitation from Professor Henry²⁸ (the Principle of the Institute) and Col. Wilder,²⁹ of Boston President of the Society.

Although my heart ~~is~~ was too sad, to enjoy very much, the idea of being present at a crowded assembly, I accepted with a feeling of pleasure, dear Uncle’s invitation to accompany him. As a general thing, he prefers going alone, to such places and has never, on any previous occasion, expressed a desire for my company – therefore, I felt it to be more complimentary, on this account.

²⁶ Henry C. Potter (1834-1908) was at the Virginia Theological Seminary from 1854-57. The son of Aldonzo Potter, Bishop of Pennsylvania, he eventually became Bishop of New York.

²⁷ Francis Nelson, manager of White House plantation in New Kent County.

²⁸ Joseph Henry (1797-1878) served as the Smithsonian’s first secretary from 1846 to 1878.

²⁹ Marshall Pinckney Wilder (1798-1886), President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society 1841-1848.

The ruffled shirt, which, on such occasions, ~~I always crimp~~ is always worn, I crimped the night before and all other little matters of dress, were at the same time arranged, so, that he came out in the morning all ready for departure. He complained of being very unwell and in wretched spirits – both, I attributed it to the anxiety of mind, he had experienced for two or three days, in contemplation of this event. He appears so seldom in Public, that it is naturel, that it should produce this species of nervous excitement, which, I know, would wear off, as the day advanced. Leaving Uncle at the Smithsonian, I went to call on my friends, the Aberts & to leave a note, for Custis, making arrangements for our meeting & going together, to the Smithsonian. I then called at Mrs Tayloe's – dined at the Aberts' and after diner, went with Thayer, to Church at St. Johns'. (this, was an unexpected pleasure.)

From thence, we walked to Mrs Thornton's Dear Mrs Thornton, I feel towards here as a very near relative, from the intimacy which has always existed, between my dear Grandmama & herself. I yielded to her persuasions to go down to Tea & scarcely had we reached her room on our return, when Custis was announced. After sitting a few minutes, I made ready to depart, and we wended our way, by the light of a clear and beautiful moon, to our place of destination – thinking it very bad taste to ride, when the evening was so delightful for a walk.

The Lecture Room, was handsomely lit, with gas – & there were already, an audience present – Custis & myself however, obtained agreeable seats. After a few minutes, Dr. La Fontaine Lippit³⁰ came up & took the seat on my other side.

It was about a quarter of eight, I think when, Uncle Custis & Col Wilder, made their appearance on the Rostrum. At that moment, there was a reillumination [*words scratched out*] & the Band struck up “Hail Columbia.”

The Music (for my heart is always “moved by the concord of sweet sounds”) inspired a most lovely sensation of Patriotism. Dear Uncle, looked so well, so venerable, so like a gentleman of the olden time, as he sat back in his ~~arm chair~~ high back chair. I wish all who love him, had seen him as we did then. If it is right, to feel proud of those we love, I felt proud of him at that moment.

My dear, sweet “Pettie,” looked as modest, and unpretending, as if it was not his Grandpapa – I felt like giving him a shaking. The day will come, when he & I too, will appreciate more, than we now do, his honored grand-sire.

The music ended, the venerable & gentlemanly, Col Wilder, advanced & introduced, “George Washington Park Custis, the adopted son of Washington & the Farmer of Arlington (in allusion to the agricultural Meeting). Uncle then advanced & ~~making a~~ putting on his hat, took it off, with a most profound bow, wh[ich] elicited great applause & then, commenced his address.

He said, he was no Lecturer — he had consumed no midnight oil, in the research of science &c &c &c — he thanked those who had ~~come~~ done him the honor, to come, to hear “an Old Man's Tale.”

But, one theme, engrossed his mind and that, was the character of Washington. He told many anicdotes (wh[ich] to Custis [&] myself, were quite familiar) ~~which~~ about the General, in his domestic, civil & military character & then as a Farmer.

³⁰ Dr. William Fontaine Lippitt (1831-1902)

At the conclusion he begged leave to repeat an ode, composed by himself, on the centennial anniversary of the Gen's birth[.] This elicited great applause – Uncle then made his bow & thanked the audience upon wh[ich] after more applause, the Band struck up “the Star Spangled Banner.” “Pettie” laughed, at my enthusiastic Patriotism and asked me why I did not show it more – I said I am trying to look it. He smilingly reminded me; that these were the same eyes that looked “Perry” “Bread & Butter” &c &c at the Breakfast-Table & said quistically, “& now looking Patriotism.” A crowd of people went up on the ~~stage~~ rostrum, to shake hands with the “Old Orator” and it was fully a half hour before he was released. During this time Custis Dr. Lippit & myself remained below in agreeable conversation. I have rarely met with a very young gentleman, with such very prepossessing manners.

When Uncle was finally done we joined him & were conducted by the janitor with a lantern to Professor Henry's Private room. The Professor insisted on our entering & Mr Randolph & himself, entertained me very agreeably while there & the Professor asked me to come to the Fair, saying he would be most happy to go with me & show me everything interesting &c &c – At length we got away. The night was lovely & Uncle filled with patriotic feelings, repeated to-me “the Ode.” We arrived-at Arlington after ten – had a rehearsal of the day – our Tea – then I read in the Bible to Uncle, had Prayers as usual and retired at 12 o'clock to my room.

[*Note: the March 11, 1855 entry of Agnes Lee's diary records was in Atlanta “looking for a lost trunk.” Markie's journal ends without detailing that trip. See Mary Custis Lee deButts, ed., Growing Up in the 1850s: The Journal of Agnes Lee (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 48]*

1856

March 1856

[Sunday] March 2nd [1856]

Uncle took me over to the Capitol to see De Soto (Powell's picture)¹ & also to the Smithsonian –

[Thursday] March 6 –

My darling Pet² left us to-day – with a sad heart.

[Friday] March 7 – W.H. Wilson³ an English Artist, in company with an amateur musician, have just made us a visit of a few hours – The former, Mr Wilson has made a pen-drawing of Sharpless' Head of Washington & received by Uncle's signature a certificate of its truthfulness. I stood by the Artist most of the time, and gained from him as many ideas as I could – He seemed very generous in giving me instruction & entirely willing & anxious for me to express my opinion of the likeness as he went on – indeed, at my suggestion, he made several little alterations. He had altogether the air & manner of the Englishman but, I think he had not been long in ~~this~~ England.

He was very solicitous to see my drawings[.] I thought they were not worth showing, but, he insisted on seeing them if I did not particularly object. I at last consented & brought down my port-folio & was much encouraged by his comments – He took a peice of paper & gave me some instruction in shading, which I shall endeavor to imitate. Uncle was most of the time out of the room, but when he came in he praised his efforts & told many old anecdotes of Stuart, Trumbull, Sir [blank] Laurence, Sir Joshua Reynolds &c &c—

Said that Stuart told him in his Studio in Philadelphia, that he painted for posterity & consequently made Gen Washington's eyes deeper than they were in reality – They were of a greyish blue –

Uncle Pointed to Houdons Bust, & said that it always hung in the Gen's Library at Mt Vernon – just over his head where he sat. it is now, in the original frame in wh[ich] it came from France –

Uncle said that he had a suit of blue & buff like Gen W's when he was a little boy in N Y – & with the son of Hamilton, Knox, Clinton &c – were formed in a company & marched in the Procession on the 4th of July 17 [blank]

Arlington House [Saturday] March 22, 1856

¹ "Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto" (1855), one of four painting in the Capitol rotunda by William Henry Powell

² Custis Lee

³ Likely Matthew Henry Wilson (1814-1892), a London-born artist who relocated to America in 1832. He eventually started a studio in Washington, DC and painted several members of the Lincoln cabinet. His 1865 portrait of Abraham Lincoln might be the last painting of the president created while he was alive.

~~I have seen~~ I have just been enjoying a long and delightful twilight, listening to my dear Uncle's graphic & soul inspiring tales of by gone days. Cousin Mary was slumbering on the sofa & Millie seated quietly at the window. Seeing Uncle light his segar, I was about retiring to commit to memory in my own room, some pretty lines by my friend Mr Janvier;⁴ but, Uncle arrested my attention in his wonted affectionate tone, by saying "Ah! my Markie I have not the same good opinion of French men that you have." ~~I smiled & said Why not Uncle Oh! replied he Markie you must~~ The modern french I mean." – You ought to read Gibbon's Rome,⁵ he said, taking it up from the table beside him – it is so forcably written – I am very much interested in it – so much deep research. I am getting quite out of conceit of Napoleon, after reading the achievements of Augustus Ceazar [Caesar] – From one thing to another he touched upon Lafayette. This always seemed an electrical subject with my Uncle. I saw that I might as well sit down ~~and I saw felt that~~ felt myself quite enchained by the increasing interest of his conversation and drew a chair up & took a my seat by him in an attitude of deep attention. This seemed to increase his enthusiasm and I can but very faintly portray what followed – Lest I should entirely forget however, I will not down at least some data wh[ich] I may hereafter fill up.

Gen Lafayettes last visit to America was in the year 1824 – Monroe President – He landed at New York – in the vessel Cadmus Capt Allen⁶ Capt & came to this House & told Uncle that Gen L– was inquiring about how he should get a ~~hack wh[ich]~~ carriage when he got to America – that he ~~he~~ could not ride on horseback (in consequence of a fall in Paris) as he did when he was here before – Oh! General said the Capt, I suspect our people will find you a carriage. What was his inexpressible delight to find that the whole city turned out to meet him with aclamations of ~~deli~~ rejoicing & a state carriage was in attendance accompanied by a procession. John Q Adams was elected President while he was here – Uncle dined with him three times at the Presidential Mansion - Dear Grandmother gave him a grand entertainment & illumination at Tudor Place when she heard the day he was to be there Uncle conducted his son & himself there. The next day, he had a Review at the Navy Yard & dined at the Presidents. Uncle was there[.] That eve he had appointed to visit Arlington but, his appearing so tired Uncle urged him not to come – He said it was a duty he could not waive. He must go to pay his respects to every member of the General's family.

Two carriages accompanied ~~the one with the Gen & Uncle~~ Uncle's. George Lafayette & Lavaisseau, the Gen's secretary were of the party. Arlington was illuminated by 600 lights and they were conducted from Guy Henry's by twelve Negroes with blazing cedar branches for torches. This was an original idea with Uncle. The Gen was so wearied he took but a sip of coffee – Though a grand collation was prepared. Gen Macomb⁷ & Commander in chief of the Army & other distinguished guests were here to meet them. Uncle returned with the Gen to his lodgings.

⁴ Likely Francis De Haes Janvier (1817-1885). Although Markie never gave his first name, references to his friends in Markie's Arlington diaries and those at Tudor Place suggest this identification. Janvier was a Philadelphia businessman and poet who spent some time in Washington, D.C.

⁵ *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon

⁶ Captain Francis Allyn (1791-1862) took Lafayette from France aboard the merchant ship *Cadmus* in 1824.

⁷ Alexander Macomb (1782-1841), Commanding General of the United States Army 1828-1841. He did not occupy this position when Lafayette arrived.

The Gen left Washington in the Brandywine, a U S vessel under Com Morris.⁸ Uncle went down to the vessel with him & bade him à dieu, then, accompanied him in a Steamer to the mouth of the Potomac – Talk as they will of omens said dear Uncle much affected by all he had been saying, but, some beautiful things happened about that time[.] When we got near the mouth of the Potomac within a few miles I was summoned on Deck by Mr Southard⁹ (secretary of the Navy) to see “the most beautiful sight (as he said) you ever beheld.” An exquisit rain bow spanned the river from the Virginian to the Maryland shore & the Ship passed beneath it.

I saw the touching simile – It was indeed, beautiful & appropriate. Uncle said so often that the Gen’s heart overflowed with gratitude – that he had no utterance. If earthly Honors affected him so much how must he have been overpowered with this beautiful emblem of celestial promise. I might have paused to hear more, for I never heard dear Uncle in a more interesting mood, but, I have stolen away that I might record what I have written before it escaped my memory and I am writing with rail-road speed.

The Gen went to see Mrs Hamilton the very evening he arrived in New York from the Cadmus. He went with Mr Fish¹⁰ & others –

In Baltimore \$3000. Were subscribed for his entertainment there & he had scarcely a minute to call his own wherever he went. Napoleon was the enemy of Lafayette. He released him from the dungeon in Olmutz because he was a Frenchman at the time of the Treaty of Tilsit.¹¹

Martha Custis Williams

[A piece of paper in Markie’s handwriting was inserted in this part of the diary]

Les charmes de cette follie que la jeunesse appelle amour¹²

“Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mer courant.”

“They change their skies but, not their souls, who cross the Sea”

Arlington [Tuesday] March 25 1856

This evening, I enjoyed another twylite sitting with my dear Uncle Custis beside the parlor fire – My observing that Dr Willing of Philadelphia & his wife were coming over to see him, lead him to speak of Mr Thomas Willing of Philadelphia,¹³ whom he said was in the times

⁸ Commodore Charles Morris (1784-1856). He had served as executive officer aboard the *U.S.S. Constitution* during the War of 1812 and later commanded a voyage to improve diplomacy with South American countries in 1820. The frigate which returned Lafayette to France, *U.S.S. Brandywine*, had been specially named after the Revolutionary War battle in which the general was wounded.

⁹ Samuel L. Southard (1787-1842), Secretary of the Navy from 1823 until 1829.

¹⁰ Nicholas Fish (1758-1833), father of Hamilton Fish, had fought at the Battle of Yorktown.

¹¹ The Austrians captured Lafayette in 1792 after he tried to escape the Reign of Terror by fleeing to the Austrian Netherlands. They imprisoned him in the fortress of Olmütz, Moravia. Napoleon secured his release in 1797 following the treaty of Campo Formio.

¹² “The charms of that folly which youth calls love.”

¹³ Thomas Willing (1731-1821) was President of the First Bank of the United States and a former mayor of Philadelphia.

of Independence, branded as a Tory because he did not vote for Independence. He was a member of the state Legislature – the two or three times appeared before its sessions to know if it was the voice of the body that he should represent them as voting for the Declaration of Independence –

There was not a voice in reply & saying that he felt himself the Representative of a body, he did not feel himself justifiable in expressing his private feelings which were in favor of independence. He then spoke of Mr Bingham's¹⁴ family – of Maria Bingham who married the Count Tilly – how she ~~ran away~~ eloped with the Count – causing an ~~immence~~ immense sensation in Philadelphia – how her mother went into hysterics & they th[a]t would die – ~~Bishop~~ The daughter was sent for & found by her cousin Mr Frances who took her to her dying mother, where Bishop Moore¹⁵ & others were assembled. The count was then “bought off” as Uncle said providing that the ocean sh[oul]d always separate them. She then married Lord Ashburton¹⁶ & went to England was separated from him & marrying an officer of the Guards went to Paris &c &c —

Uncle spoke of Louis Philipe the Duke of Orleans, Duke de Montpensier & Duke de Beaujalais¹⁷ coming to America & visiting Mt. Vernon in [17]98. Duke Louis Philippe he says addressed one of the daughters of Thomas Willing but her Father objected because as he says, “he is now heir to the throne but, what he will be is less certain.”

These royal personages were sons of Philippe égalité¹⁸ who was guillotined. This was at the time of the Directory. Then came Napoleon – All the reading of French History does not impress certain facts on my memory as does hearing of these things from Uncle so I note them down. ~~These~~

Louis Philippe & his Brothers remained in this Country Uncle thinks a year or two – Uncle remembers seeing him on the steps of Mr Thomas Willing for the first time – Afterward he became well acquainted with them when they visited Mt Vernon – where they remained several days – ~~La Fayette~~ Lafayette was there at the time – Uncle had left College then –

Arlington House Virginia [Friday] March 28, 1856

Last evening (March 27) was one to be remembered. The Hon. Edward Everett¹⁹ was to Lecture by invitation of the citizens of Washington, before the “Smithsonian Institute,” on “the Character

¹⁴ Maria Matilda Bingham (1783-1849) married Jacque-Pierre-Alexandre, Comte de Tilly (1761-1816) when she was just fifteen.

¹⁵ Richard Channing Moore (1762-1841), who later became the second Bishop of Virginia in the Episcopal Church.

¹⁶ This is not quite correct. Her sister, Ann Louisa Bingham, married the future Baron Ashburton.

¹⁷ As Markie records, the future-king Louis Philippe fled France during the Reign of Terror after his father was executed. He stayed in America between 1796 and 1800. G. W. P. Custis was dismissed from Princeton in 1797 and met the exiled duke shortly thereafter.

¹⁸ More liberal than the rest of the royal family, Louis Philippe's father abandoned his noble title and assumed the name “Philippe Egalité,” meaning “equality.” Nevertheless, he was executed during the “Reign of Terror” in 1793.

¹⁹ Edward Everett (1794-1865), a former senator from Massachusetts first delivered his “Oration on the Character of Washington” in Boston on Washington's birthday, February 22, 1856. It proved so popular that he was asked to deliver it again in Richmond, Va., to raise funds for the purchase and preservation of Mount Vernon. From Everett's own tally, from 1856 until the spring of 1861, he delivered the speech 129 times. This allowed him to raise \$69,000 for Mount Vernon – more than a third of the total needed to preserve the site. A full account of the speech he delivered at the Smithsonian on Thursday, March 27, 1856 appears in the *Daily American Organ* (Washington, D.C.), March 28, 1856.

of Washington[.]” Uncle Custis had been personally invited by Mr Everett himself to be present – thought it was entirely out of his line to go to Lectures, he said to me, in the evening, in consideration of the Lecturer for whom he had a very high regard, and the subject than which, I am sure none could be more interesting, he determined to go – The weather was so very cold & blustering & Uncle so disinclined to go ~~out~~ – for nothing else that I could see, but, because he was not in the habit of doing such things – especially with Ladies, wh[ich] he seemed to consider a very awkward way of going, tho’ he said not a word to this effect – Hence ~~hed~~ he did not make up his mind until the very last moment then, genius like, he had never thought of ordering the carriage or even intimating to the coach man that he w[oul]d probably want it. Fortunately however, the delectable Daniel was not out of the way. ~~W~~ Cousin M & myself then hastened up stairs to prepare, as we were extremely anxious to go. Cousin M – ~~her father~~ hearing that it w[oul]d be an hour before the carriage was ready thought that entirely too much time to waste on personal adornment, seized that propitious time, for the cutting out of servants clothes and what was my dismay when at the end of the hour I walked into her room with my bonnet on to find that she was just about commencing her toilette – and altho’ we had to procure tickets at some of the Hotels wh[ich] would involve some considerable time with the chance of not getting them, on account of our tardy application, still, there was not the least hurry thought necessary & the carriage was at the door a half hour before we were ready to get I – At the last minute the hurry was violent – I ~~saw~~ heard Billy rushing about the house & soon saw him in the parlor looking under the sofa & in the Book case with the utmost impetuosity. What are you looking for Billy said I – “Miss Marys fur cuffs, Miss” was the reply – Then came Millie my little cousin gazing about looking about with an air of bewilderment – And what do you want Millie said I – [“]Ma’s letter that she wrote this morning” I sat on the sofa mending very composedly, mending Uncle’s crimson lining of his cloak which by the bye, I ought to have thought of before – But unfortunately the love of procrastination stamps the family and I cannot except myself – At last dear Cousin M came flying in to know if any one had seen her gloves – no one had – she picked up a p[air]r of very light undressed kid, wh[ich] to my eye were so unharmonious with the rest of her dress, that I urged a few more moments delay to look for them. She now ran up stairs while dear Uncle who had long sat the picture of silent resignation calmly impatiently inquired “what has Mana got to do now?” “Get her gloves, sir. I faint with waiting, said [he]. This doubtless seemed to him a very unnecessary article of attire, in our great haste, and looked – “Oh! what a ridiculous fashion,” but, he preserved as usual, a look of the most patient impatience and said nothing. At length Cousin M returned with so satisfied a look that I supposed of course she had found her black kids but, to my surprise she produced a p[ai]r of old black silk ones which she said w[oul]d answer just as well & so we all hurried to the carriage – On arriving in Washington whether we had ridden in just an hour, it being then 7 o’clock, we went immediately to ~~the Book store~~ Willard’s[.]²⁰ There the tickets were all gone & so we drove to the Kirkwood House²¹ & obtained them. We then went immediately to the Smithsonian where we had opportunity to select seats as very few had arrived – Cousin Mary & myself sat on the third seat from the foot of the Rostrum on the left side of the room – Uncle went into Professor Henry’s room where all who were invited to sit on the Rostrum were assembled. Precisely at 8 o’clock the door was opened facing the audience on the stage & Mr Seaton (editor of the Intelligencer) came out followed by the Orator, Uncle Custis, Governor Marsey (secretary of State) and other members

²⁰ The Willard Hotel on 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. Henry Willard founded it in 1847. It is still in business.

²¹ Located on the corner of 12th Street, NW, it operated from 1847 to 1875.

of the Cabinet, Mr Pine, Mr Cumming & Mr French (Records), Mr Hamilton Fish, Mr Corcharan, Professor Henry & many whom I did not know.²² ~~Mr J~~ When they were all seated Mr Seaton arose and said that if they were any persons there who had intended taking down the speech that was about to be delivered, he begged that as he had accepted invitations to repeat it in other cities he would ask as a particular favor, that it might not be published – adding that this indulgence had been granted him in other ~~cities~~ places. ~~Mr E wa~~ I must now describe the personal appearance of Mr Everett, having never before seen him. Above the medium height, remarkably well proportioned – his head thinly covered with white hair, wh[ich] was brushed out at the sides, as if slightly electrified – complexion a little ~~tended to floridly~~ florid – nose straight – eyes either grey or something in that vicinity – at any rate, so entirely expressive that their color was lost in their expression. The other features have passed from my remembrance, but, the tout ensemble, ~~was the~~ struck me as exceedingly pleasing. There was firmness, intelligence, modesty & refinement, depicted in every lineament.

His manner was ~~that of gentle~~ that of the most perfect repose – gentleness & kindness seem to be natural characteristics. Mr Seaton ~~now~~ & Mr Everett now arose and Mr S introduced to the audience, “the Hon. Edward Everett” Mr E as he stepped forward on the stage, his face suffused with blushes, but, still maintaining the most beautiful self complacency of manner, was the very impersonification of a statesman and a gentleman. If it were not too great a decent from the sublime, I would remark on the exquisite fit of his full suit of black cloth, but, I will only leave this intimation, as my testimony to his taste & his Tailor’s execution of his art. Mr Everett bowed to the audience – at least, I think he intended to do it, but, was so absorbed in the grandeur of his theme, that he could not stoop to this first unimportant step. To me, it appeared a mere soupçon of a bow – and I am sure it would so have appeared at the Tuilleries – though, at the court of St. James,²³ where he so long did honor to his country, I doubt not that it was considered graceful. It was certainly expressive of dignity.

Mr Everett commenced his lecture by saying that he felt a peculiar diffidence in addressing an audience in the City of Washington – here, where all the talent of the country was assembled &c &c –

My memory fails to remember a tithe of all he said and all I so much admired, but, I will not on this account, let escape what I possess of it.

I think his first comments were upon Washington’s youth – the extreme force of character wh[ich] he exhibited in Braddock’s war when he was but twenty years of age at its beginning.

He described each development of character as he went through each eventful scene of his eventful Life – He said there were ~~three~~ four men of ~~past W~~ Historical memory upon whom was

²² The audience members included William Winston Seaton (1785-1866, editor of the *National Intelligencer* and former mayor Washington, DC; William L. Marcy (1786-1857), former Governor of New York and Secretary of State under Franklin Pierce; Dr. Smith Pyne, rector of St. John’s Church near Lafayette Square beginning in 1845.; George David Cummins (1822-1876), who served as rector of several parishes around Virginia and Washington, DC before founding the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1873; Benjamin Brown French (1800-1870), a politician who had formerly worked as Clerk of the House of Representatives; Hamilton Fish (1808-1893), then a senator from New York; and William Wilson Corcoran (1798-1888), a banker and art collector who later founded the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

²³ Tuilleries was the palace of Napoleon III in Paris. The Court of St. James in London is where the British monarch receives ambassadors.



conferred the title of great – “how did they compare with our Washington?” – He commenced Peter the Great – Frederic the Great & Napoleon the Great. He have the character of each consecutively & then most graphically drew the comparison. He said he did not mean to depreciate other great men – they were all great in their spheres, but, Washington stood alone. Lord Braughn²⁴ had said that Washington was the greatest man of his age, he, Mr E felt inclined to say, he was the greatest man of any age. It had been said of Washington that he was not a man of genius. Mr E then viewed it in the light of a blessing that he was not inasmuch as genius seemed to be necessarily attended with so many inconsistencies. ~~But, he had~~ He had prudence – now, no one ever attributed prudence to a genius. He had common sense, so called not from its being so extremely common &c &c – (Laughter!) He then compared his character to a perfect circle, whose beauty & perfection were in its equanimity – There were no salient points no excessencies &c &c – Justice, too, he said was not an attribute of genius – ~~In the days of Aristides it was indeed banished from the Court of Athens,~~ Yet these, in connection with the aforementioned, were qualities in wh[ich] this great man excelled. ~~The~~ Men of our day have all the political experience of the great men of other days after which to model their characters, but, Washington had not this – the printing machine, had not diffused knowledge in our country as it has now – very few book[s] were possessed and our heros career began so young that he had not time for study, besides there was no Washington in the 17th century by which to mould the Washington of the 18[th] century. He spoke of the monuments of Europe reared to the memory of her heros – spoke of two visits to ~~the~~ Blenheim castle, reared to the memory of the Duke of Marlborough²⁵ the place covering a space of thirteen miles square, with seven gates & porters Lodges within ~~this~~ a superb ~~palace~~ mosoleum the walls with inscriptions in Latin & English lauding the praises of its hero &c &c – And what were the virtues for wh[ich] he was extolled? One of the Porters lodge, I was going to say – no, one of the Dog Kennels, of that Palace, cost more than could ~~buy Mount Vernon~~ than is demanded for Mt Vernon.

[Friday] March 28 1856 Arlington House

[Under the date, Markie has drawn a banner reading “Decus et Tutamen Ab Illo,” which mean “Honor and Defense from it.” Following this are the words “Jersey,” “New York,” and “Virginia” in interlocking rings. They are described as being “around the India cups.” All of this perfectly describes the Mount Vernon plate discovered during an archaeological dig at Arlington in 2018.]

²⁴ According to *Maxims of Washington* (1854) by John Frederick Schroeder, Henry Brougham, 1st Baron Brougham and Vaux (1778-1868) called Washington “the greatest man of our own or any age.”

²⁵ Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, England, is the seat of the Dukes of Marlborough. The first duke named it after his 1704 victory over the French in the War of Spanish Succession.


 March 28. 1850 Wilmington House
 secus et tutamen ~~de~~ Jersey New York Virginia Around the
India cups
 Uncle Castis has just informed me in re-
 ference to the three sets of Mount Vernon china
 now extant n of which I ~~the~~ have knowledge.
 Part of each being at Tudor Place & part of at
 Arlington - The Cincinnati china - white edged
 with blue, has a spread eagle upon the breast of
 which are a group of minute figures representing Cin-
 cinatus at the plough. In the eagles mouth is
 a bow of ribbon (blue originally) and a round ring
 encircling the whole.  This is the Order of
 Cincinnati as represented on the cup. Said china was made
 at the Sèvres manufactory a Paris according to an order
 sent over of Gen Washington sent over by ~~Arthur~~
 Lee. The china at Tudor Place, with the
 states around it, was made in India & painted
 in England & presented to Gen Washington
 by a Dutch man named Van --- something
 I do not remember - I believe he was a
 merchant. The delicate looking gold & white
 slightly painted china with G.W. in a cloud on

Uncle Custis has just informed me in reference to the three sets of Mount Vernon china now extant of of [*sic*] which I ~~kn~~ have knowledge. Part of each being at Tudor Place & part at Arlington –

The Cincinatus china – white edged with blue, has a spread eagle upon the breast of wh[ich] are a group of minute figures representing Cincinatus at the plough. In the eagles mouth is a bow of ribbon (blue originally) and a round ring encircling the whole [*drawing of eagle here*] This is the Order of Cincinatus as represented on the cup. Said china was made at the Savres manufactory a Paris according to an order ~~sent over~~ of Gen Washington sent over by ~~Author~~ Arthur Lee.²⁶

The china at Tudor Place, with the states around it, was made in India & painted in England presented to Gen Washington by a Dutch man named Van — —²⁷ something Uncle does not remember. I believe he was a merchant.

The delicate looking gold & white slightly painted china with G W in a cloud on it, was presented to € Mrs Washington by Count de Coustine²⁸, whose portrait I saw at Versailles. One of these cups dear grandmother gave me.

I write this information about the cups, because I am so apt to forget these things & now it is just from Uncle's lips.

Martha Custis Williams

Uncle Custis' toast at a 22nd Banquet in Alexandria Virginia 1853 or 1852

President Fillmore

Fill-more – Fill-more!

Aye! Fill to the brim,

A health to the man of the Nation;

Fill-more – Fill-more!

We fill unto him

Who nobly hath filled his high station!

April 1856

Arlington House

[Friday] April 4, 1856

²⁶ Arthur Lee (1740-1792), a U.S. diplomat during the American Revolution. He was a cousin of Light-Horse Harry Lee.

²⁷ Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest (1739-1801)

²⁸ Adam Philippe, Comte de Custine (1740-1793)

Not feeling well today I did not go into Town, but, Bishop Meade came out with Cousin Mary. He is a venerable looking man – looks as if he had suffered much and has the characteristics of firmness and severity in his countenance – at the same time appears kind. This afternoon Uncle Custis has been conversing with him of old people & old times – The Bishop read aloud the last chapter of his publication in the Southern Churchman. The subject of Uncle’s “Recollections” was then brought up – Cousin Mary & myself both told the Bishop how much we had tried to induce him to get them ready for publication. The Bishop said in his rather blunt way – “well suppose you die and it is not done!” “Well then Bishop – said Uncle bowing in his complaisant manner – I shall be most happy if you will publish them for me.”

Uncle’s publication on the subject of Mr Griffith,²⁹ one of the Chaplains in the American Army, during the Revolution was then alluded to, and at the Bishop’s request Uncle brought out the newspaper article & read it to him. The Bishop said he w[oul]d take it with him, as it might be useful in his work –

At Tea, the Bishop said he had no doubt that Uncle had many old papers wh[ich] w[oul]d be useful to him in writing his book – and they both agreed that I must have an over-hauling of his papers and send the Bishop such as I thought w[oul]d be useful –

To-night the Bishop’s head-ached and he asked for little Millie to comb it for him. M c[oul]d not be found & Cousin M proposed that I sh[oul]d do it. I felt a slight delicacy but, of course was willing to administer relief & comfort to the suffering – I had a severe headache myself & could deeply sympathise with the mallady.

He said my mezzmarising was very pleasant.³⁰ Yes, indeed it is pleasant to be Pettied and it is orthodox too, for even Bishop’s think so.

The very idea that any one is engaged in ~~the trying to re~~ the kind offices of trying to releave you is a pleasure & a comfort, however great the pain.

Sunday April 6

A sweet spring day, but, yet cool – I gathered a little bunch of white crocuses and took them out to my dear aunt Custis’ grave – On my return saw some of the servants reclining in the sun on the Hill-side – stopped and talked a little. I asked Perry the dining room servant a lad of 17 or 18 – why he never came to say his lessons to me as I had often proposed – He replied that he knew how to read a little – might have known very well, if he had chosen, but, ~~that~~ added “it is too much trouble Miss Martha – it seems to me colored people never will do anything that gives them trouble – that is anything that is profitable to them.”

Well said I, Perry, that is a wise remark & a very true one – I am glad you know yourself so well – now, why don’t you resolve to do better? He smiled lasily & respondingly and after a little while, said he must go & set the dinner-table.

²⁹ David Griffith (1742-1789) served as chaplain of the 3rd Virginia Regiment from 1776 until 1779. He ministered in Loudoun and Fairfax Counties before becoming the first Bishop-Elect of Virginia.

³⁰ According to the theories of mesmerism (now considered a pseudoscience), stimulating a portion of the body could redirect its electrical currents and heal injuries or illnesses. Thus, touching the scalp in a certain way could cure a headache.

Selina, who was also there agreed with Perry's words & said "I might have been a elegant schollar if I had chose to have larned all that I might have larned." Late this evening I heard Henry³¹ a lesson & read to him in the Bible – then came down to read a chapter in the Apocalypse (Cumming) to dear Uncle as I have been doing this winter ~~since~~ on sunday afternoons. He said he was just about going to walk, but, that he would listen to me this evening. I observed that I ~~was~~ thought the servants ~~w~~ children would come up soon to be taught – and then seeming to think it w[oul]d be more convenient to me to read now – said – "Markie, read now my dear if you wish" – Dear Uncle! I often think how many times I shall recall his kind voice & expressions, if I sh[oul]d live after he is dead.

When I am not well, he always asks so kindly how I am & says some thing wh[ich] shows he feels sorry to see me suffering. None ever appreciated these things more than I do.

Arlington House

[Wednesday] April 9 1856

A delightful day – the first of the season in which we have felt the sun's summer rays which are peculiarly grateful, after old winter's unusually long and icy reign – more than delightful, has it been to me, also, in the unexpected arrival of my dear friend, Blanche Berard.³² Seeing her again, seems to renew the memory of happy days gone by, and we we have so many subjects for discussion and so many places of noteriety to visit in Washington, that we feel overpowered at the mere thought of only a week, to do it all in.

Already, at her very urgent entreaties, have I been reading to her the first volume of my journal. She seems so interested in it, that it [is] a pleasure to me to read it to her[.]

Blanche is very anxious for me to write a book of travels founded upon my Journal – My fondness for literary pursuits and the time and opportunity I have for them seems to indicate it as a sort of vocation, and yet I am at a loss to know what I can do with my pen, that will be most useful to my fellow beings and contribute most to the glory of god.

Blanche has succeeded so well with her little History³³ that I confess myself encouraged by her example.

While I was sitting surrounded by my seven eight or nine volumes of my European Journal³⁴ I heard foot-steps on the portico and in a few minutes, the servant brought me up a card on wh[ich] was written "Mr. S Baily, Mr Jas T. Bruce, and Nathan Thompson Jr, strangers from New York City." I soon went down, (Uncle not being at home & Cousin Mary always engaged) and showed them the pictures. It is pleasant to see persons interested in the history of their country and willing to take pilgramiges on foot, to see what is associated with its early History.

³¹ Likely Henry Bingham, a young enslaved man or boy.

³² Blanche detailed her surprise visit to Markie in a letter to her mother. It was published as "Arlington and Mount Vernon 1856. As Described in a Letter of Augusta Blanche Berard" in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, April, 1949, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Apr., 1949), pp. 140-17. This letter includes detailed descriptions of many of Arlington House's rooms and artwork.

³³ *A School History of the United States* (1855) by Augusta Blanche Berard.

³⁴ All the journals she produced while in Europe are in the archives of Tudor Place.

The gentlemen professed themselves much gratified and then Mr Baily told me that Mr Thompson was known all over the world whereupon I looked at Mr Thompson and mentally reiterated “Mr. Thompson – Mr Thompson” – well really, I – I confess my ignorance, but in my catalogue of distinguished ~~persons~~ characters ancient or modern I remember no Mr Thompson. Mr Baily ignorant about these inoral soliloquies told me that he was the inventor of “the Life-preserving Seat”³⁵ – that he had exhibited his celebrated invention before the Crown’d Heads of Europe &c &c[.]

Mr. Thompson looked conscious merit and modest resignation. I said “Ah! – indeed! – certainly it must afford you great gratification Mr Thompson, to have been the ~~author inventor~~ author of so much good to mankind.” “Yes it is,” he replied blinking his brown eyes with an air of satisfaction. Mr Thompson then thought it was time to produce tangible evidences of his noteriety so he ~~drew~~ brought out of his pocket a large jewel box and opening it presented it to me for inspection, saying, that it had been presented to him by the Emperor of the French. It was, indeed, a beautiful gold & blue enamelled snuff box inscribed inside, to the author of this humane invention & upon the top a letter N in Diamonds. He s I expressed my admiration – he said it was not the value of the box itself “Oh No! said I, of course not, but, the associations with which it is connected.”

He then showed me a printed sheet containing letters from many distinguished people testifying to the merits of the invention &c &c –

He said the invention was so very simple that he wondered any one had not found it out before. He said he had given some time to finding it out, having followed the Sea a long time, he had seen the necessity of such things. Mr Bruce & Mr Baily conversed with Uncle who came in after some time and Mr Thompson devoted his conversation to me.

It is a pleasure to have dear Blanche Berard with me – we have so many thoughts & feelings in unison. We have so much to talk about concerning our literary avocations – so much to talk of on a thousand subjects.

[Added after a large gap in the middle of the page]

Cousin Mary Lee tells me that there was a beautiful miniature of her Father, in the family, but, that he presented it to George LaFayette when he was in America. Should I ever go to France again, I hope that I shall have an opportunity to visit La Grange.³⁶ And see the miniature and the interesting family by whom it is possessed.

May 1856

Arlington House – [Tuesday] May 20, 1856

Went to Washington this morning –

Had an interview of an hour and a quarter at Col Abert’s with Mr Janvier – I dissolved the engagement we had made to walk to Arlington to-morrow (May 21). This was the anniversary of

³⁵ Nathan Thompson, Jr. of Williamsburg New York received a patent for a life-preserving seat in 1853. The seat was made of cork and supposed to serve as an emergency personal flotation device. It is unclear who his two companions were.

³⁶ Château de la Grange-Bléneau, the Lafayette family’s ancestral home.

our first visit there, in 1847 – Alas! how many changes have occurred since then – the loved & the lovely are gone, of our human friends – but, the same little blue “forget-me-nots,” which strewed our path-way then, are bluming now.

Alas! this is a day long to be remembered for its varied emotions, its sadness, its broken bond of friendship. God forgive me, if I have acted wrongly – I implored his direction in all the affairs of this day & more especially, with regard to my interview with Mr J and I humbly trust what has happened may eventuate in our good, though it is for the present, grievous to be borne.

[Wednesday] May 21. This day, seven years ago, Mr Janvier and myself, walked from Tudor Place to Arlington. ~~It was a beautiful sunny day~~ – He was then in ~~Washington~~ Georgetown boarding at the same house with Mr Tillinghast³⁷ on 1st street & awaiting the movements of Comdr Morgan USN³⁸ with whom he expected to go to the Mediterranean as private secretary, on board the “U S Ship ~~Missippi~~ Mississippi” then at Norfolk.³⁹ Mr Tillinghast brought him to Tudor Place with Mr Carroll Tucker,⁴⁰ the Capt’s Clerk. At the time of their visits, Aunt Britannia was absent & my Sisters were in Washington on a visit to Mrs Capt Swift, so that dear Grandmother & myself were alone.

We were both prepossessed in favor of Mr Janvier & thought Mr Tucker handsome & genteel. They came to see us several times. At length Mr Janvier & myself ~~agreed~~ made an engagement to spend a day at Arlington & the 21st of May was selected & 9 o’clock, the hour appointed for leaving Tudor Place. The weather could not have been more propitious – ~~A sunny~~ I kissed my dear Grandmother and with many regrets at leaving her alone, Mr J & myself set out punctually at 9 o’clock. A sunny, cloudless sky, canopied our walk – those beauteous innocent little blue “forget-me-nots” bloomed along our shady path-way through the woods – and in poetic strains, we interchanged our thoughts. I particularly remember his repeating to me Longfellow’s “Resignation”⁴¹ & a piece in wh[ic]h each verse ended “And the beating of her own heart, was all the sound I heard”⁴² – some of Montgomery’s Poetry⁴³ and some lines which I very much admired, written by his friend Mr Tuckerman.⁴⁴

I also, essayed to tell my favorite verses – The balmy atmosphere the poetry & wild flowers enjoyed ensemble with a spirit so refined & congenial in taste, rendered the walk inexpressibly delightful – on our arrival at Arlington, we were so kindly welcomed by my dear Aunt Custis and Aunt Lewis, both of whom as well as my dear Uncle Custis, made themselves particularly agreeable & in the evening we returned to dear old Tudor – How well do I remember how glad poor Grandmother was to see us back.

³⁷ Rev Nicholas Power Tillinghast (1817-1869), rector of St. John’s Church, Georgetown.

³⁸ Charles W. Morgan (1790-1854), a naval officer who had served in the War of 1812 and later became a commodore.

³⁹ *USS Mississippi* did in fact depart for the Mediterranean in 1849-1851.

⁴⁰ “Resignation,” in *The Seaside and the Fireside* (1850) by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

⁴¹ “Resignation” (1850) by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

⁴² The original line is from Richard Monckton Milnes’s love poem “The Brookside”: “But the beating of my own heart/ Was all the sound I heard.”

⁴³ James Montgomery (1771-1854), a Scottish poet and hymn writer.

⁴⁴ Frederick Goddard Tuckerman (1821-1873), a Harvard-educated poet whose works have become obscure.

There are some days in Life wh[ich] seem to stand apart from other days – they seem as it were a bas-relief from the r[ou]tine of daily experience – such was this and the memory of it, comes back to me, like the breath of summer flowers.

The stranger was never forgotten – and from that day, through the period of seven long years, have I daily prayed, that God’s Holy Spirit might find an abiding place in his heart, and the conviction has always been strong in my mind, that we should some day meet again, even on this earth. He was three years in Italy – I was nearly a year in France after his return home, but, I never by the most remote accident heard of his whereabouts, nor I believe did he of mine.

On the 3^d of November, 1855, I was seated in the parlor with my hat on & my pen in my hand, meditating whether I should enjoy the autumn air in the garden or write a letter, when I heard Uncle open the door and say “there she is gentlemen, walk in & take her captive.” Upon raising my eyes, I beheld to my overwhelming surprise, Mr Tillinghast & Mr Janvier – They spent the day – our recollections of the past were sad as they were happy – this was the beginning of our renewed friendship – and shall I say that yesterday was the ending?

No, I will not. This is not the last of one for whom I have prayed. The broken bond, will be reunited – we shall be friends again.

How strange – how curious – how wonderful the way of circumstance, [*several words scratched out*] Oh! what will be the warp of time?

Arlington House

May 25, 1856

Sunday

A lovely sunny day – dear Lum is making me a visit of a few days – we both felt too much indisposed to go to Alexandria to Church & so remained at home. It is a great pleasure to me to have her with me – Our destinies are now so separated, that I appreciate the society of my dear Sister.

This afternoon, Lum being not well enough & Cousin M too fatigued, to go, Millie & myself wended our way to the little sanctuary in the woods, whither Uncle had preceded us – but we overtook him before he arrived. Mr Keeling⁴⁵ of Baltimore, one of the Theological Students, made a most eloquent and appropriate address – I predict that he will one day be one of our distinguished ministers. His subject was, the evidences of a God, wh[ich] we see everywhere displayed in the objects around us – the joys of Heaven &c &c — —

I noticed that Uncle gave more than usual attention – and I always pray, that what he hears, may redound to his eternal good.

⁴⁵ Robert James Keeling (1828-1909). In 1858 he graduated from the Virginia Theological Seminary and married Elizabeth Bend Polk, the great grandniece of Charles Willson Peale. He was originally from Norfolk but was living in Baltimore when he married his wife.

After Church, we returned home together. Millie ran on far before us and Bobby⁴⁶ rode his little Poney, “Santie.”⁴⁷ The Woods were shady and beautiful and I enjoyed our walk extremely. After commenting on the excellence of the Sermon or address we had heard, I asked Uncle if he had ever know[n] General Washington to commune, though I thought I remembered that he had told me he had not. He said he had told me so – and that he could see no evidence to the contrary – that he had been written to, some dozens of times in his life, by persons of every denomination, but, he had always replied by the same answer. I asked if he attended Church regularly. He said emphatically – “always[”] – he always attended Christ’s Church in Philadelphia with his family when he resided in Philadelphia. And when he was at Mt. Vernon? – said I – then, he replied, he went to Pohick about seven miles from Mt. Vernon – Mr Massey, was the Clergiman – or else, to Alexandria nine miles distant, where a Mr Davis preached.⁴⁸

I asked if Family Prayers were conducted at Mount Vernon – No, Uncle said, but my Grandmother always retired to her room when the domestic duties of the morning were over – and remained for some time reading her Bible & Prayers. This interesting incident of our honored ancestress, I had hea[r]d often before from the mouth of my own beloved Grandmother[.]

On my way home, I gathered some lovely wild roses – but, sweet as they were, I could not mingle them, with the innocent “Forget-me-nots” already clasped to my bosom (in other words pinned in my breast pin) for, these are unique in their association.

Monday – May 26

An interesting day – This morning, Uncle asked me to look over General Washington’s papers and get him something that I thought would be appropriate to send to a man in Elmyra, who applied for a specimen of Gen Washington’s writing to hold as a relic in a certain College or other public institution there. I selected a receipt written with his name in full, which Uncle pronounced, “exactly the thing.” I saw several interesting letters of written by Uncle’s Father, Mr John Custis – one of these, he kindly gave me & I shall prize it beyond all expression. How interesting it is to hold communion with ages past – to know how our ancestors thought & wrote and acted. While Uncle was at the Farm, I sat for an hour or two in his studio beside General Washington’s old letter trunk (which by the bye, always stands by Uncle’s paint table, without any kind of lock or other fastening.) This rusty old relic with G W on it in brass nails, stands like a kind of sentinal ~~over~~ in that artistic realm.

This afternoon, we had a visit from Miss Marsey (daughter of the Secretary of State) and Mr Bayard⁴⁹ from Philadelphia, son of Senator Bayard of Delaware. Uncle was quite delighted to talk to the latter about his revolutionary ancestors, Charles Carroll & Charles Bayard⁵⁰ – we went

⁴⁶ Robert Edward Lee II (1843-1914)

⁴⁷ Santa Anna. Robert E. Lee named the horse after the President of Mexico, whom the United States fought against, in the Mexican-American War.

⁴⁸ Lee Massey (1732-1814) was rector of Pohick Church in Fairfax County, Va., and was a friend of George Washington. Thomas Davis was rector of Christ Church in Alexandria, Va.

⁴⁹ Cornelia Marcy (1834-1888) was the daughter of Secretary of State William L. Marcy. Richard Bassett Bayard (1831-1878) was the son of Senator Richard Henry Bayard of Delaware, who served from 1841 to 1845.

⁵⁰ Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1837-1832), a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was Richard Bassett Bayard’s great-grandfather. None of his ancestors were named Charles Bayard. However, a cousin of that name was killed in the 1850 eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

into the Studio and stood before that grand effort of genius, which Uncle is now executing – the Battle of Trenton. Dear Uncle! It is wonderful to see how deluded he can be, about his pictures. He told Mr B this evening, that the horse in Powell’s Picture of the discovery of the Mississippi was not to be compared with his horses, &c &c – Praised his own genius and industry stood before the Picture with all the pride and pleasure of a most accomplished artist. Sometimes I feel almost tempted to tell Uncle that every one does not think of his pictures as he does, but, then, I remember his age and think it is all very well, if it is a source of gratification to him. MCW

Arlington

May 1856

Uncle told me that Col Trumbull told him that the two engravings of the death of Montgomery and the battle of Bunker’s Hill, cost him in London \$6000. a peice (the engraving of them) ~~Those~~ The proof ~~sheet~~ engravings were sent to Gen Washington & are in the parlor at Arlington – Those at Tudor were copies wh[ich] Gen W subscribed for. Uncle thinks he subscribed for three copies & at a pound a piece, but is not sure about the price.

Col Trumbull was a great friend of my Uncle & there is no one ~~with wh[ich]~~ of whom he speaks with more enthusiastic affection. To-day he told me that the Col when here, gave him a little account of how he came to be an artist ~~and~~. As they were both in parlor, he took him up to the engraving of “the death of Wolfe”⁵¹ from West’s great Picture. That was the picture, sir, said he (the original ~~painting~~ painting in London he alluded to) wh[ich] determined me to become an artist. He studied under West in London.

His marriage was very mysterious. No one to the day of his death ever knew anything of the woman he married. Uncle says Mr Rufus King, then, American Ambassador in London ~~was~~ told him that he was invited to the wedding. That he knew nothing of the engagement, until he was sent to by Mr Trumbull to see the marriage at the Church and that he never could glean anything about the affair afterwards either in London or here. Uncle mentioned that Mr T– seemed to [be] very much attached to the person – and that they both spent a day together in this house after their return from Europe.

(The engraving of Col. Trumbull’s picture took three years.)

June 1856

Arlington House [Tuesday] June 3^d 1856

This was the day appointed for the great pic-nic at Uncle’s Spring⁵² – He was of course, invited to be there, to meet the guests & never was a girl of sixteen more elated at the prospect of a Ball, than was dear Uncle with this anticipation. It is astonishing, that he should, at the age of 70 odd [“0 odd” added in pencil] retain so much relish for amusement. I am sure, I never – unless it

⁵¹ *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770) by Benjamin West. It depicts the mortally wounded General James Wolfe surrounded by his officers after the 1758 Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

⁵² According to the *Alexandria Gazette*, June 5, 1856, “The Russian Minister on Tuesday, gave a pic-nic entertainment at Arlington Springs, to his diplomatic associates and others.” June 3, 1856, was a Tuesday.

might have been at fourteen – ere a single cloud⁵³, had shaded my young career – felt half so strong an interest in scenes of festive gaiety. The morning was fine & everything propitious – Uncle shaved, put on a clean shirt – which it is always my ~~prø~~ special province to button just before he goes away – and even changed his coat. From these extraordinary arrangements we all knew that it was a high day with him. I reminded him to put on his cravat which else I am afraid would have been regarded as superfluous – and put on his chin myself a piece of coat-plaster to hide a gash wh[ich] had been made in shaving. An old brown cloth coat which & a buff vest which I remember to have seen for many years on the premises, formed his best attire. I wonder what the fashionable modern belles thought of his costume. But, with all Uncle’s eccentricity of dress he always looks the intelligent gentleman.

He begged that I w[oul]d go in the garden, & take a servant to hold an umbrella over my head and gather a large basked of flowers and send down to him for the Ladies.

Soon after his departure, therefore, I was in the garden gathering flowers & by the earliest opportunity sent them down – Uncle retains his feelings of gallantry for the Ladies I was both pleased & amused at his asking me to get some long ~~leaves~~ wreathes of Ivy & other pretty flowers for decking the hair as on a prior occasion the Ladies had decked their hairs with leaves, which he did not like so well.

This afternoon the President rode over Perry (the waiter) said very unconcernedly as he was asked what gentleman is that coming in the Portico – “Mr. Pierce ma’am”! Cousin Mary & myself arose from the Tea Table and adjourned to the parlor. I had never been at home on his previous visits – When Cousin M introduced me, ~~I~~ the President arose came forward & shook hands with me – by the bye, he has the softest hand for a man I ever felt.

He has very mild, gentlemanly manners – not polished. His countenance bore the impress of care & ~~sadness~~ was a little sad in expression. We spoke of Mr Sumner.⁵⁴ He said no right minded person could fail to deplore both the cause & ~~its~~ of Mr Sumner’s misfortune and its consequences – that there never had been such disgraceful conduct in Congress as during the present session. That it did not use to be so, in his time but added, smiling, that old gentlemen always said such & such things were not so in their time. He said that he thought that it is the Speaker’s place to call the House to order, upon the first intimatation [intimation] of violence. The President then remarked that he had called by to look in upon the festive scene at the Spring on his way up & said what a charming place it was and how much interested he had been in looking at the Mount Vernon silver (wh[ich] by the bye, Uncle had sent to the house for this morning.) His Excellency then expressed himself most happy to have been enabled to ~~lөө~~ come over even for so short a visit & apologized for not having been before this spring and hoped Mrs Pierce⁵⁵ & himself would be able to drive over before very long & make us another visit. Mrs Pierce was here about a fortnight since. They both look sad & in wretched health. Alas! what a trying position, must be that of the chief magistrate of the Nation. Were I to choose for myself a lot in Life how far from me it would be, to select a position in which I should be obliged to live

⁵³ Markie may be referring to the death of her mother, America Pinckney Peter Williams, who died in 1841, when Markie was fourteen.

⁵⁴ On May 19-20, Charles Sumner (1811-1874) delivered a fiery oration opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. His highly personal attacks against Andrew Butler of South Carolina, one of the bill’s sponsors, led Butler’s cousin Preston Brooks to attack him with a cane after the Senate adjourned. Traumatized and severely injured, Sumner did not fully return to the Senate until 1859.

⁵⁵ Jane Means Pierce, 1806-1863

so much in the world and for the world. ~~Let me roam the world earth over, unshackled by the motives of world or policy & questionable policy and from some lone sequestered spot on the banks of some~~ *[scratched out illegibly]* My love of freedom, revolts, at the shackles they impose! Far rather would I select the Life of a Shepherdess where I might ever live among the Hills & woody vales, or on the Banks of Streams where I might *[scratched out]* enjoy God's beautiful blessings, always.

Arlington House [Thursday] June 5, 1856

No fairer day every dawned than this one – though I felt languid & unlike exertion, I was tempted to go into the garden and gather a bouquet of flowers – Among damask roses and Ivy Leaves, I lose all consciousness of self and I remained for a long time, enjoying these “precious relics of a lost Eden” & then came to the House, to decorate the glasses in the parlor. What a pure, ~~high~~ exalted pleasure it is to arrange flowers!

I sometimes wonder how some persons can pass through this dreary world, without the joy which flowers bring. I never regret the moments I spend, in culling & arranging them. I am the happier for it! Flowers seem to me like friends; – and there are times, when I feel as if they were the only things on earth with wh[ich] I find congeniality.

I plucked a white rose and took it out to my dear Aunt Custis' grave.

This afternoon, we had a violent storm. – so little does a forenoon, predict an afternoon! There was a party at the Spring – a Target company.⁵⁶ When the storm abated, Uncle went down to see how the people had sheltered themselves from the rain. I was out of the room when he returned, but, when I entered he said with a mournful face “well, Markie, I have bad news for you – the old oak tree at the Spring has been blown down.” I expressed as I felt, great surprise & regret for I remembered the tree and some pretty lines on it, which Uncle gave me some years ago, written by Lorenzo Dow.⁵⁷ Uncle showed a great deal of feeling in speaking of it & said he must have some English Ivy planted around the stump.

Arlington House [Wednesday] June 11, 1856

This morning, I declined accompanying my Cousins on a visit to Mrs Lippitt's (where we were all invited to dine) because of a little note from Mr Janvier, announcing that Mr Buchanan Read⁵⁸ & himself would be at Arlington, the first pleasant afternoon. As soon as the family had departed, I went to take a walk in the woods – gathered the last “Forget-me-nots” of the season, with a sentimental remembrance, and returned home wondering how my friend & myself would meet, after our last interview at Col A's.

Who should appear before me, as I came through the garden gate, but my dear Brother Lolo. How much I rejoiced in the Providence which had permitted me to be at home to see him. In the afternoon Mr Janvier & Mr Buchanan Read rode over. Mr Read, is both a Poet and a

⁵⁶ According to the *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), this was a party for the Ben Franklin Target Company No 1. A “target company” was a club for target shooting.

⁵⁷ Lorenzo Dow (1777-1834), an itinerant preacher and widely read evangelical writer. He had a reputation for being eccentric.

⁵⁸ Thomas Buchanan Read (1822-1872) was a painter and poet.

Painter. Mr Janvier told me that Mr Read asked him if he had told me how “insignificant looking” he was. I was not disappointed in Mr R’s appearance, because, I have ceased to look for external charms in men of great genius. Nature’s gifts are more justly portioned. Still Mr Read had an interesting face – A thoughtful countenance a silent calmness in his mien. He said nothing that was very remarkable but, seemed absorbed in admiration of the scenery & the flowers. We sat on the Portico steps after gathering some flowers in the garden and conversed while I vainly attempted to divide them into pretty bouquets. I was hurried in my beautiful occupation by the arrival of the carriage, and had the dissatisfaction of feeling, that I had never before put these lovely gems together with so little taste.

Mr. Read said nothing very remarkable. I remarked to him having read his “House by the Sea” and his “New Pastoral”⁵⁹ He looked modest at the allusion and Mr Janvier said that he sent me the former book, not because it was his best but because it was his last. I replied that I like the New Pastoral better. Mr R then asked me if I had read one of his other Poems, which he seemed to consider the best, but, which I could not give any opinion on as I had not read.

Mr Janvier spoke of Mr Read’s Paintings on Exhibition at the Capitol and urged me to go & see them “Undine” and “the Lost Pliad”⁶⁰ I hope I shall be enabled to go.

June

While in Washington I saw Mr Read’s paintings – Though so wearied with visiting, I managed to enjoy “the Lost Pliad,” towards three o’clock[.]

Cousin Mary Lee, Mary & myself went to the Capitol unaccompanied by a gentleman, although Mr J so much urged that we sh[oul]d call for him to go with us.

“The Lost Pliad,” ~~wa~~ is a charming in its conception & in its execution, according to my poor judgment. Space, is so vividly pictured – the forms and faces so beautiful & so delicate and the gossamer veil thrown around them, gives a mystical air to the piece which is very bewitching. Mr Read spoke of Mr Janvier – of how beautifully he repeated poetry and observed that he never could remember Poetry and especially not his own. Upon hearing this I felt somewhat consoled for my bad memory.

August 1856

Arlington Saturday Aug 9, 1856

This has been a week of unusual variety with me – staying a few days, the first part of it, with dear Lolo at the Aberts – then, a few more days at Tudor, where I witnessed the departure of dear Aunt Brit Bev & Miss Wight⁶¹ for the Springs. They left early in the morning and I remained at

⁵⁹ Thomas Buchanan Read’s *House by the Sea* and *The New Pastoral* were both published in 1855.

⁶⁰ It appears Thomas Buchanan Read created these two paintings in the 1850s. They now seem to be in private hands.

⁶¹ Ann Gertrude Wightt (1800-1867). Wightt had formerly served as directress of the school which Georgetown’s Convent of the Visitation ran. However, after having a falling out with the convent over her management of the school, she renounced her vows and (according to Britannia Kennon’s memoirs) fled in the middle of the night. She stayed with Britannia at Tudor Place for a time during the mid-1800s.

the dear old Place all day. It seemed so strange to hear no childrens' voices to see no moving to & fro of people & above all to miss the energetic step & care worn countenance of dear Aunt Britannia – For the first time, for many a long month, did things remind me of my dear Grandmother – How many a week have we passed there together when the family were away.

I looked around and everything seemed to recall the past & those quiet happy days when my highest pleasure, was derived from being dutiful. I enjoyed these sad feelings until afternoon when the Arlington carriage came for me. Poor Stascia's⁶² hospitality and kindness was very touching she told me in the kindest manner, that any time that I wanted to come over to Town and did not like to dine or stay all night with any of my friends, she hoped I would come to Tudor Place – She would heartily share with me what she had and my room was always there & she ready to serve me, and if I feared sleeping in the room alone, he would bring her bed & put it on the floor in my room – that anything in the world that she could do for me she was ready & would be pleased to do it." I thanked the honest creature for her genuine feeling & told her I w[oul]d come sometimes, expressly to see her.

Dear Uncle came over for me & waited at the Book Store in Washington as usual. I was delighted to get back to dear Arlington. It is the sweetest, peacefulest place, in all the world to me & its inmates the most agreeable.

The day after my arrival, there was a pic-nic at the Spring & in the afternoon, a regiment of little Boys with Flags made for the occasion, out of their pocket-handkerchiefs tied upon sticks marched up the Hill with one or two young men, who seemed to be their preceptors, at their head, by the tune of Yankee Doodle, wh[ich] they played on Drum & Fife & when the[y] got in front of the house, they all took off their hats & waving them with great vehemence, gave three cheers for Mr Custis. Uncle & myself were in the parlor with Annie & Agnes who now form all our family. Uncle was apparently reading "the Sun" during this interesting ceremony but, I could see from the faint smile of pleasure that he was not less pleased than interested in the attention. The Boys, after playing about for some time, marshalled in front of the house – gave three more cheers for Mr Custis & departed.

Day before yesterday, a hack drove up with two Ladies & two gentlemen & various boxes & undefinable things which they took out & brought in the house & in a few minutes, sent up a card with the names Mrs Underwood, Miss Peck, Mr Elliot & a Daguerreotype artist who had come over by Uncle's permission some days ago, to get a copy of Sharpless' Picture.⁶³ Uncle was at the Farm, but, I sent for him and made my appearance in the Parlor immediately. As Uncle had given permission I thought it useless to waste time, so I prepared a place for the Artists' operations, between the Parlor & the Studio & I then entertained the ladies & Mr Elliot for how many hours I would not pretend to say. When they departed Mrs Underwood promised to send me from Kentucky, an eyeless Fish⁶⁴ & Mr Elliot from the mines of Missouri some specimens of iron. Of course it is a manifestation of their appreciation of Uncle's kindness.

⁶² Stacia (1815-c.1892) was an enslaved maid at Tudor Place. In the 1840s she acted as nurse and nanny to Martha Peter's grandchildren. That meant Markie would have known her from childhood.

⁶³ From context, Mrs Underwood is likely Elizabeth Threlkeld Cox Underwood, the wife of former Senator Joseph Rogers Underwood of Kentucky. Underwood was heavily involved in making Mammoth Cave a tourist destination.

⁶⁴ Likely Amblyopsidae from Mammoth Cave in Kentucky.

This afternoon, while I was drawing on “Les Quatres Age,”⁶⁵ a Buggy drove up and Uncle & myself resorted to the parlor to see our friend Mr Janvier who was accompanied by a Mr Morrel⁶⁶ of the Senate – from Vermont – A very interesting man upon a short acquaintance. Mr Janvier’s visit was a particularly agreeable one – until at the end of it, he accepted an invitation from Uncle to smoke a cigar.

Arlington House Virginia

[Monday] August 11, 1856

I was much amused this morning at the Breakfast table to hear the manner in which Uncle addressed Billy, the little Boy waiter, who stood by his side. Without turning himself around in the least, he said in the most amiable unconcerned manner, “I saw the marks you have been making on my picture young man – I did not suppose for a moment, that I c[oul]d leave home for a day without seeing some of your mischief on my return – “there he’s gone and put a great spot of vermilion on that Hessian’s nose – the idea of a dying man, having a red nose – I wonder if any one ever heard of such a thing?” Billy looked surly and muttered a denial that he had been near the picture, but, Uncle seemed positively convinced that he had and told him he sh[oul]d put it down to his account and as soon as he had done a few more things, he would give him that long promised whipping.

I could not refrain laughing at the whole scene & dialogue & feeling very very confident that many a Hessian’s nose would be rouged before Uncle would take the trouble to chastise a servant.

Uncle had not long taken his morning walk to the Farm, when a carriage drove up and a gentleman alighted on the Portico, & from my window I saw him step up to the front door with such an air of assurance that he w[oul]d be admitted that I thought it must be one of the family. He was a tall stout man with a moustache wh[ich] gave him a foreign appearance. I could not imagine who he was, but, am sorry to say I felt a little inhospitably at the thought of being interrupted in a very agreeable interview with one of my absent friends. The Servant soon brought up a card with this insignia “Mr. Crawford Villa Nigronei”⁶⁷ I laid it upon my toilette & began to dress to receive the visitor, not imagining, however, that he was a person I should derive any pleasure from seeing – I soon finished ~~my~~ dressing and hastened in to the parlor. It is almost an involuntary practice of mine, to shake hands with both Ladies and gentleman upon first introduction, if they manifest the slightest inclination to do so. On the present occasion, the person advancing to meet me, looked rather coarse & as the french say, gauche, and when he extended his hand, I merely bowed & took my seat. He made many apologies for having interrupted me, but, said he was not at all prepared to find Mr Custis out & hearing from the servant that his niece & two grandchildren were here, he had taken the liberty of sending his card to me. The intellect in his countenance pleased me more & more every minute & in my turn, I made a most hospitable reply. He observed, that he wished particularly to see Mr Custis, to ask

⁶⁵ This might refer to Valentin de Boulogne’s 1639 painting *The Four Ages of Man*.

⁶⁶ Justin Smith Morrill (1810-1898). From 1855 to 1867 he was a representative rather than a senator. However, he did become a senator after that.

⁶⁷ Thomas Gibson Crawford (1814-1857) was a sculptor who was most famous for creating the Statue of Liberty atop the U.S. Capitol and the statue of George Washington in Richmond, Va. He died on October 10, 1857 – the same day as G.W.P. Custis. Villa Negronei was his home on the Esquiline Hill of Rome.

in reference to some costumes for his statues. The agreeable fact then dawned upon me, that I was conversing with one of our most distinguished American Sculptors. I then said, I think I have heard my Uncle speak of you – “It is probable,” he modestly replied. It was not until his departure, that I remembered, that I had not even intimated that I had ever heard of his fame, except from Uncle, whereas I have always read with interest, the the mention of him, as it has occurred in the papers. Mr C took an interest in the Paintings around the room and soon discovered that I was an enthusiastic admirer of the arts – there needed no stronger bond to make us friends. We talked on from one subject to another until, almost unconsciously to myself I had become so well acquaint that I was induced to show him not only the leather frame, which I had just made, but, the little picture of Les Quatres Ages, wh[ich] I had regarded as finished, though I intended to put on it a few more touches. I asked Mr C to point out such defects as struck him particularly & he did so with great delicacy & many apologies – saying at the same time, that he had seen many a worse picture, by artists of great pretentions & that some parts of it were really very well done. He urged upon me the necessity of perseverance and hoped I would one day come to Italy – that if I did I must be sure to go to his house in Rome and there he would do everything for me, to facilitate my progress in the arts. He alluded to what I have often thought must be the fact, that there is an inspiration in being associated with those of the same taste & profession, and in a place so renowned for its monuments of art. My feelings were wrought up to a pitch of perfect enchantment at the contemplation of all these things and I felt that I would give the world to go to Italy and study painting as a profession. “Give all your time to it now, Miss Williams, for soon you will have to turn it to other things, said Mr C looking insinuatingly” – Oh no! said I, I feel as if I should like never to marry, but to give all my time & attention of the arts. Oh! but, you may be married and still persue your painting he said – Mrs Crawford does.⁶⁸ He then said that he had a notion when he was quite young that he must not think of matrimony, but, like all other artists, must live in a hole and have everything in confusion around me & so I went out to Italy and after remaining there, I think he said twelve years, a Miss Ward came with her family. She took an enthusiastic interest in the arts (as you do, he said looking at me) – we saw a great deal of each other – we took pleasure in the same persuits and at last we began to feel that we were necessary to each others happiness and so, whether she proposed or I, I know not but so it was one day, we concluded to be married (I suppose she knows who proposed, I laughingly interrupted). How well I remember He said (mentally going back to Rome) & ~~soliloquising~~ – it was one day in St. Peter’s just after “the Miserèri”⁶⁹ – It is well “the Miserèri” did not come after that, said I still laughing. He laughed too, but, continued in the same sentimental strain to relate the history of his Life.

[The next paragraph was written after the one that followed it. To put it back in order, Markie wrote above it, “Continuation from opposite page.”]

He said they wished to be married immediately, but, their friends would not be satisfied, until they consented to return to America. This, he said seemed very foolish in their eyes, but, to pacify all parties they crossed the ocean & were married with all due form & ceremony & had a

⁶⁸ Louisa Ward Crawford (1823-1897). She was a sister of Julia Ward Howe, who wrote “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

⁶⁹ “Miserere Mei,” meaning “Have mercy on me,” is the Latin name for Psalm 51. It is chanted on Maundy Thursday during Holy Week.

grand reception &c &c & then sailed for Italy. My wife he said was an orphan, so that she had no very strong ties in her own country so that we shall always live in Italy.⁷⁰

[*Returning to the order in which the paragraphs were written, Markie wrote, "Now, read at the top of this page."*]

"Oh, said he, there is nothing like a woman – to love one, as she does me – she sympathises in all my pursuits – as I said, she is herself somewhat of an artist. She takes an interest in all I do & never intervears [interferes] with me in any respect. She assists me in my labors – I think a great deal of her opinion – and she feels a pride in hearing me praised, so that really he said, with enthusiasm which was nearly tender emotion ["S]hould anything now occur to deprive me of her, I do not know what I should do." I listen with rapture at this recital, novel as it was refreshing, in these days when marriage, appears to be in eyes of most, a civil contract (and not long has it even ~~the~~ civility to grace it) or a trivial pastime. He then said, he had been married twelve years, and had four little cherubs. That God had greatly blessed him in every respect – I felt a still greater regard for him when I heard him give praise to God.

But, suddenly starting back, as if alarmed at the unreserve with wh[ich] he had spoken to me, he said – But, why sh[oul]d I be telling you all this – I have been speaking to you with as much confidence and unreserve, as if I had known you all my life – when in fact, we have never been introduced – but, then, he said as if he had found an all sufficient reason – "We are both artists – theres the mesmerism" – I felt at that moment as if I could have sunk through the earth and involuntarily exclaimed – "Oh! don't say that, you make me feel about three inches high." Come to Italy he said and I will make you feel higher than that. There ~~is~~ was so much straightforwardness & sincerity in Mr Crawfords manner, so much genius in his expression & so much knowledge evinced in his criticism of my picture that I felt during his whole visit a constant sense of intellectual enjoyment.

It was two or three hours, before Uncle made his appearance – when he did, it was but a continuance of pleasure. Uncle showed him the pictures in the Hall & parlor & took him in his studio to see the Battle of Trenton. Such a scene of confusion as that Studio was – there lay his Pallet & brushes on the floor (the paint side downwards) dust was a fraction of an inch deep upon everything – the old Mt. Vernon table was covered with paints and papers, the Harpsichord & Gen Washington's old trunk, grey with dust – cobwebs festooned the room – but, Mr Crawford did not look astonished – I suppose he had seen such places before – He confined his attention to the picture & to Uncle's narrative of the figures in it – seemed much interested – said he supposed the picture was accurately historical – praised the arrangement of it &c &c – Uncle told him about Mr Leutzer's Battle of Trenton⁷¹ – said that his Washington looked like an over-fed Butcher violently charging upon his own troops – for the enemy were not to be seen. That was not the Chief's manner, Sir, at all – continued Uncle. – He was always calm and collected – I told Mr Leutz so – He came here, and asked my opinion & counsel about the picture – he went away and painted it in no respect as I suggested. There he has a dog in the fore-ground lapping

⁷⁰ Louisa Ward Crawford's mother died in 1824, and her father died in 1839. She married Thomas Crawford five years later, in 1844.

⁷¹ Markie meant "Washington Rallying the Troops at Monmouth" by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze (c.1851). She may have written the wrong name because her uncle was discussing Trenton and Leutze's more famous work, "Washington Crossing the Delaware," depicts events immediately before the attack on Trenton.

water and it is a historical fact, that at the battle of Monmouth, hundreds died for want of water – that is notorious, Sir!

I had heard dear Uncle, many times before relate this, and I felt anxious to hear something from Mr Crawford. He was however extremely reserved on the subject of his own works. When interrogated, however, he conversed most agreeably. I think he told me, he worked four years, before he produced anything worth speaking of. He spoke in the most frank and friendly manner of his Brother Artists, Powers, Chapman the Painter &c &c –⁷² I was somewhat surprised to hear him say that the Pictures in the Rotunda at the Capital, were after all very fine pictures (referring to Chapmans & Trumbull's).⁷³ Do you think Chapman's fine, said I, for I had always heard my dear father criticize them as flat. "Well, he replied (rather hesitating) they have some faults, but they are good pictures – the figures are well arranged & the and [*sic*] they are accurately historical – that is a great thing – there's nothing like it." This love for truth in Mr C evinced a high moral tone of character which added to his other charms.

Mr. C has just returned from Richmond whither he has been, to take two of the Bronze statues, belonging to his group around the equestrian statue of Washington. I think he said the statues were each 12 feet high. The U. States Ship Merrimac, lately launched at Philadelphia is to be or has been, sent to Amsterdam for the Equestrian Washington. He said he could not bear that Washington should come over in a Merchantman & spoke with great satisfaction of this arrangement made by government. As he looked at the incompletd dome of the Capitol, from the front door, he said he was going to make a statue of America for it.

Mr. C's conversation with Uncle & vice versa were so very instructive & agreeable, that I was sorry I had not a pencil & paper that I might take notes of it.

Before leaving he took out a little pocket note book (just like one I had in Europe by the bye) and asked me to write my name in it, and my address, for, said he when I go back to Rome, I shall want to send you something. I most willingly wrote my name, not so much because I wanted him to send me anything, as because I wished to be remembered by one, who had afforded me so much pleasure.

The [*word crossed out*] artist expressed great pleasure in having made my acquaintance, wh[ich] sentiment I warmly reciprocated – and after three hearty shakes of the hand & three goodbyes, – quite a contrast to the meeting, when I would not give him one – we parted friends. Some of my more practical friends, might laugh at so sudden a friendship, but, to those who have felt the sentiment, what is a stronger bond, than similarity of taste & feeling? – surely, there is none more pure & exalted!

After looking at & admiring my Leather Leaf Frame Mr C suggested that the Leaves might be colored any color & that green w[oul]d be pretty.

Arlington House Va.

[Friday] Aug 15, 1856

⁷² Hiram Powers (1805-1873) and John Gadsby Chapman (1808-1889).

⁷³ John Gadsby Chapman's "Baptism of Pocahontas" (1840) and John Trumbull's "Declaration of Independence" (1826) are still on display in the U.S. Capitol rotunda

This afternoon, came Mr Waldo,⁷⁴ the Chaplain to the House of Representatives – a very aged man – numbering 94 years.

Uncle had expressed a great desire to see him & sending him a message to that effect, Mr W came over. Uncle, accustomed himself to be saluted as the veteran & the venerable, seemed to feel himself quite a boy by the side of Mr Waldo. In fact, he was only born, when Mr W had arrived at the age of twenty years, or within a few months of it.

Mr. Waldo, in his appearance & manner of talking, had the Shibboleth of Yankeydom and still, I thought I could perceive the englishman a generation nearer, than we are wont to see it, even in our grandparents of the present day. He totters a little in walking, has lost his teeth – His pronunciation is not in the least impaired, however, and his eye-sight and hearing seem good though I was much surprised to hear him say, he had lost the use of one ear, about six months ago, in listening to the sermon of a methodist minister. He said he had fully intended to prosecute him for dammages, for, he would not have lost his hearing for a thousand dollars, but, he went to consult with a Lawyer as to how to lay the action and he advised him to lay it aside.

If Mr W said this in fun, I could tell from his tone of voice that he felt in very earnestly.

Uncle Custis, hospitable as he always is in the reception of his guests, seemed to feel particularly gratified and honored by the presence of this venerable man. They conversed together all the morning. He, Mr W, told Uncle, of having enlisted in the Army at the age of sixteen in the year [*blank*]⁷⁵ – of his having been taken prisoner by the British & confined three or four months in the famous sugar House, in New York where he endured the greatest suffering & privation.

After dinner, I took my seat by him and conversed on religious topics. He said he had preached a sermon in the Capitol not long since on cruelty to “dumb beasts” (as if there were any of Baalam’s asses⁷⁶ living now, that would make such a distinction necessary) from the text “A Righteous man regardeth his beast, but, the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”⁷⁷ What made you think of preaching a sermon on this subject I said – “Why, he replied some one was telling me how they brought calves to the market in Washington and let them lay there all day in the hot sun – it ruins them for veals, continued he, with so much emphasis that I could not forbear laughing at so mal appropos a parenthesis. “Well said he, I wrote to Mrs Sigourney, being a friend of mine, and asked her if she would compose me a hymn suitable to be sung on the occasion and she sent me one, & it was sung and the sermon was preached, but, I don’t know as it will do any good, for none of the people was there who treated the calves so.” I smiled again, and said I should like to have seen Mrs Sigourney’s Hymn.

The conversation then turned on Mrs S & I observed that her husband had died about a year ago & observed that I had heard their marriage was not a very happy one – Well, said Mr W, I think my case was almost as bad as her’s. I lived fifty one years, with a crazy wife & she

⁷⁴ Daniel Waldo (1762-1864), chaplain of the House of Representatives from 1856-1857. Despite his advanced age, the House of Representatives elected him as their chaplain as a compromise during a time of increasing sectional tension. Perhaps because he only served for one year, Waldo’s name was left off the official list of Congressional chaplains until 2012. The House of Representatives did not successfully elect another chaplain until 1861.

⁷⁵ Daniel Waldo enlisted in the Connecticut militia in 1778, serving for one year before the British Army captured and imprisoned him.

⁷⁶ In Numbers 22:28, God caused the prophet Balaam’s donkey to speak to rebuke him for beating her.

⁷⁷ Proverbs 12:10

just died the fifteenth of last November.” Uncle & myself listened with sympathetic interest. I felt shocked at his mode of expressing himself, but, I do not think it proceeded from any want of affection on his part, as his subsequent conversation proved; – for, he added, that on one occasion, when a Bill came up before the Senate, to enlarge the causes for divorces, and add to them, that of Insanity he had been applied to for his opinion &c and had written a letter, showing that it was no more cause for divorce than a physical infirmity of either party would be. He said that there were no Hospitals in this Country, at the time his wife was taken with this dreadful malady, or for many years afterwards – latterly, he observed, that he had placed her for a short time at Hartford, but could not afford to keep her there. Poor Man! He looked as if he had deeply felt this trial & I doubt not that he viewed it as a christian sh[oul]d do & that it was sanctified to him. When we went to the Tea-Table, the subject being fresh in his mind, he at the time of grace, thanked God that we were not suffering from the the dread affliction of Insanity & that we might ever retain our reason. As none of the other members of the family heard what he had told Uncle & myself, the prayer must have seemed rather foreign to the occasion, however, we had scarcely commenced supper, when he mentioned that he had a most interesting son, who had graduated at Colledge & had just arrived at the age of twenty three, when he died – this, he said turning to Cousin Mary Lee, added to the fact, wh[ich] I believe you are not aware of, that I lived fifty one years with a crazy wife, is enough for one man to bear – don’t you say so? The abrupt manner in wh[ich] this was repeated for the second time in my hearing & the occasion, too, seemed almost more than my rissibles could bear; tho’ indeed I felt for the poor man from the bottom of my heart & was very much ashamed of a nervousness, which is I am glad to say not habitual with me. He did not perceive it though, for he took my arm after tea, with the same cordiality as before and asked me to assist him into the other room. He seemed very fond of music & agreed with me in thinking none so beautiful as Beethoven’s. The old man kissed my hand in a very patriarchal way and asked me to play – as I knew no tunes by his favorite composer, I asked my sweet cousin Agnes to be a substitute for me, at the Piano, which she very amiably consented to do & played “Le Desire,” Gertrude Dream, “The Spirit Waltz[”]”⁷⁸ &c to the great gratification of Mr Waldo, who holding my hand all the time signified to me his impressions, by pantomime expressions. I then sang several little songs, which seemed to please him.

Arlington House Va

[Tuesday] Aug 19, 1856

News of the President’s having convened Congress on the 21st they having adjourned on the 19th without passing the Army appropriation Bill.⁷⁹ What is the country coming to? – Surely, this has been an eventful session in the Annals of Congress.

This morning Uncle asked me to look over Gen. Washington’s papers and get him something to send to Minnesota to some public Institution there. So I went into his Studio while he was there & sat myself down by the little old Trunk & overhauled the dusty papers, talking the while to

⁷⁸ “Le Desire Waltz,” “Gertrude’s Dream Waltz,” and “The Spirit Waltz” are works which were erroneously attributed to Ludwig van Beethoven. None were published in his lifetime.

⁷⁹ President Pierce’s proclamation calling Congress back into session was published on August 19, 1856, in *The Daily Union* and other Washington, D.C., newspapers. Divided over whether or not the Army should be allowed to intervene in “Bleeding Kansas,” Congress failed to provide funding for it.

dear Uncle, who was busily engaged in painting the feet of his large white horse, in the Battle of Trenton.

I found an old letter of George Lafayette's written to Uncle from Paris – this he told me I might have & I shall prize it highly for all its associations.⁸⁰

I am sure if I were to spend time enough in the little anti rooms about Uncle's Studio, I might find amidst the myriad letters, which strew the tables & floors & are stuffed in kegs &c innumerable letters of interest and value – but, although these treasures are & have been, from my earliest recollection, entirely exposed to the mercy of the public, I always feel a delicacy in looking over them – a feeling that they were not addressed to me & were not intended for me to see. Notwithstanding, Uncle always deposes me, to look out autographs of the Genl. for him, whenever occasion requires.

[Wednesday] Aug 20

Mr. Janvier walked over [*word scratched out*] yester afternoon. Our communing was not as agreeable as during his last visit. I had a severe headache. This morning he returned to Washington, accompanying me in a walk through the woods, part of the way. A fresh breeze reminded us of October weather and we enjoyed the beautiful around us. He says he thinks me inconsistent. I wonder what he means exactly. I think I have not shown any variableness in my deportment to him. And yet, in a measure, we are all inconsistent.

[Thursday] Aug 21, 1856

To-day I received most unexpectedly through the Post Office, from Revnd Mr Waldo, Mrs Sigourney's Hymn,⁸¹ copied for me, by himself. I appreciate the kindness so much & will here insert the hymn for the sake of reading it better myself.

Regard the patient ox,
 Regard the laboring steed,
 The Trusty Dog, the peaceful flock
 That in thy pastures feed.

For all their wants provide,
 Protection kind bestow,
 And turn away the tyrant hand
 That seeks to work their woe.

⁸⁰ This letter is in the Custis-Lee Family Papers at Tudor Place.

⁸¹ This poem was later published in *The Daily Counsellor* (1859) by Lydia Howard Sigourney

For in these humble beasts,
 May mute affection flame,
 And faithful virtues that might put
 More selfish men to shame.

Yea, even that abject race,
 The creeping things of earth,
 Since God has made them by his power
 Scorn not their reptile birth.

Draw back the crushing foot;
 Brief is their span of gloom.
 Why lightly quench the spark of life
 Thou never canst relume?

That mystic spark of life!
 Respect its lowest forms,
 Thou who in thy Creator's sight
 Art, but thyself a worm.

September 1856

Sep 1, 1856 Monday –

I have just returned from Tudor, where I have been keeping “Bachelor’s Hall” for a day or two during Aunt Brit’s absence at the Springs – Friday morning Aug 29 – I accompanied Mr Janvier and his Sisters to Mount Vernon – by invitation from Mr J–. The day was a very pleasant one and I think we all enjoyed ourselves. I did from the very fact that others appeared to.

How strong the ties of friendship that can at once interest us in perfect strangers! I felt towards the Miss Janviers as if I had known them all my life & they seemed prompted by reciprocal feelings towards me.

I cannot say that I felt otherwise, any pleasure in going to Mt. Vernon. My visits there on previous occasions, have been with dear Grandmother & her dear image is too sadly recalled, when I go now. My last visit with her, was on the occasion of my dear Aunt Lewis’ funeral.⁸²

⁸² Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis died on July 15, 1852.

The classic associations of the place are strangely mingled with social & domestic associations and the whole place is so overgrown with rank weeds, that I cannot think distinctly of anything & the predominant emotion with me is, a wish to pull up weeds. Surely the only idea of rank that a person can have in going to Mt. Vernon, now, is conveyed through ~~these~~ this noxious species of vegetation.

Mr & Mrs Washington⁸³ were kind & polite – We sat with them for some time in their parlor & they then took us in the Library, where I saw for the first time, Houdon's Bust of Washington wh[ich], by the bye, has been much injured by Clarke Mills⁸⁴ who took a cast from it. There is a fine bust of Lafayette & one of Necker⁸⁵ – Mrs W showed me one of the old Bibles wh[ich] belonged to Gen Washington.

I felt particularly gratified by their attentions to my friends.

Mrs Washington offered Mr Janvier something to drink, which I appreciated, though I do think it a most disgusting way of showing an attention.

Mr. J, his Sisters & myself had (to me) a very agreeable ride through a hard rain to Tudor Place. I regretted the sun did not shine anywhere but in our hearts, for I sh[oul]d like their eyes to have been gratified by the lovely view from the lawn at dear old Tudor.

Montevideo⁸⁶ – Montgomery Co– M — D.

Sep 1856⁸⁷

On Wednesday evening the [blank] of Sep. my friend Mr Janvier & Lt Tidball⁸⁸ of the Army spent the evening with us at Arlington. If there was one feeling that pervaded my heart, more than any other, after their departure, it was that of thorough indifference. The next morning about 8 o'clock Uncle Custis and myself left Arlington en route to rockville Md, to attend the agricultural fair – or rather he had that object in view and I only thought, of meeting there, my relatives from Montanverd⁸⁹ and returning home with them. We took with us little Robert Lee.⁹⁰ We had scarcely arrived on the ground when Mr Richard Bowie of Rockville,⁹¹ the executive officer on the occasion came up & taking Uncle Custis' arm, insisted upon conducting him to the Rostrum or rather Pavillion, beneath which were seated the distinguished guests and officers of the society.

Among them, my relatives, Mr Robert Dunlop, Mr Robert Dick and Maj George Peter. I met Thomas Peter & his Cousin Lizzie, whom I joined and walked around – but, I was fatigued and

⁸³ John Augustine Washington III (1821-1861) and Eleanor Love Washington (1824-1860). They were the last Washingtons to live at Mount Vernon before the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union acquired the site in 1858.

⁸⁴ The sculptor Clarke Mills (1815-1883) produced several copies of Jean-Antoine Houdon's bust which he sold.

⁸⁵ Jacques Necker (1732-1804), France's Minister of Finance during the Revolutionary War.

⁸⁶ Montevideo was the home of John Parke Custis Peter.

⁸⁷ The agricultural fair Markie mentions below began on September 11, 1856, meaning Markie wrote this entry sometime in the week afterward.

⁸⁸ John C. Tidball (1825-1906), an army officer who later served in the Union horse artillery.

⁸⁹ Montanverde in Montgomery County, Md. It was the home of George Peter (1779-1861), a former Maryland Congressman who was Markie's great uncle.

⁹⁰ Robert E. Lee, Jr. (1843-1914)

⁹¹ Richard Bowie (1807-1881), a two-term congressman from Maryland who served 1849-1853.

dusty and my head ached and I did not know & did not feel interested in the place, the people or the things around me. If Two or three of my Cousins, filled ~~the charitable offices of~~ by turns, the charitable office of going and staying beside me. I say charitable, for it could not have afforded them the slightest degree of pleasure, to be in my society under the circumstances. I appreciated their self-sacrificing dispositions, though I said nothing.

Mr. Bradley, a lawyer of Washington delivered an address – so did a Mr Davis of Rockville⁹² –

October 1856

Arlington House [Saturday] Oct 11 – 1856

This afternoon, Cousin Mary Lee, little Millie & myself drove over to Washington, to meet dear Uncle Custis at the Depot at 7 o'clock – going early, we had time to call at the President's House to see the Lady Presidentess, who being out, we made several other visits. Arrived at the cars, Cousin Mary was too suffering to get out, so I took Millie and wended my way through the line of hacks and hack-drivers to the rendez-vous. It was not many minutes, ere the bell rung, which announced the entrance of the cars into the Depot. As the passengers, came out and passed through the gas lit area, I gazed intensely at each one – I laughed to think how intensely, afterward, because it is hardly to be supposed that he could have changed so much in a week, that I should not know him at a coup d'oeuil⁹³ besides, at his age, it is not to be supposed, ~~that~~ that his movements would be so alert that I could not make a full investigation as he passed. These were my thoughts, as I saw at a little distance ~~advancing~~ a way-worn traveller ~~slowly~~ wrapped in a large blue cloth cloak lined with red, a straw hat and a large ~~oaken~~ cane, slowly wending his steps towards us. I ~~thought~~ said to myself, how could I ever have imagined that I could ever have taken Uncle for any one else. Poor Uncle! He looked so old, so wearied, that my joy at seeing him was mingled with sadness. His appearance seemed to say I cannot go much farther on the march of life. As soon as he entered the area, I took Millie's hand & ran up to him. He seemed most delighted & surprised to see us. Embraced me two or three times in the most affectionate manner – & with many endearing epithets to us both, said it was so kind in me to have thought of coming over for him. We paused until the crowd had a little dispersed and I insisted on taking his little black glazed travelling bag, but, fatigued as he was, I knew it was his spirit of gallantry which ~~pre~~ prompted him to resist my entreaties. He at once commenced telling me of the kindness of every one he had met & his great appreciation of it. Gratitude is a striking characteristic of my beloved Uncle.

His visit to Philadelphia, was altogether agreeable – the Fair was wonderful – he had never seen so many people together in his life. Cousin Smith Lee⁹⁴ & his family had done every thing thing [*sic*] to make him comfortable and he had a very happy time with them. The crowd had by this time dispersed & I piloted my dear Uncle out to the carriage, which was some distance in the rear of a mass of hacks; not, however without the importunities of that most officious set of the human family, hack-drivers. They as usual beset us on all sides – Uncle seemed disposed to parley with them, but, my answers were satisfactory all around – namely, that we had our own

⁹² The *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), for September 12, 1856, states these were J.H. Bradley and Allan Bowie Davis.

⁹³ “At a glance.”

⁹⁴ Sydney Smith Lee (1802-1869), an older brother of Robert E. Lee and a captain in the U.S. Navy.

carriage & I knew exactly where it was standing – this seemed to remove all doubts as to its not being standing at all, which some seemed to entertain.

There was never a more perfect night than this – the moon was refulgently bright as we rode home and old Arlington with its massive pillars, looked like an old castle. Uncle remarked “how beautiful the house looks by moonlight!” and truly the old mansion and its surroundings could not be exceeded at least in our partial eyes.

I ~~shall~~ made Uncle’s return a subject of special prayer and thanksgiving. The house seemed so lonely without him. When I told him so, & said how much I had missed him, he said in the kindest ~~voic~~ tone “And I have missed you, too, Markie” & kissed me so affectionately.

This day ~~was~~ has been as beautiful as the 11th of Oct 1883 [1853], when ~~in~~ the grand old ship Atlantic, sailed out of the harbor of New York, with my lonely homesick self, among her passengers.

Dear Uncle was so kind as to think of bringing me a Philadelphia Paper with his speech in it – Speech made at the Agricultural Fair – I shall prize it highly!⁹⁵

Arlington [Sunday] 19 of Oct – 1856

A lovely indian-summer sabbath, but, I was not well enough to resort to the sanctuary of God, where it is always my duty & my pleasure to be when providence permits.

I spent the day in reading my bible and in translating “Dieu est infiniment bon,”⁹⁶ A little Tract sent me by my faithful and kind spiritual friend Mr Shiras.

When I had finished it, dear Uncle came in & took his seat by me at the fire. Fearing that he might think I remained at home to write letters (and yet he could not think so, knowing my principles as he does) I explained that I was translating a little french tract.⁹⁷ “It is very well, he replied, to keep up your knowledge of the language – it is a thing easily forgotten without constant application.” While saying this he lit his segar and went out of the room. As I mused on his remark, I felt sorry to think that he should ~~think~~ believe that I had taken the sabbath morning, merely to improve myself in French. I feared that this seemingly negligent conduct would not redound to the glory of God and I determined to take the first opportunity of effacing such an impression from my dear Uncle’s mind. When he returned to the parlor, & took his seat before the fire, I said to him, “Uncle, I have just finished the translation of my little Tract, will you listen to it?” Yes, my dear,” he replied laying down the book he had in his hand and assuming a listening posture. I commenced, but, had not proceeded many pages, when the carriage drove up and Uncle went out as he usually does, to help the family out of the carriage on their return from Church. There was of course no more reading. Dinner was soon ready. After dinner, Uncle, without waiting for his cup of coffee, went to his studio. I made the coffee, as that is always my provence, and took Uncle’s cup in to him. “My kind Markie,” he said, as with palet an[d]

⁹⁵ The U.S. Agricultural Society’s Fair took place in Philadelphia on October 7-11, 1856. The article Markie mentions was likely “The United States Fair at Powelton,” published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on October 11, 1856. The article summarizes his speech, which was mostly about agriculture but also included several references to life at Mount Vernon and keeping alive the memory of George Washington.

⁹⁶ *Dieu est infiniment bon* (1843) by Napoléon Roussel.

⁹⁷ This French tract was likely *Midi à Quatorze Heures*. Markie’s translation of the first chapter of that book is in the National Park Service collections at Arlington House.

brushes in hand he turned around & saw me approaching – “how much trouble you give yourself for me” “It is never any trouble and taking putting down his things he took the cup in one hand & putting his other arm around me affectionately kissed my forehead. “It is never any trouble to do anything for you, dear Uncle,” I said. “Dear, good Girl!” he gratefully ejaculated & then drawing my attention to his picture, he began to give me a history of Col. Bonnar⁹⁸ whose outline he had just made on the canvas. “He is a fierce looking fellow! – is not he? Just as he said this Col Bonnar’s proportions form in all its fearful proportions dawned upon my astonished vision and I could not suppress an outburst of laughter.

“Yes, very fierce,” I said – don’t you think he is rather long, Uncle?” Well yes rather – but, you see, he is to be filled out, yet – besides, you must remember he is in the foreground. You see he must be much larger, than those officers & men in the rear. You see he is leaning on his drum – that [*word scratched out*] idea I got (I pick up ideas here and there as I do anecdotes) from [*blank*] life of General Pearson.⁹⁹ “Poor Bonnar!” he continued, he and [*blank*] were the only American officers killed on that memorable occasion.

There were two British officers killed[.]

I felt interested and could have remained an hour longer listening to the interesting details of Uncle’s picture; but, I remembered it was Sunday, and, I ought to be otherwise employed and I took advantage of the first pause to retire. It always pains me, to see Uncle spend the sabbath in painting. It seems a desecration of the day, and yet I doubt not, he remembers the day, as he sits there alone & perhaps thinks more of serious subjects than many who seem to pass it more innocently. I ~~do~~ never go in the studio, however, on Sundays except on special missions, which do not often occur. In the afternoon, Uncle went to the little tabernacle in the woods to he[a]r Mr Potter.¹⁰⁰ I was sorry not to be well enough to go with him.

Monday 20 Oct.

I was confined to my bed nearly all day – I heard a horseman drive up to the door & upon inquiry, heard that it was the president’s messenger, with a note ~~fr~~ of invitation from his excellency, to Uncle, to sup with him at eight o’clock.

Uncle went and did not return until twelve o’clock at night.

Arlington House Virginia [Tuesday] Oct. 21, 1856

This morning, about ten o’clock, a buggy drove up – Mary Lee was sitting in the portico making leather frames, in somewhat negligent attire. I was in the parlor, hearing Mildred her French

⁹⁸ According to a letter from George Washington to Patrick Henry, July 4, 1778, Lt. Col. Bonner of Pennsylvania was one of only two “officers of rank” killed at Monmouth. Dr. William Read’s account of the battle states that Bonner was carried off the field by six men after he was mortally wounded. According to Benson Lossing’s article on Custis’s paintings, Bonner appears in the bottom left next to a drum.

⁹⁹ There was no “General Pearson” at the Battle of Monmouth. Markie may have meant General John Paterson (1744-1808), who was at the battle.

¹⁰⁰ Henry C. Potter later wrote, “Mr. Custis, who was an old man, often went to sleep when I spoke in Arlington Chapel and was fortunate in being able to do so, for very poor preaching it was...” This is quoted in Eleanor Lee Templeman, *Arlington Heritage: Vignettes of a Virginia County* (Privately published, 1959), 176.

Lessons. Uncle had gone to the farm, feeling very much the worse for his night's dissipation and Cousin Mary, ~~being~~ quite unwell had not left her room.

Mildred completed her lessons in a few minutes after and I went out in the hall to see who had come. Mary ~~emerged~~ came out from the ~~parlor~~ drawing room, telling me that the President had caught her in dishabille – that he had come over to see Uncle, saying which, she went out in the yard to find a servant to send for him. While I was standing at the back door meditating whether my appearance was sufficiently *comme il faut*,¹⁰¹ to present myself before his august excellency, he came out into the Hall. He immediately recognized me and bowed affably. I advanced and he came up and gave me his hand & introduced me to Mr Tilden of Boston.¹⁰² I was mantled in blushes at this [*word scratched out*] unexpected rencontre & commenced to apologize for my morning costume. He waved all apology, saying the hour was so early. I regretted that Uncle had just gone to the farm, but, we had sent for him. He said he would not give us the trouble to do that, that he would ride down & see him there. That he had felt very anxious about his coming home last night. I remarked that Uncle had expressed an appreciation of his great kindness in urging him to stay &c – “Yes, he said I was very anxious for him to stay – Mrs Pierce had had his room prepared & was much disappointed when she heard he could not be prevailed on to occupy it.” I told him, that Uncle could never be persuaded to break in upon long established rules, and that it was one of his, never to stay away from home at night, when it was within the range of possibility to get there. He asked to see Sharpless[’s] likeness of Washington as he said he thought that so peculiarly expressive of what he apprehended as the character of General Washington. We asked then in the back parlor where it hung over the Mantle piece. Mildred was astonished to be molested in her lessons, by the intrusion of the President; however, she went on with her writing without paying any attention. I then went up stairs to get Grandmama Washington’s miniature, which they both seemed to admire extremely. The President expressed regrets that the atmosphere was so hazey that the view was obscured as he said he thought the view from here was the most beautiful he had ever seen. After looking at the pictures with much interest and hearing from Marie¹⁰³ & I the discription of each, he made motion to depart. I sent my kind remembrances to Mrs Pierce and Marie & myself both said we hoped that she would soon come and see us. He said that she was not very well, but, he would bring her over as soon as she was better, &c &c –

When Uncle returned he said he missed seeing the president. I told him that we had entertained him &c – He said he went down to the Spring and enquired for him but, missing him left his compliments and regrets.

Uncle seemed very sorry not to have seen him, coming up to me as I sat at the little table writing and putting his hand on my head he kissed my forehead & said in his kind way, “Markie I am glad I have such a good representative as you when I am not at home.”

It seems almost egotistical, writing so much about myself, but affection and kindness are so greatful to my heart, that I ~~treasure~~ garner up, all these kindly epathets – all these affectionate appellatives – they have often been balm to my sad heart and I feel that it may some day be a

¹⁰¹ “As necessary”

¹⁰² The Tilden family was famous in Massachusetts. It is unclear which of its members Markie meant.

¹⁰³ “Marie” and “Marie la fille” appear to be French nicknames to distinguish the younger Mary Lee from her mother.

melancholy pleasure to peruse this treasury of ~~kin~~ fond words, when the lips of my dear Uncle can utter them no more. So will I embalm his ~~memory~~ heart!

[*Added later*] Uncle said he expected, from the informality of his invitation that the President's party was to be very small, but, was astonished to find his Cabinet, the Army & Navy & officers of Militia & city authority present – In fact, a company of two hundred. Somewhat a motly crew. Uncle remarked that one of the company being somewhat auxilerated with the President's good wine walked up to his excellency and by way of making a pleasant little speech, said – Sir, I respect you most highly – yes, I have the very highest respect for you – but, I don't vote for you – no sir, I don't vote for you." Uncle said the President replied in a very ~~ple~~ affable tone, "Oh never mind, never mind that – you vote for who you please."

I do not know that I have heard anything for a long time, which has more excited my ire. Such a breach of propriety! A positive moral atrocity! I am sure had I been there and heard the chief Majestrate of the Nation so insulted, ~~I think~~ it w[oul]d have been difficult for me to forbear (if I was a man, I mean) taking the aggressor by the ears and putting him out of the house. I am sure his ears must have been long enough to have taken a good hold.

[Wednesday] Oct. 22

The family all went to Alexandria today, leaving Uncle & myself to keep each other company. Having promised Uncle to look up some of Gen Washington's autographs, I thought I sh[oul]d not probably have a more appropriate convenient occasion. I therefore repaired to the Studio, where I found him painting. After his usual affectionate salutation, he commenced as ~~was~~ ~~his~~ is his wont to tell some interesting nar[r]ative or make some intelligent remarks on the subject of his picture. I remarked that I was going to look over the General's papers, and get those autographs, apologizing at the same time for my remisness in not having done it before according to his request. He said it was no matter – not to fatigue myself if I did not feel well – another day would do ~~as well~~ – or to have the old Trunk dusted and taken in the parlor and put on a chair before the fire – I would get cold if I remained in his studio – [*several words scratched out*] I thanked him for his kind solicitude, but, said it was not very cold and placing a little stool before the old Trunk I opened it and began my search.

"Uncle, said I, may I have an autograph for Mr Janvier?" Yes my dear," he replied cheerfully – "I suppose we shall see Mr Janvier, before long."

"He did not intend to remain long in Philadelphia," I said, "I shall be glad to see him again" he continued – "Yes," I faintly replied.

"May I also get one for Mr Crawford – what Crawford? – The Artist Sculptor – Yes, my dear. I may not have time to get them all to day, I said, but, I will keep in mind that I have the permission[.]

Uncle said he was surprised to hear Mr Crawford speak slightly of Mr Mills' statue of Jackson in Laf[a]yette Square. This led him to speak of Powers. "Powers, said he, is par excellence, at the head of the Art – no one has a word to say against him. Did I ever tell you of a

compliment paid him by Thanwalsden?¹⁰⁴ I do not now remember it, although you once told me – What is it?” – Mr Wilde a gentleman from South Carolina who was in Congress some years ago, (and a most interesting man he was – poor fellow he is dead now) told me, that he went to see Thanwalsden at Rome – Upon entering his room the great Sculptor said to him, “well sir you are just from Florence, I believe, how is God Almighty’s Powers?” Mr Wilde replied that he need hardly ask him what he thought of him as an artist, after what he had just said –

“Sir, answered Thanwalsden, “I think him not only the greatest sculptor living, but, the greatest sculptor that ever will live.” Uncle told this with so much gusto.

As an evidence of Uncle’s great kindness of feeling he remarked the other day at the table, “Markie my dear, I told you I saw our friend Mr Janvier in the street in Philadelphia the other day – I would have got out of the omnibus to speak to him, but, he was walking very fast & going in a contrary direction. I was going to the Navy Y[ar]d and the omnibuses were all crowded & had I gotten out, I should have lost my chance entirely and more than probably, lost sight of Mr Janvier who w[oul]d then, have been at some distance.” “Oh! certainly, I said, I suspect Mr J w[oul]d have been very glad to see you, but, he would not expect you to get out of an omnibus to speak to him.”

Dear Uncle! he is so sincere – so friendly – so unaffectedly cordial – so social – so affectionate! No one ever appreciated his character more than I do.

Last evening, he said to Cousin Mary & myself who were sitting with him in the parlor at twilight – “Well, my children, I must go out and smoke my segar” – you need not go out, said Cousin Mary – smoke it here. “Oh! yes, I must go out, ~~he replied~~, it would kill our dear Markie to smoke in her presence, he said affectionately and, at the same time coming up and kissing me, two or three times. “Oh! No Uncle smoke here – I can bear it – don’t go out – do stay. No Markie, I don’t want you to bear anything that is disagreeable if I can help it – and he went out.

December 1856

Arlington House

Christmas evening [Thursday, December 25] 1856

Under the influence of deep feeling, it is difficult for me to find words sufficiently expressive to embody my thoughts, it is for this reason, that I have ~~failed to~~ noted down in my journal some of the most interesting events of my life; but, were I to fail to record the mercies of the past day, it would seem, that I failed to give glory to that God unto whom, my heart is now overflowing with gratitude.

Scarce had the day broke, ~~The~~ when “Merry Christmas!” and “Christmas gift!” of the children ~~echoed~~ chimed through the crack of our chamber door which in anticipation of a matinal invasion had been secured by lock ~~before retiring~~ ere we retired the evening before; but, all chance of sleep was at an end. ~~We~~ Mary & I consequently after vain attempts at sleeping, arose later than usual – ~~dispensed~~ took our breakfast, dispensed our Christmas gifts & prepared for ~~christ~~ church.

¹⁰⁴ Bertel Thorvaldsen, the Danish sculptor

For many months, we have been in great terror of meeting the Rail Road cars on our trips to Washington & Alexandria but, hearing that they had made many ineffectual attempts to get thoroughly under weigh, we had now banished them from our minds. I had always said, since an accident caused to the carriage about six weeks since, by wh[ich] I was very much hurt, that when we saw the cars approaching I should stop the carriage and get out – What was my [*word scratched out*] astonishment then, as we were driving close along side the rail-road to hear Mary exclaim with a countenance filled with horror, Oh! here are the cars! – Daniel stop, stop the carriage! The cars passing so much more rapidly than the carriage, however, ~~made~~ I suppose made me believe, that the carriage had stopped and opening the door I sprund [sprung] from it. As might have been foreseen, I was thrown to the ground, on my back, striking my head with considerable force. My feelings upon finding myself in this position were indiscribable – [*several words scratched out*] “Oh God! Why is my life sapared [spared] ~~a third time~~ again!” I ~~fa~~ remember to have heard myself faintly exclaim. I soon arose & walked toward the carriage wh[ich] ~~when I arose~~, was still going on – for it appears that the coachman could not be made to hear & was entirely unconscious of my exit, notwithstanding the repeated attempts from Mary to arrest his attention.

The cars had also passed, but, ~~but~~, I felt that the people in them had seen me fall and I feared I had made an indelicate exposier of my under garments – this really distressed me more than any physical pain I was suffering & ~~This~~ was greatly augmented, by Mary Lee’s observing when I was in the carriage again “Well, I suppose this will be in the papers to-morrow – I hope they get the right name – for I w[oul]d not wish any one to think it was me. The cars stopped as soon as they could and all the people looked out of the windows & a gentleman came forward and asked the coachman if the Lady was hurt. I thanked him ~~for~~ mentally for the delicacy he showed in not looking in the carriage.

Like the mother who was going to whipp~~ed~~ the child for falling down stairs & breaking her neck my cousins filled up the time between the accident & our arriving at the church door in greatly upbraiding me for my foolishness – “You,” they said, “who ~~prize~~ pride yourself on your great presence of mind.”

If there is anything calculated to humble oneself in there own eyes, it was such a fall as mine – Perhaps I had prided myself on my presence of mind ~~though~~ this is perhaps one of “the things we do” that “we would not” as St. Paul says – but, now, at all events, my pride was deeply mortified & this allusion, ~~was deeply~~ wounded me to the quick.

To jump from a carriage, when the carriage is in rapid motion, does seem, I acknowledge, perfect madness – it is what I have often said of others myself & I do not blame others for making the same remark, but, “there is a time for all things.” No one knows what he w[oul]d do, unless exactly situated in a similar circumstance – this teaches me a lesson of charity – in speaking & judging of others actions.

1857

February 1857

Arlington [Tuesday] Feb 24, 1857

Yesterday, Feb 23^d Mary Lee & myself, accompanied dear Uncle Custis into Alexandria to the celebration of Washington's Birth-day. We have heard, since, that it was designed that an escort should meet the carriage & escort us into Town, but, in consequence, of Uncle's great anxiety to get into town in time (a sort of idiocyncricy of Uncle's always to be before the time) we did not receive the honor until the carriage stopped at Mrs Fitzhu's¹ to put Mary & myself out – four or five marshalls then rode up & surrounded the carriage. ~~Marie~~ Dear Uncle had on his ruffled shirt an inseperable habilliment on all state occasions, but, Marie & I grieved much at the deplorable color of his coat & vest & the incongruity between them & his pants, the former being a light-dingy brown or snuff color & the latter a dismal grey – however, we were consoled to find that on the Rostrum with his back to the light they were not so remarkable, as we feared. The procession consisted of the Mt. Vernon Guards,² the Rifle Company, in their new green coats (reminding me of Eugene) the Arlington Carriage, another carriage containing the Orator of the Day, two fire companies with very pretty ~~orn~~ flower adorned engines & a small engine drawn by very small boys in uniform. Upon the very top of one of the Engines sat two little girls dressed in white muslin dresses, low neck & short sleeves, blue saches, wreaths of flowers on their heads & bouquets in their hands – The effect was very pretty – but, my first exclamation was, “Are those ~~live~~ children alive?” and upon being answered in the affirmative expressed my conviction that it could not be supposed that they would live a week after such a performance. I felt an amount of honest indignation which I wanted words to express. How absurd the idea – to use these little immortal beings to decorate a piece of machinery – Instead of making wreathes of natural flowers whose fragility would not admit of so much exposure, they substituted artificial. Why did they not on the same principle, get wax figures to personate the little girls – ~~or~~ gather “immortels” from the fields, rather than from the ranks of ~~see~~ humanity.

Mr. Funston the Orator of the day made a remarkably fine speech at Liberty Hall,³ where the multitude assembled.

It was calculated to do good to the heart, as well as instruct the mind. It does my heart good to see a christian man or woman, show themselves the christian wherever they may be – take every opportunity of showing to the world on which side they stand – using every advantage or occasion which may be offered them for doing good to their fellow creatures. Mr Funston did this eminently in his speech & he showed with all, so much patriotism & research (his topic, of course, Washington). Washington's Farewell address, was read instead of the declaration of Independence & dear Uncle finally delivered an address. He said it was the 68 anniversary wh[ich] he had celebrated.

¹ The Fitzhughs lived at 607 Oronoco Street, Alexandria, Va.

² Mount Vernon Guards, were a militia unit. The *Alexandria Gazette* for February 23, 1857, advertises a ball they were holding that evening. It lists several of the unit's officers. The Alexandria Riflemen were a company within that regiment.

³ David Funsten/Funston (1819-1866), an Alexandria lawyer and future Confederate congressman. Liberty Hall was located on Cameron Street near Royal Street.

Th I observed that Uncle held his hat in his hand all the time he was speaking. This reminded me of his telling Mr Edwin White and Mr Charles Lanman⁴ the other day, that General Washington had as well be painted “without his head as without his hat.” Mr White is the gentleman who is to paint a picture for the Senate Chamber, at Annapolis, of “Washington resigning his commission.” He came to consult Uncle as to the figures in the picture & especially that of General Washington. The artists dined with us and we had a very pleasant day – subjects all agreeable & congenial – Mr Lanman says he is going to bring his paint & brushes & sketch for me my favorite Landscape, between the pillars of the portico. I was sorry not to see Mr White’s picture of a scene on board the May Flower⁵ exhibited at the Capitol. Mr White was a friend of Mr Crawford the artist which was of course, a link between us.

March 1857

Arlington House, Virginia

[Tuesday] March 17, 1857

A Balmy spring afternoon – Feeling unwell physically, and mentally dispirited, I resorted to the garden to try the soothing effects of nature’s beauties; – gathered a little bouquet of lilac crocuses and strolling out to the grave of my dearest Aunt, laid them in the form of a cross on the green turf which covered it, and after gazing around for a few minutes on the desolated grove and heaving an impatient sigh for green leaves & flowers, I retraced my footsteps, unfolding as I walked, a letter just received from my dear friend, Adviser and Counsellor, Dr. F– He does not seem favorable to my literary projects⁶ – fears I would have a great deal of labor and reap little pecuniary profit. This is a blight upon my hopes – I had marked out for myself a little humble course of labor for my pen, the profits of which, I had already dedicated to the precious Brother, whom God has committed to my care. Shall this discourage me, – or shall it not? – I will not decide until I present the subject on my bended knees, before my Almighty Guide & friend, but, I cannot believe that I am to be thus thwarted in what seems so laudable and just. Suppose I do not reap what I hope, I will at least, have the comfort of having tried – having done what I could.

I mistrust my capacity to write satisfactorily for the press, but, how shall I ever learn if I never make the effort. By experience I shall gain Knowledge – If I were writing for fame or the approbation of my fellow mortals, then, the repeated failures wh[ich] I shall meet with in the beginning of my undertaking might prove sources of mortification but, as it is, I do not think they will. I shall have one high aim before me and I shall not see the obstacles, in my zeal to overcome them. Oh! could I only do all I wish, with the encouragement of my best of friends – but, I see this is to be denied me – this is to be one of my trials. I have many other friends – many who could aid & encourage me & who will do so; but, without his approbation, what are they all! – My hands drop beside me, a blush of disappointment burns on my cheek – I feel now, the heavy chain of his friendship, & then, the freedom of being bound by no stronger ties – ties wh[ich] might make ~~duty to sub~~ submission to his suggestions a duty.

⁴ Edwin White (1817-1877) was an American painter. In 1858, he painted *Washington Resigning His Commission*. Charles Lanman (1819-1895) was then serving as librarian for the Department of the Interior. He was also an artist.

⁵ “Signing of the Mayflower Compact” (1855-56) by Edwin White

⁶ Markie began working on a piece for the *Southern Churchman* newspaper. During the summer of 1857 she would also begin work on an autobiographical novel. See appendix for both these texts.

These ~~are~~ were the thoughts wh[ich] filled my mind as I walked along. Approaching the house, I met dear Uncle Custis who had been taking a walk. He joined me and entering into conversation, we walked several times up & down the long road – ~~I had~~ In teaching my little Cousin Mildred Lee this evening, I had noted an incident in American history, to wh[ich] I wished to call my Uncle's attention. As he appeared in a charmingly loquacious & agreeable humor, I availed myself of this opportunity to mention it. This was the beginning of one of the most interesting interviews I have for a long time enjoyed. I inquired what were the vocations of Mr Livingston & Mr Sherman (two of the formers of the Declaration of Independence) after they ~~ceased from~~ finished their term in Congress – Uncle spoke of both in eulogistic terms, but, said there was a very interesting anecdote in connection with Mr Sherman. “You know, said he (wh[ich] I of course did not know) he was a shoemaker. At the time he was in Congress, in 1775 (the second Congress, of wh[ich] John Hancock was President) there was a movement made, to form a committee to inspect the shoes made for the soldiers, when Mr Sherman arose & addressing the President, said “Gentlemen, you know I am not ambitious of honors, but I should deem it an honor to be put on that committee – Why? – because these hands (holding out his hands) have labored at that trade.” “Now, was not that fine – noble – a Roman sentiment,” said Uncle with enthusiastic admiration, in wh[ich] I sympathized – “Many a one in his position continued he, would have been but too glad to sink the shop & all its recollections – but, he had the true spirit. Yes said he I have taken the old fellow by the hand and I assure you I consider it an honor to have done so.

One subject led to another – Gen Washington was a member of Congress from Virginia when he was appointed to take command of the Army – he ~~did~~ went right on to join the Army at Cambridge – my Grandmother did not go but ~~followed afterwards~~ returned to Mt Vernon & followed her husband some months afterwards. Who went on with her said I? “She went in her own chariot (a white chariot with only two seats – all the Gen's carriages were white) with the maid – coachman & footman in livery (white & scarlet) – four horses & two postilions (small little, old timed looking men named Giles & Paris,⁷ they were also dressed in livery).

The coat of arms of the family was upon the panelling of the carriage. My Father & Mother said Uncle, who were recently married – with a liveried groom, accompanied the carriage – they rode all the way [*blank*]⁸ miles from Mount Vernon to Cambridge on horseback.

The soldiers of that time, said Uncle, were many of them, indeed most, gentlemen farmers &c – they much extolled the bravery of my mother & she was on her arrival at head quarters, made a great deal of by the Army.

Did they stop on their way, said I (except for rest & refreshment) Yes, I believe they stayed two or three days in Philadelphia at Robert Morises

All this, I had heard before & perhaps have recorded, but, lest I should have omitted such an agreeable little incident of the domestic annals of our family, I will here take another note of it.

I heard from my dear Brother Orton to-day & am comforted to think he likes his new school and thinks himself in the way of improvement. My great concern now is on account of the religious impressions which he may receive, or rather, the want of religious impressions. Had I known that

⁷ Giles and Paris were both enslaved men.

⁸ The distance between Mount Vernon, Va., and Cambridge, Mass., is about 450 miles.

the Hallowells were Hicksite Quakers⁹ instead as I thought, the old time society, I should not have consented to my present decision, for their creed is nothing more or less than Unitarian. But “there is a destiny that shapes our ends” and taking all things into consideration, this seemed the way marked out by Providence. I therefore will not doubt, but, trust God will out of seeming evil bring good. This may indeed be an ordeal which Divine Wisdom sees fit to subject him, in bringing him to the fountain of truth. Oh! that he may be speedily brought to know & believe the things which belong to his eternal salvation.

Yesterday, Cousin M received a letter from her daughters Annie & Agnes, beaming with spiritual hopes & aspirations. How much it rejoiced my heart to see that these dear children in the days of their youth, desire to remember their Creator.

[The following page appears undated after several blank pages]

The past, have been a particularly interesting weeks to me, although ~~one~~ of full great care & anxiety, on account of my inability to decide on a school for my precious brother[.]

Arlington [Sunday] March 22, 1857

Uncle Custis said this evening that Gen Washington left Mt. Vernon in the year 1775 for Philadelphia – returned there for one night only in [17]81 and remained with the Army until 1783 when he came home by the way of ~~Mt~~ Annapolis – where he resigned his commission[.]

Grandmama always went on to spend the winters at Head Quarters – One of the General aids always accompanied her on her journey – either ~~Tillm~~ Col Fitzgerald or Mead or perhaps Col. Tillman was sent for her[.]¹⁰ Gen Lafayette arrived at Mt. Vernon in 84 – Uncle says he remembers it well.

[Saturday] March 28, 1857

My Birthday – I remembered it by prayer, that I might live more to God & accomplish more for him the remainder of the days of my sojourn in this mortal sphere.

Oh! how the Birthdays come & go[.] I find me as they left me in spiritual knowledge.

Nothing of note has occurred to-day, but the coming home from school of my dear Brother Orton & a good report from Mr Hallowell. This is a source of great pleasure to me.

Yesterday we had a Levée day wh[ich] wound up by a visit from Mr Potter & Mr Morris¹¹ from the Seminary Theological – I met them in my walk & Mr Potter got out of the Buggy & walked with me to the house. The afternoon was lovely & we had a sweet walk – I always enjoy Mr

⁹ Benjamin Hallowell (1799-1877). Beginning in 1824, he operated a school in Alexandria, Va., which Robert E. Lee also attended. It stood near the intersection of Washington and Queen Streets. Hicksites were followers of Elias Hicks (1748-1830), a liberal Quaker who was accused of denying Original Sin, the Trinity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Hallowell mentioned the prejudice against his school on account of supposed “Hicksite proclivities” in his autobiography. See *Autobiography of Benjamin Hallowell* (Philadelphia: Friends’ Book Association, 1883), 177.

¹⁰ John Fitzgerald (?-1799), Tench Tilghman (1744-1786), and Richard Kidder Meade (1746-1805) all served as aides-de-camp for George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

¹¹ Rev. Oliver Morris, pastor of Christ Church, Alexandria.

Potter's visits, for I have few acquaintances more congenial if as much so. I enjoy nothing so much as the society of a true Christian – & of course, when intelligence & refinement combine, as they do in Mr Potter they are doubly agreeable. We have so many subjects in common.

I told of my friend of the dream about the ~~flowers~~ bouquet of flowers, the willow wreath & ~~himself~~ ourselves & he appeared extremely interested & asked me if he might tell his Father the Bishop, to ~~w~~ which in a hasty moment, I replied he might, but, have since regretted that I allowed the transfer of what, to a third person, will doubtless appear very ridiculous.

I criticized Mr P's style of addressing the servants on Sunday in our notable school house – by telling him that he “put the hay too high for the sheep of his flock” – & was quite mortified by his grateful & amiable acknowledgment of his fault, but, he said that his addresses were intended in part for ourselves –

A letter to-night, from my dear friend, Blanche Berard.

Arlington

Sunday eve [March 29, 1857]

Dear Orton has ~~been~~ made me very happy to-day. Instead of seeking some worldly book to read, on this holy day, as he has been wont to do, he went to the Library of his own accord & selected Cummin's Apocalypse¹² wh[ich] he read attentively a portion of the day. This afternoon he went with me to the school-house to hear Mr Potter address – He did not come, but, his place was supplied by one of his brother students. Oh! how ardently do I wish & how devoutly pray, that my dearest Orton may one day become a Minister of Christ.

April 1857

Good Friday – Arlington [Friday] April 10th 1857

Not having enjoyed the privilage of going to Church all Lent I could scarcely realize that this was good Friday but Cousin Mary & myself went into Alexandria to Church & heard a sermon from Mr Dana – the first part of which was, on the original use, design &c of Crosses – He quoted ~~latin~~ & greek in profusion & I thought ~~it~~ the discourse more learned than profitable; in fact, the first part was litirally the Etymology, Syntax and Prosody of Crosses. Towards the end, it was more agreeable to the occasion.

But, when I do not take my wonted pleasure in a sermon, I am sure it is greatly owing to my frame of mind. Oh! that I might always learn from the words of Jesus, wherever I hear them.

After Church, we went down to the stores, where Cousin Mary made many purch[as]es for the house & I circulated about in different stores to get a few little articles of a more tasty nature. My darling Orton hearing that we were in Town came to find us & accompanied me in my peregrinations. We went to Bell's Book store¹³ where I purchased a few good books – some

¹² *Apocalyptic Sketches: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (1854) by John Cumming

¹³ Robert Bell, an English immigrant, ran one of Alexandria's most successful bookstores. It was located on King Street.

to send to the dear children at Staunton,¹⁴ some Tracts for distribution at Fort Ridgley¹⁵ & a pack wh[ich] I intend to give my darling Orton for Sunday reading at school. Good books are such a means of religious profit.

A few minutes after Orton left me, my good friend Mr Potter came in the store telling me he had seen the carriage in Town & had been looking in several of the stores for me. We had a charming chat & tho' so brief, I think I never enjoyed a little interview more. Mr Potter always evinces so much pleasure at seeing me & I most cordially respond for he is one of my greatest favorites. He proposed coming over on Monday week – after he returns from New York whither he is now going – & remaining all night at Arlington & taking me the next day over to the Seminary to stay a day or two with Cousin Hattie Cazanove.¹⁶ It is a most delightful project for I have long wanted to go to see Cousin H & to make the acquaintance of Mrs May & several of the families in the neighborhood –

Arlington April Sunday 26 – 1857

A lovely day – the first really spring day that we have had. Cousin M & myself went to Church. Dr Packard preached – his sermon was excellent, as Mr Potter very justly remarked, “full of illustration” – My precious Brother sat in the pew with me – Mr Potter read the service. After assisting Cousin Mary in the carriage Mr P & Orton walked with me up to Mrs Fitzhughs – the [*word scratched out*] former accompanied us to Arlington & we walked out to the station together in the afternoon – ~~we~~ we talked pleasantly & gathered “Forget-me-nots” & heart’s-ease by the way – the first of these beautiful little fleurs des champs, that I had seen.

~~On my return~~ After Mr. Potter put the hay somewhat more within reach of the sheep of his flock, to-day – still, I think some how or other, the trough is not quite as accessible as it might be. I think if I were about to make a another suggestion to my friend, I would ask him ~~to~~ not to let the discourse flow on, as it were, like the even current of a river – a little more impressement – a ~~pause~~ a slight variation of voice now & then and above all, occasionally a pause – Where the apprehension of the audience is not very acute, it seems to me ~~these~~ this latter is very essential.

‡ The impression which might be created by one sentence, is likely to be effaced by the rapid succession of many.

It is not often that one has to object to fluency in the pulpit; especially, in a theological student.

As we turned our faces homeward, I called to see Charles, who was much of an invalid. The family received me with great kindness & ~~was~~ seemed grateful for my visit. Uncle walked slowly & I over took him & ~~we accompanied him home.~~ we walked home together – I met near the garden gate two gentlemen who turned out to be Mr ~~Poore~~ Ben Perley Poore & Mr Charles Lanman. They were agreeable as usual – Such people carry along with them a kind of interest & in spite of yourself you feel interested in every thing they say –

¹⁴ Agnes and Anne Lee were students at the Virginia Female Seminary in Staunton, Va.

¹⁵ At this time, Markie’s brother Laurence was assigned to Fort Ridgely, Minnesota. Letters he wrote to Markie on April 19 and June 24, 1857 (now in the collections of Tudor Place) inquire with concern why she had not written him. Evidently, the letters and tracts she sent were lost in the mail.

¹⁶ Harriett Stuart Turberville Cazenove (1896-1896), a member of the Lee family who married Louis Albert Cazenove (1807-1852) after 1837.

Arlington [Wednesday] April 29 1857

Yesterday Cousin Mary & myself, rode out to the Seminary where we spent the day with ~~Mrs Cazano~~ Cousin Hattie Cazanove – In the afternoon Mr Potter & Mr Mason came over to see call. After sitting some moments, Mr Potter propose[d] to me to go over to see the Library & putting on my things, I was soon ready to accompany him – The afternoon was lovely & I enjoyed the disengagement from a heated room to the warm spring air & on our way, Mr P– transferred to my hand, a little bouquet of Trailing Arbutus, which he had been all the while holding, and which he told me had gathered for me in the woods –

This most favorite wildflower, presented by a favorite friend, charmed me.

After remaining sometime in the Library & going into an adjoining room to see some very old Parish Records, wh[ich] Bishop Meade had had conveyed there for his perusal, we we went to the Seminary & mounted up into the Belfry to the Balcony above, to see the view, wh[ich] was exceedingly beautiful.

We then called to see Mrs May – The Dr¹⁷ came to the door and we were ushered into his Library. Mrs May was too indisposed to see us. The Dr. told us, with the utmost gravity, that she had been confined to her bed for two weeks – though Mr Potter & myself had seen her as we passed at the Basement window. The good Dr. however evidently believed what he said to have been strictly true – ~~Indeed,~~ We were not a little amused when we came out, to think how surprised ~~the Dr~~ he w[oul]d be, when he found out the state of the case. Mr Potter proposed to me to stand sponsor for a little child, whose mother is a poor woman in our neighborhood & who wants her child baptized next sunday. I look upon it as a deep responsibility & I do not at once feel prepared to decide in the matter. If it is God's will that I sh[oul]d do so, I earnestly pray that I may have strength & grace to persever in the undertaking I begin.

On our return home, from the Seminary we found a note from a gentleman in Washington expressive of Lady Napier's¹⁸ desire to visit Arlington & asking Uncle, if agreeable to him to appoint a day & hour[.]

Arlington House

[Thursday] April 30, 1857 Uncle's 76th Birth-day

I am glad the day was so bright and beautiful, as it was my dear Uncle's Birthday. For there are few whose spirits are more affected by the weather, than his.

Mrs Fitzhugh came out by invitation and spent the day with us – brought with her Mrs Funston of Alexandria.¹⁹

¹⁷ Rev. James May, D.D. (1805-1863), a professor at the Virginia Theological Seminary.

¹⁸ Anne Jane Charlotte Manners Napier (1824-1911), wife of Francis Napier, 10th Lord Napier (1819-1898). Lord Napier served as Great Britain's envoy extraordinaire and minister plenipotentiary to the United States from 1857 until 1859. Embroiled in scandals over his endorsement of the Monroe Doctrine and perceived support of slavery, he was recalled after only two years.

¹⁹ The wife of the previously named David Funston.

Uncle had talked a good deal about his birth-day before it came, but, this morning when I went down early telling him I had made a remarkable effort, on account of its being his Birthday at the same time kissing him and wishing him many happy returns, he looked up from his book and said "I had forgotten it was my Birth-day – Ah! my dear, I shall not have many returns.

Lady Napier having intimated that it was her desire to visit Arlington & if agreeable would like to have a day and hour appointed the subject was discussed at table this morning, ~~whether when~~ ~~sh~~ what day should be appointed. Cousin Mary wishing always to kill as many birds as possible with the same stone, wanted them to come to-day as we were going to have company, but, Uncle said as it was his Birthday perhaps they had better defer it till tomorrow. Cousin Mary did not see the reasoning & looked firmly bent on her plan. I fully appreciated the feeling that prompted what he said he did not want a stranger to meddle with the sacredness of the occasion.

I was so unwell, that I begged Cousin Mary on my account, not to decide on to-day as I felt quite unequal to acting Mistress of ceremonies. It was therefore deferred until the 1st or 2nd of May –

Uncle was more thoughtful than usual & absented himself from the parlor part of the day. He talked with Mrs F – about A[a]ron Burr & Thomas Jefferson for a short time, but, was otherwise more quiet than is his wont.

[Friday] May 1. Gloomy & stormy – No Lord & Lady Napier, to-day, though from an early hour a grand revolution was going on downstairs with Cousin Mary at their head.

Henry & Percy & Billy & George & Mary Anne & Agnes & Marselina²⁰ were all stirring about with scrubbing brushes, brooms &c &c – I dressed my pretty little hanging basket with flowers & suspended it in the parlor window and arranged the books & pictures.

Uncles toilette was immense – that is, he put on a clean shirt out of the regular time – assumed his new coat vest & pants & consented at my request to wear a black silk cravat. I trimmed his moustache on the occasion. The weather was so threatening that we could not decide that it w[oul]d not rain and yet, we felt as if we ought to be ready to receive our guests, whether they came or not.

Cousin Mary also, made great exertions in the dressing line & I am sure felt herself en grande toilette, when she put on her little Paris cap & threw around her, her Mexican scarf, wh[ich] suited well with her black silk dress – but, still I don't think it would ever have occurred to Lady Napier that any effort had been expended on her costume. For myself, I had been so preoccupied in thought all the morning, that except when I arranged the flowers & books, I had had no time to think of our expected visitors – in fact, I had been busy with my pen, from an early hour –

However the hour of 4 o'clock drawing near, I hastened up stairs to prepare – put on my black robe flounced with purple, a rose de chîne bow, ~~wit~~ attached my collar with a Lava breast-pin²¹ & some lovely double flowering cherry clustering with my curls – When I went in the parlor, I found Uncle had ~~pla~~ taken down a little picture of Lo [*the sentence ends here, followed by a large empty space*]

²⁰ Henry Bingham, Perry Parks, Billy Taylor, George Clark, Mary Anne Burke, Agnes Burke, and Marselina Parks, all of whom were enslaved at Arlington.

²¹ A kind of cameo made of igneous rock that was popular in the 1800s.

Yesterday, I sent an article to the Southern Churchman, the first thing of the kind I have ever written & I hope it may do good – I hesitated long, before sending it & me read it over & over, until I was positively incapable of saying whether it was fit to send or not. One would have thought from the time I took to meditate on it that it was to decide the fate of our republic, whereas, I presume, not one in twenty people who read the paper will ever notice it. How much more important our own affairs are to us, than to any one else. And yet I wrote it to benefit some who I thought might read it & as it was the first thing I had ever send to the Press, I layed it before me in prayer and dedicated it to God.

May 1857

Arlington [Saturday] May 2, 1857

I spent the morning in trimming Cousin Mary's spring bonnet, while she read to me "Little Dorrit" by Charles Dickens – We laughed incontrolably over Mrs Sparklers saying & doings – I have seen characters exactly like her's. What is natural and life-like always goes interests.²²

The pouring rain of this morning seemed to exclude all hope of our noble guests, but, it cleared off so pleasantly for a time that I supposed they might come; so, I got Uncles black neck handkerchief & tied it on nolens volens²³ saying at the time "we must at any rate be ready Uncle[.]"

Cousin Mary curled herself on the sofa for her evenings nap, in her calico skirt & sack. Nothing that I could say would induce her to undertake another grande toilette, but, she turned over & said very coolly, "if those people come, you can wake me up[.]" I imagined myself, on the arrival of Lord & Lady Napier (by appointment) going out of the room to wake Cousin Mary up – I could see, en avance, two or three maids running to & fro bringing dress cap & scarf – then, seizing with hasty snatches as they passed out, some of the numerous superfluous articles that littered the room – but, fortunately there was no occasion. The weather was certainly a sufficient excuse for their non-appearance –

Arlington House V– a–

[Sunday] May 10, 1857

Like my name sake, Martha of Scriptural memory, I ~~have been~~ awoke this morning much troubled about many things.

Mr Potter's good letter on Baptism was not answered, nor was my mind quite made up with regard to standing sponsor for Mrs Ellet's little child²⁴ – I had been prevented by indisposition from going to see Mrs Ellet, last week as I had intended and promised & I did not want the

²² It is unclear which character in *Little Dorrit* (1855-1857) Markie is referring to. Edmund Sparkler is the dimwitted character who marries Fanny Dorrit. His mother is named Mrs Merdle.

²³ "Nolens volens" means "whether he wanted to or not."

²⁴ The Ellet family appears on the same page of the 1860 census as the Lees. Cassene Ellet, the "Mrs Ellet" Markie mentions here, was born in 1825 and is listed as being illiterate in the census. Her husband was a farmer with \$800 worth of property. The list of their children includes a boy named William who was born around 1850.

baptism to take place until I had seen her & enlightened her mind a little on the subject – but, it seemed too late, now, to make any other arrangement & it appeared to me, there was no alternative.

I was not well enough to ride in to Alexandria to Church, and walk out to the Station in the afternoon – What was to be done? I finally decided, ~~to write a note to Mr Potter~~ and to stay at home ~~this~~ in the morning and write a note to Mr Potter & tell him that I would consent to stand as sponsor for the child and that I would make all arrangements for Dr May at the hour appointed.

The note was soon written & I committed it to the care of Cousin Mary, who highly disapproving of my writing notes to gentlemen, took it with great reluctance; however, after duely impressing it on her mind, that there was nothing in the billet, but, a matter of great importance referring to the afternoon service & the Baptism of the child for whom I was to stand sponsor &c she received it with my strict injunctions that it should be delivered immediately after church.

The morning passed away – I prayed for divine grace & strength in the performance of the great duty I was to undertake. I read my Bible, my devotional exercises – and from my own book of pious extracts & I tried to get clearer views of the duties I was about to undertake.

At length the carriage came and Mr Potter in it – When I entered the parlor he was pacing the floor in somewhat a bewildered air & coming up to greet me, told me, he had terrible news to tell me – What? Said I astonished, but, never once imagining the full force of his remark. Yes he replied I have lost your note – and before I read it – I broke the seal & half withdrew it from the envelope, the moment it was put in my hand but, some one coming to speak to me just then, my attention was called off and having several books papers &c in my hand it slipped out unobserved – As soon as I ~~found~~ saw that it was gone, I went back & looked for it, but, it was no where to be found.”

I was amazed beyond all expression ~~& could think of nothing else, but~~ and did not attempt to disguise my feelings. Of course, there was nothing in the note, that might not with propriety have been seen – but, I could not bear the thought, that it should be read by Tom, Dick & Harry – that my written sentiments should be picked up & read by a stranger. Mr P suggested that he might have dropped it in the vestry-room in wh[ich] case, Dr Richards would take charge of it. This consoled me, for a few moments, but, then the possibility of its having fallen in the hands of persons less reliable, was perfectly ~~reliable~~ anhilating to me. I tried however, for Mr Potter’s sake, to forget it or at least to talk on another topic.

After dinner, we set out for our walk to the Station – the woods had for the first time put on their summer garb & our path-way was strewn with wild violets, forget-me-nots and anemones. Mr Potter suggested that instead of my green barage bonnet I should wear my flat wh[ich] I put on in rural style. We took with us the Baptismal Bowl, our prayer-books &c, & We talked of Holy things and of some (but not many) that were not holy. Mr Potter said he would share the responsibility with me by standing sponsor with me[.] This was a great comfort & relief and we gathered some white anemones to memorize our Baptismal day. Mr P— says he likes to see me on the subject of flowers for then I wake up.

Mr Potter read the afternoon service, Dr May preached a good sermon – The dear little chubby blue-eyed child was present with his tall awkward mother who seemed impressed with the

solemnity of the occasion. I went up with them to the altar (or what was meant for it). The child was grave & thoughtful and I prayed that all the prayers we said, might fall as blessings on his head – that his nature might be regenerated and that he might indeed be a child of God & heir of a bright & glorious immortality. I wore in my breast pin a spray of Lily of the Valley and a pure snow drop in token of the comparative innocence of childhood & the purity of the ordinance of dedicating it to God. Mrs Ellet's little boy, she says, will be five years old next month & ~~is named~~ was christened William Alexander (Ellet). His mother tells me she does not know how to read. What a misfortune! – and what a barrier to the good I might do.

Dear Uncle C. goes to Jamestown tomorrow. He reminded me to-night to get his ruffled shirt ready.²⁵

Arlington House [Wednesday] May 13 – 1857

Again, after the lapse of three years, we have a visit from Mr Childe. Now he is accompanied by his ~~son~~ & son & daughter – We have had a house full of company among others our sweet little cousin Julia Stuart[.]²⁶ This afternoon we had a visit from my friend Mr Potter accompanied by several students from the Seminary. Dr. Richards, Mr Sciver & Mr Williams –²⁷ Mr Potter, Mr Williams and myself walked in the garden, gathered some flowers -- & thence to the grave where we sat beneath the rustic arbor & made a bouquet –

I felt through the visit a pensive sensation whenever I thought that it was probably Mr Potter's last visit to me – Arlington, but, the visit was a very agreeable one & I consoled myself with the thought that absence only “strengthens friendship when the last recollections are kindly.”

[Written in pencil on the side of the page]: A sweet May morning seven years ago – My footprints pressed this shady path –

[The rest of this page is blank. The following sentence appears at the top of the next page.]

We are all delighted with Mary Childe. Mr C seems sad and looks a little aged, by time and its changes.

Arlington – [Sunday] May 17, 1857

This morning, we awoke at the Stuarts'²⁸ – in Alexandria – enjoyed the kind hospitality of the family and accompanied them to Church, where we heard instead of Mr Dana, a Dr Wells of Boston with whose discourse & manner, appearance & deportment, I was unusually pleased. Mr Potter joined me in the aisle after Ch[urch] and accompanied me as far as the ~~gate~~ carriage – where [several words scratched out] Mr Marbury joined me and we walked to-gether to Mrs Fitzhughs!

²⁵ Custis spoke at the 250th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown.

²⁶ Julia Calvert Stuart (1814-1888). She was distantly related to Markie through the Calvert branch of their families.

²⁷ “Dr. Richards” is Charles A. L. Richards, “Mr. Williams” is Walter W. Williams (1834-1891), a student at the Theological Seminary of Virginia from 1857-1858 who became rector of St. James Church in Leesburg, Va.

²⁸ This is probably Stuartland, the home of Harriotte Stuart near Seminary Hill in Alexandria.

I felt unusually well in the afternoon and I walked out to the [*word scratched out*] Station accompanied by Mary Childe, Julia Stuart, Edward Childe and Lewis Marshall.²⁹

Mr. Potter appeared for the last time, as Rector of our little Church.³⁰ He read the Service & Mr Sceiver preached – from the text “Methusalia lived 969 years & he died”³¹ showing that however long ~~we~~ man may live, death is at last, inevitable &c &c – After Ch[urch] – we had a little converse with the Theologians at the door & departed on our way home. I felt sad at the last good bye of my friend Mr P– and would have walked home in musing mood alone, but, Edward Childe joined me and made himself more agreeable than he is sometimes wont. In fact he talked pleasantly & rationally.

On my return home, it occurred to me to ask for the “Southern Churchman” It contained the first peice I ever wrote for publication, addressed to “The Mothers of our community.”³² I had sent the M S to the office of the Southern Cxman, the week before & as it had not appeared in the first Paper after, I supposed of course, that it was not considered worthy a place there. Entirely satisfied with this conclusion I did not feel very highly complimented, but, still not very deeply mortified. I felt that I had not taken as much pains in writing it, as I might have done & doubtless it was all right, that it sh[oul]dnot be published. As I did not make known my name, I knew no one would be aware of my folly. I was sorry no one could be benefitted by what I had intended as salutary advice to a few of my friends.

~~What was my great surprise, then, when~~ Asking at the Stuarts’ this morning if they took the “Southern Cxman” – I had it put in my hand & the very first thing that met my eye, ~~was~~ at the very head of the page was – my first essay – I beheld it as calmly & emotionless, as if it had been my last.

I read it over with an undefinable feeling – something akin to interest in the author, but, not very much prepossessed with its literary merits of the production[.]

Though I have seen things worse, I certainly think there is great room for correction. I was almost sorry it was published and saw a dozen better modes of expression, than those I had employed. But, the deed was done.

While reading the paper at Arlington, Florence Marshall came in the room & asked me what I was reading – “A peice to mothers, I said – you ought to read it.” Cousin Mary Lee said she w[oul]d like to read it but ~~it~~ the room was too dark. Florence remarked, that she w[oul]d read it aloud. [*Line scratched out*] Every one listened & so did I. When it was done, every one remarked that it was “an excellent article” I was glad they thought so and I hoped it might do good –

²⁹ Edward Lee Childe (1838-1911) was the son of Catharine Mildred Lee Childe (1811-1856), sister of Robert E. Lee; Louis Henry Marshall (1827-1891) was an Army officer and nephew of Robert E. Lee. He married Florence Murray Burke

³⁰ On May 27, 1857, following his graduation from the Virginia Theological Seminary, Henry C. Potter was ordained a deacon at his father’s church, St. Luke’s Church in Philadelphia.

³¹ Genesis 5:27

³² “To the Mothers of Our Community” was published in the Episcopalian newspaper *The Southern Churchman* (Alexandria, Va.), on May 15, 1857. As Markie said, it was printed in the top left corner of the page. Taking Proverbs 29:15 as its inspiration, the article criticizes mothers who neglect their children and fail to correct the sinful behavior they see. Expressing a gendered view of parenting, Markie wrote, “The care of children is a high and holy charge, and it is in most instances, committed almost entirely to mothers – to them we commit these few suggestions, with our earnest prayers.” Additional articles on parenting appear beside Markie’s column.

Arlington House – V–a
[Tuesday] May 19, 1857

[The first paragraph is scratched out with vertical lines]

Like the flickering uncertain light of a lamp are the changing hours of every day. We awoke this morning in Alexandria after the pic-nic of yesterday.

On the 16th of May, I accepted an invitation to a Pic Nic to the White House³³ – Deeming it as I do, inconsistent with the profession of a Christian to ~~atte~~ Dance, or what is the same thing, to take pleasure in attending dancing parties, I would willingly have declined the invitation, had I only consulted my inclination; this however, I did not –

Edward ~~expressed~~ Childe expressed a great desire that I should accompany them – they were strangers & as it were, foreigners, having so recently come to America – and I felt it incumbent on me, to do all in my power, as they were our guests, to make their time pass agreeably. I therefore went – I congratulated myself upon feeling tolerably well on the day of the excursion – We drove in to Alexandria & joined some of the Pic Nic party, at the Stuarts, where we were most hospitably & kindly received – from thence we drove down to the Boat – The day being damp & a little cool & cloudy, we did not go on Deck but, most of the Ladies remained in the cabin – This was ennuieux in the extreme to me. When we arrived at the White House, we all took off our wrappings & repaired to the Ballroom. The Band immediately struck up a march & after the ladies & gentlemen walked around for some time the danse commensed –

It has been long since I was a looker on, even, in such a scene but, uncongenial as it was to me, I felt, that I was in the path of duty. Edward Childe seemed as thoroughly disinterested in all around us, as myself, though from a different motive.

Of course, as I refused all invitations to danse, I became a Wall-Flower – most of the day trying most ineffectually to entertain Edward Childe – part of the time sitting quite alone on a long form beside the white-washed wall and ~~most of~~ the rest of the day, was entertained by Mr Marbury³⁴ – who after sitting sometime beside me in the Ball Room, contrived to be seated next to me ~~in~~ at Dinner – conversed with me some time after dinner and then, we took a walk together – a lovely walk on the sandy shore – the afternoon was beautiful & we enjoyed the scenery extremely. The ~~eam~~ placid river before me & the budding trees around – ~~we sought a~~ Mr M sought for me a pleasant seat on the Banks of the River and taking his place at my feet we enjoyed a quiet converse which for its perfect orthodoxy might have with propriety taken place, within the walls of a Church – In fact, we spoke of the experiences of Life and religion in its application to them. *[Five lines scratched out]* Then, I was not sorry that I had come to the Pic-Nic, since I had had an opportunity even there, of doing or saying a little, that might eventually prove to the Glory of God.

³³ The *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser* reported on May 18, 1857, “On Saturday last, a large number of ladies and gentlemen, of this city, went to the White House, on the steamer Thomas Collyer, on a Pic Nic Excursion, where the day was spent in dancing, and other pleasant amusements.”

³⁴ The Marbury family (descended from the same Marbury of the Supreme Court case *Marbury v. Madison*) lived in Georgetown. Most of them were buried in Oak Hill Cemetery. It is not clear which Marbury Markie is referring to here.

Arlington House

May 31, 1857

Sunday

While Uncle & myself were calmly sipping our after dinner cup of coffee together, he said to me – “Markie, I dreamed last night of being kissed – it was an angel’s kiss, he said, assuming a serious thoughtful air & continued, I do not know anything that has made such an impression on me for a long time – it produced the most holy influence, indeed so much was I affected by it, that I awoke. I longed to fall to sleep again, that I might experience it over ~~again~~ and that I might see how the vision would end, but, I tried in vain – but, really, I never had such an impression produced on me before – I declare to you I felt the kiss, on my head just as if you had put your hand on it.

Then, going on in somewhat a meloncholy way, he said “Well, I don’t know what will come of it – perhaps it is the fore-runner of some good that is to happen to me – I do not feel well at all – I have not been well all day.

I asked if he was going to the Station to Ch[urch] – He replied – Yes, he had not been for some time & getting his hat & cane, sat off. He walks so slowly, that he generally prefers going alone – I got ready & soon followed. Arriving at the station, I perceived a broken Buggy, but, it being a subject or object rather wh[ich] did not rivet my unpractical eye, I walked in the school-house, took my seat & thought nothing more of it.

Mr Morris was in the Desk – He persued the service, without my perceiving anything extraordinary in his manner, but, when he commenced the discourse, I observed that he ~~seem~~ was very much at a loss, ~~his mind~~ he repeated over & over what he had said & then, seemed to forget what he was going to say next – his mind was evidently, entirely preoccupied with something that was not in what he professed to be doing –

The broken Buggy floated before my mind once or twice, in connection with this manner, but, I each time checked the thought that Mr Morris could be thinking of anything so material when engaged in his sacred duties & I settled down into the conviction, that what I observed, arose simply from exhaustion, in having taken so long a walk in the sun – this opinion was confirmed when towards the end Mr Morris said, to the congregation “I hope you will not think from my manner, that I am not in earnest in what I have said, I know I have been apparently indifferent in my manner but the reason is, that I have not been well for some time and am now suffering from a very bad head ache.”

When the service was ended, Mr M came up to me & told me the unfortunate story of his horse having run off, while tied to the Tree & broken his Buggy all to peices. I began immediately to think of what could be done. He looked the picture of despair – said he did not know how in the world he should get the Buggy home &c &c – I immediately asked him if he would not come home with us – suggested to Uncle that his horse should be brought over likewise – that his Buggy or the remains of it sh[oul]dbe removed to a house nearby & that by the next morning, we might be enabled, to devise some plan for his getting back to the seminary – all of wh[ic], was acquiesced in, and we commenced our walk homeward. Mr M seems to be a simple minded man & in his simple, natural way, he talked of his misfortunes & of his reflections on them. Every now & then, he would vent his feelings in expressions such as these – “How fortunate that I did

not get the new Buggy instead of the old one! – Do you know the man was very anxious for me to take a perfectly new Buggy! – just suppose I had done it! Wouldn't it have been awful! I should not be surprised if he made me pay \$50 or \$60 for repairing this. How much do you think it will be? What would you say to the man, Miss Williams, if you were in my place? To this last query, I replied, that I w[oul]d go to the man and tell him the exact state of the case and say I was willing to pay him anything he thought right – would you tell him that? replied Mr M, I wouldn't. No, said I, not exactly that, but, I w[oul]d tell him I w[oul]d pay him what was just. Oh! Yes, I'll do that, but, I would not pay him anything he might ask, because it is an old Buggy & he might ask a great deal more than it is worth. Oh! said I sh[oul]d not think he w[oul]d do that, I do not imagine he will charge you anything – knowing as he does that you are a Theologian & supposing as he might, that you ~~were~~ are not very wealthy. He smiled at the thought & seemed very distrustful of any such proceeding. (I cannot bear to see any one so suspicious & distrustful.) Poor Mr M– then revealed to me, that this was not by a great deal his first ill luck – that he had a short time since, lost a porte-monnaie containing \$30. that did not belong to him & a little while before had lost a Sunday-school Library wh[ich] cost \$10.

July 1857

Arlington House [Monday] July 6, 1857

If weather ever ought to be journalized, I am sure the past few months deserve it – so cold for the season, so changeable – so rainy – such constant lightening and thunder & wind and such an awful hail storm. But, we must not complain, but like the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain say “whatever weather God sends is good weather.”³⁵

The mended Bridge has brought over a day full of visitors. This morning, Ella Carter & Mr Radziminski³⁶ – & then, our three Cousins from the University of Virginia[:] Laurence Butler, Charles and Lewis Conrad.³⁷ This afternoon, two gentlemen from Washington, whose appearance from the window and their converse as from my room window I heard it on the Portico, was so far from interesting that I excused myself[.]

This evening Uncle returned from the Spring, bringing with him a Lady & gentleman, rather extraordinary in appearance[.] They occupied themselves conversing and looking at the pictures until after dark & the Tea bell still found them here. At Tea, I sat by ~~made~~ Mrs Storm as I afterwards heard she was named – She was evidently a foreigner & as I learned a Holander – Extremely coarse, [*word scratched out*] & common & superlatively ugly in personal appearance – ~~but in~~ and with an awful voice. She said she had been seven months in America & had travelled through all the southern states & is now on her way to the North. I sat by her at Table & found her conversable & intelligent. She remarked my mosaic breast pin, with the Temple of Vesta on it & said she had lived in Rome – then took out her [*word scratched out*] Cameo wh[ich] had an angel treading on an anchor on it. I asked some question or made some remark on

³⁵ The quote is from Hannah More's story “The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain” (1795). Correctly, it should read, “it will be such weather as shall please God, and whatever pleases him always pleases me.”

³⁶ Charles Radziminski (d. 1858), a Polish immigrant who served as a surveyor with the U.S. Army along the Mexican border in 1853.

³⁷ Lawrence Lewis Butler (1837-1898) and Lawrence Lewis Conrad (1830-1883) were grandsons of Eleanor Parke Custis. “Charles Conrad” is Lewis Conrad's father, Charles Magill Conrad (1804-1878).

it wh[ich] she not understanding thought I asked how much it cost & answered \$100 – Tho' quite handsom it certainly belied its looks if that was the price[.] I was very sorry of her misinterpretation. After telling me of her travels, I remarked that she had been almost as much of a traveller as Madame Phifer³⁸ – She said she knew Madame Phifer – Her taste she said was to go in all parts of the unknown world & among uncivilized people & nations; she Mrs Storm on the country [contrary liked science and civilisation – On finding she had been in Paris I conversed about many things there[.] She took out a note book & wrote much – I was astonished to see Uncle come in to Tea with her on his arm – a gallantry I never saw him extend to any other Lady[.]

Arlington

[Tuesday] July 7, 1857

My precious Brother's eighteenth Birthday. He has seemed sad all day, which has made me sad – This morning, he went to Georgetown with Uncle and did not return till late this evening. That this Birth-day, may be a new era in his existence, is my earnest prayer. It is strange, as year by year passes away, to mark the changes in his tastes & character – or rather the new developments of his character. When he was younger, I was always endeavoring to implant in his heart a love for poetry and flowers – but, he never showed any great predelection for either – Oft times, I have been in perfect despair as I saw with how little appreciation he listened to my teachings on these subjects – but, now, whenever he comes to read to me, he brings a book of poetry – is constantly quoting from the standard authors – expresses profound admiration for Shakespeare & sometimes wears a rose bud in his button hole. I ask myself, often, is this peculiar to Orton, or is it one of the phases through which, all boys have to pass – on the road from youth to manhood.

I would rather think it the fruit of my early instructions.

I am convinced that he is a remarkably good Boy – to use the term as it is generally used. He seems to strive to do right – He is so amiable to me and so affectionate & so refined and delicate in his feelings, though sometimes boyish in his manners & cant in his expressions.

August 1857

Arlington House [Monday] Aug 3 1857

This morning, I engaged myself, with the air of dear Orton, in chiseling out a box which was too small, in wh[ich] to put Uncles picture to send to Mr Potter by Adam's Express³⁹ – then, in helping Mary, in her preparations for the springs. While thus employed, Smith Lee and Mr Charles Kerr of Baltimore⁴⁰ arrived. The latter distinguished personage, I never had seen before. They spent the day & made themselves assez agreeable. Mr Kerr has learned the talent of not allowing conversation to flag and to converse easily on general topics. Smith Lee has a fine

³⁸ Ida Laura Pfeiffer (1797-1858), a prolific Austrian travel writer.

³⁹ Adam's Express Company was a shipping company founded in 1854. It has since evolved into the company Adams Funds.

⁴⁰ Sydney Smith Lee (1802-1869) and Charles Goldsborough Kerr (1833-1898)

countenance & seems to have much character. Custis Lee returned from Alexandria about four o'clock after a seige at the dentists, preparatory to his Calafornia trip – Dear C – he is in low spirits, but, kind & affectionate as ever to me. This afternoon as I was promenading the portico with Mr Kerr, I saw in the distance, my friend Maj Townsend⁴¹ coming down the road on horseback. Having seen him three times last week, I was surprised at his appearance this evening, though very much delighted. He explained to me immediately & apologetically, that Maj & Mrs Chapman were in Washington and wanted to see me and he begged that he came to ask if I would come over and spend the day with them at his house & stay all night. I have half promised to go on Tuesday and expect a charming time – Nothing gives me such exquisite pleasure, as to see my old friends – the friends of my early childhood – of my happy home in Buffalo –

Arlington House –

[Sunday] Aug 9, 1857

Since I last journalized, much of interest has occurred and much I might have written that I would like to have read in after days, both of my my outward & ~~inward~~ in[n]er life; fə but, for want of time and opportunity, it has past. I note first, an evening spent at Maj Townsends with my old friend Dr Tripler – another reunion with those same old friends, at Col Abert's next day, and a visit from them both, at Arlington two days after and a few days after that, another visit from Maj T— to announce the advent of our other mutual friends, Maj & Mrs Chapman⁴² – and then an engagement on my part to dine at Maj T—s with them and then a note from Maj T— saying that the C[hapman]s had left the City and then my reply regretting. How strange this new & repeated association with Maj Townsend seemed to me, after so long an interval – How delighted I was to see Dr. Tripler!

[“]What softened remembrances come o'er the scene,
 When gazing on those we've been lost to so long,
 The joys & the sorrows of which they were part,
 Around us like visions of yesterday throng;
 As letters, some hand hath invisibly traced,
 When held to the light, steel out to the ~~view~~ ~~sight~~ sight
 So many a feeling that long seemed effaced,
 The warmth of a moment like this brings to light.”⁴³

⁴¹ Edward Davis Townend (1817-1893). He served in the Union Army and was later Adjutant General of the U. S. Army. Markie met him at Fort Hamilton in New York. According to Cullum's Register, at this time he was a major assigned to the Adjutant General's Office in Washington, D.C.

⁴² Possibly William Warren Chapman (1814-1859). He graduated from West Point in 1833 and was breveted a major in 1847 during the Mexican-American War. He eventually lived in Texas.

⁴³ “And Doth Not a Meeting Like This” by Thomas Moore. Correctly, the lines should read:

What softened remembrances come o'er the heart,
 In gazing on those we've been lost to so long!
 The sorrows, the joys, of which once they were part,

So touchingly did Moore write – so exactly do I feel!

My childhood's days, were all brought back – Years had wrought changes in us all each – The Dr said it seemed to him, there never w[oul]d be times like those old times – and people like those who were gathered around us, in Buffalo & I felt so too. How beautiful the distant glimpse of my early home then dawned up before me & and my lovely graceful mother gliding through the scenes dispensing hospitality to all around and my handsome Father with dignified demeanor, smiling blandly making some galant speech to the ladies or telling some wonderful tale of his Europe – an adventure or relating an anecdote from some old artists' memoir to his comrades, ~~and the dear Old 2nd~~ making happy joyful all their company. And the dear old 2nd Artillery. These officers with those of our own corps, formed a part, & sometimes the whole of our ~~company~~ society & now, in recollecting these days, I feel [*the rest of the page is blank*]

And since I last wrote, poor Mr Charles Hall⁴⁴ has past away.

It has been long, since I have heard of a death that has made so much impression on me. Not that I knew Mr Hall very intimately. I did not. He came to Arlington to give Mildred music lessons. And as he came in the capacity of teacher, I always felt a reserve in allowing him to spend his time in conversing with me. When he first came in the early morning I w[oul]d generally be in the garden, gathering flowers to dress the parlor table. He seemed to be passionately fond of flowers & once or twice, instead of going in to give Mildred her lesson, he has joined me there. He always spoke to me in french. One morning, he playfully said his head on one side, & his unique way of talking – Mademoselle, some morning when I come, I shall find you turned into a flower & growing here.

I think he almost always, spent twenty minutes at least, after he first came, in expressions of rapturous extacy about the view – then, after the lesson, I have known him to remain hours declaring that Arlington was such a Paradise he could not get away. Mr Hall, had a face full of sentiment & Italian beauty and he was a real genius, with many of ~~its general~~ excentricities, belonging to that class of society – He spoke several Languages they say, with as much fluency as he did french but, music was his art. He would often play for us by the hour – His singing was inferior, but, he seemed to prefer comic songs, having a strong eye for the ridiculous. My aversion to these, is so strong, that one day, I observed half playfully, but a good deal in earnest, that I w[oul]d never enter the room where he was playing again, if he ever offered to play them in my presence, at wh[ich], he promptly said, he would never offend me again in this way. Mr Hall was as full of sensibility, as of sentiment & I fear on this account, made for himself much unhappiness. Nor was the art of drawing excluded from his accomplishments – Tho I never saw any of these productions, he had a good reputation on this score and one day, I remember, he staid nearly all day looking over some pretty engravings I [brought] for his perusal.

Arlington

Still round them, like visions of yesterday, throng;
As letters some hand hath invisibly traced,
When held to the flame will steal out on the sight,
So many a feeling, that long seemed effaced,
The warmth of a moment like this brings to light.

⁴⁴ Charles Stuart Hall (1831-1857) died in Fairfax, Va., on July 20, 1857. He was born in New York but worked as a music teacher in Virginia.

[Sunday] Aug 9, 1857

Uncle & myself have been quite alone for the last few days – Today I went in to Church & dear Lum returned with me from Dr Fairfax's. It is a pleasure to have her with me. We are now, so entirely separated, & the house has been lonely indeed, since Mary's departure.

I read to Uncle this afternoon, in the Chapters about Paul & Festus.⁴⁵ He seemed interested while I was reading but, soon after turned again to worldly topics & resources. Would that he could be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ!

Uncle told me a dream he had last night – He dreamed that the was perfectly happy – that life was an elysium of bliss – He says superstitiously, he wonde[re]d how this ~~will~~ w[oul]d end – what it portends & calls my mind to a similar dream he had about an angels kiss, some months ago – I do not have prayers now because, I understand by all I've seen, that it w[oul]d be more agreeable to me not to do so & I can never be officious.

[Thursday] Aug 27 – Arlington

1857

My life this summer, has been varied by few incidents of interest or importance – The family have been alternately arriving & departing while dear Uncle & myself, have remained constant to our home.

Not being subject to chills it seemed my especial duty, to be the one, to stay with Uncle & I am most glad, whenever I can be a comfort to him. Since the unhealthy season & the Broken Bridge we have had but little company comparatively – indeed, evening after evening, now passes, without an arrival. Dear Lum's visit and Agnes Lee's⁴⁶ being here, makes it more pleasant & cheerful, than when we were quite alone, but, at twilight, when my mind & hands are unoccupied with the various employments of the day, I miss the large family & I long for a little change. Uncle appears more feeble, than I have ever know him. We sit out on the steps in the afternoon and admire the sun's reflection on the city & the beautiful clouds that hover above us. Uncle very often expresses an admiration for my little brown hat & says it is just the color of a Pheasants wing. In the morning he goes to the farm as usual for a few hours, then comes home, & paints for some time and when he is weary, repairs to his old corner chair by the hearth in the old parlor and reads. He is fond of reading novels – and one of these is his constant companion. Every now & then however, he becomes satiated – says he has lost his taste for this sort of reading & takes up Lamartines History of the Girondists. After perusing this diligently & with primitive interest, he searches out Cummings Travels in South Africa which he reads with as much interest as if he never saw the Book before. Then, he gets Gibbons' Roman History.⁴⁷ Three or four times, since I have been to Arlington, (which has been, nearly, if not quite, four years) he has gone through this course. This history of the Girondists, he says, he has read four times & that it is historical & interesting from the first page to the last.

⁴⁵ Acts 25-26

⁴⁶ Agnes Lee (1841-1873), one of Robert and Mary Lee's daughters.

⁴⁷ *History of the Girondists* (1847) by Alphonse de Lamartine; (1820-1866) *Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa* (1850) by Roualeyn George Gordon-Cumming. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon (1776-1789)

It has recently been reperused & so has Cummings' book & [Uncle] is now deep in Roman History. He says he was always fond of this in his youth. Sunday last, we did not go to Church. It is always my wont to read to Uncle, under these circumstances when Cousin M is away in the morning. When I went down in the parlor for this purpose, however, I found him asleep. In the afternoon, when I did the same, he had gone out to walk. On his return, I told him, that I had not forgotten him, but, that he was asleep in the morning & out in the afternoon. He said, yes he had been taking a little walk & going in the parlor, took his usual seat. It was then, twilight – too dark to read. I went up & stood beside him a little while, kissed his bald head & stroked his hair, speaking a few kindly words for, I had been ~~w~~ absent almost all day reading to my self or to the Servants & had consequently seen but little of him – “You must get your Bible, & read to me, Markie, after tea,” he said – Yes, Uncle, I said, I will with pleasure. When Tea was over & he had taken his seat at his little Table, he asked Perry to light his candle; this being done, he said “Now, Markie, my dear, read some in your Bible.” I had previously intended to read a portion in “Cottage Lectures on the Pilgrims Progress,⁴⁸ thinking, that the style of that being somewhat striking, the passages of scripture therein contained might be brought forward with more force & be likely to attract his attention & better secure his interest. When he said, however, read St. Lukes Gospel – two or three chapters – adding, I believe, I almost know that by heart – I brought my Bible & taking my seat beside him at his little table, I read the XV ch[apter] of St Luke. Then, laying down the Bible & taking up the Cottage Lectures I said Uncle, I thought I would read you a little in this book – “Pilgrims Progress” – Well, if you choose, he said indifferently but, I never thought much of that[.] At first, I hardly knew whether to put it down & take up the Bible or not – After a minutes reflection tho', I opened to where Christian arrives at the Interpreters' House.

I thought he seemed interested as I went along, but, I did not dare to ask him at the conclusion how he liked it, lest, he might not have been as much interested as I supposed. Dear Uncle! How I wish I could think that his tolerance or even his desire for a little religious reading ~~reading~~ on Sunday, amounted to any thing more than a conscientious habit. It gives me unfeigned pleasure ~~to~~ when he evinces the slightest desire for religious service & yet, I see no evidence of a change of heart. Oh! God to whom nought is impossible – grant this new life, even at the eleventh hour of his dear life – for our Savior, Jesus Sake.

[Saturday] Aug 29 – Arlington

The children, Mildred & Robert returned from Cedar Grove⁴⁹ this afternoon – Uncle went into Alexandria for them. On their arrival, I saluted them from the window – Agnes who was the only member of the family at home did not go down. Robby immediately [asked] of me how & where she was – but, Mildred walked in in the most indifferent way – made no inquiries after any one, but went out to play with the cats. Agnes came down & rushed out in the yard to see her, asking at the same time, why she showed so little wish to see her. Mildred answered, because, she, Agnes, was not down stairs ready to meet her when she came. This was very characteristic of Mildred, but, very unlovely in a child of her age. I never saw a child so devoid of natural affection. She never ~~gives evidence~~ makes any demonstration of feeling, towards anything but,

⁴⁸ *Cottage Lectures, Or, The Pilgrim's Progress Practically Explained* by Charles Overton (1849)

⁴⁹ Cedar Grove in King George County was the home of Dr. Richard Henry Stuart (1808-1889).

the cats. She is certainly a remarkable child and I shall dread to see her arrive at maturity, unless some permanent change is effected.

I am not at all disposed to commence her french lessons again.

Aug 1857

[*The following entry was originally written in pencil and written over in pencil. Portions of the writing in pencil are still visible*]

Pay respect to the aged.

Arlington

It was always a great [*word crossed out*] agrivation to my Uncle, that any of the family should go come down late to breakfast & unhappily it was the misfortune of one or two of the younger members and I regret to say myself among them to frequently to incur his displeasure.

~~One one~~ At such times, he would tell us with a sort of mock severity of tone that we “had better go back and take another six hours.” One one [*sic*] occasion when my Brother Orton was here, my Uncle came in after we had all taken our seats upon observing wh[ich] one of my cousins (Marie) who was more given to frolic than veneration, ~~tuned~~ turned to my Brother at the table and said I have a great mind to tell Grandpa that he had better turn back & take another six hours” – You had better not Cousin, remarked Orton – “the Bears will come after you.”

This was a quaint mode of recalling a scriptural ~~injunction~~ illustration; but, my thoughts went back to the time when I ~~when~~ I used to read Bible stories to my little Brother, sitting on my knee – in my old room at Tudor Place. How I praise God that he remembers & can so forcibly apply ~~these~~ ~~ser~~ what he has learned in infancy – oh may it be ever so through Life.

This little incident, induced me to take up my bible & refresh my mind on the chapter alluded to – It was 2 Kings 2 ch. 23 & 24 verses. [“]And he (Elisha) went up thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city & mocked him and said unto him go up thou bald head; go up thou bald head.

And he turned back and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood and tear forty and two children of them –”

September 1857

Arlington [Wednesday] Sep 2, 1857

Depression unconquerable has weighed down my spirits this evening.

Dear Uncle came in looking so feeble that he could hardly stand. He complains all the time of extreme debility – of being very nervous & spending sleepless nights & it is painful to witness his apparently unhappy state of mind – Alas! in the happiness he has afforded so many others, he can now find no consolation. This earth is a blank to him and yet, he seems to find no refuge in Heaven. It is heart rending to see the decline of old age – the tottering steps – the expression of weakness & inability in every feature & every muscle of the body.

And how st[r]ange, that those even nearer to him than I am, seem not to notice it.

Arlington [Sunday] Sep 6, 1857

Uncle spoke this evening of the little discussion that had recently arisen in the Papers with regard to Gen Washington having been a Marshall of France.

I asked him what his evidences were to the fact, upon wh[ich], he took down the little old engraving of Napier of Merchiston, with this superscription on the margin beneath –

“To Marshall General Washington as a testimony of the sincere esteem of his obedient humble servant

Buchan”⁵⁰

and reading it to me asked if I thought it possible that such a man as the Earl of Buchan – in such a position as he occupied in the courtly circles of Europe c[oul]d show so much ignorance as to address Gen Washington by an empty title. I should say not.

I then asked Uncle when it was & how it was that he was made Marshall & who told him about it; upon wh[ich] he replied, that at the time of the revolution, Gen. Washington sent out to France one of his Aids, Col. Laurence⁵¹ of South Carolina, upon a special mission, wh[ich] was, to organize the french army, who were coming to our assistance – He, of course, proposed that Gen W– sh[oul]d be commander in ch[ief] to wh[ich], the french officers objected, saying that the Count de Rochambeau could only be commanded by a Marshall of France or the King himself; then, said Col. L – make Gen Washington a Marshall of France.

This, was then done, as is Uncle’s impression, received from Major Jackson, Sec of Legation⁵² to Col. Laurence, who related to him the whole affair with his own lips.

[A note on a smaller piece of paper appears here.]

Napier of Merchiston⁵³

The inventor of Logarithms the person to whom the title of Great Man is more justly due than to any other whom the country ever produced.

To Marshall General Washington as a testimony of the sincere esteem of his obedient humble servant

Buchan

The first paragraph above is printed beneath the engraving of Napier, the last written by the Earl of Buchan. Both, are copied verbatim.

[Monday] Sep 7, 1857

⁵⁰ David Erskine, 11th Earl of Buchan (1742-1829) was a Scottish antiquarian.

⁵¹ John Laurens (1754-1782) went on a diplomatic mission to France in 1780. He was killed in the Battle of the Combahee River in one of the last actions of the Revolutionary War.

⁵² Henry Jackson (1778-1840) served as secretary of the American legation in France under William H. Crawford from 1813 until 1815.

⁵³ John Napier of Merchiston (1550-1617). As Markie notes in the next entry, he discovered logarithms.

The portico pillars at Arlington, Uncle tells me, are five feet in diameter, fifteen in circumference & twenty six or eight feet in height. The ceilings downstairs are 15 feet high & up stairs 12.

Arlington House – [Saturday] Sept 12 1857

Sunday eve.

The fifth or sixth Sunday, since I have had the pleasure of going to Church. Each Sabbath at home, I try to do something for the good of my fellow beings or otherwise, for the glory of God; but it seems to me, it is very little done in any way & I sometimes think, that a position in Town, where one may Sunday after Sunday, go through the stated routine of Sabbath duties, is more spiritually profitable, than the meditative desultory occupations of a Sunday in the Country.

After my morning's reading, I spent an hour or two in ~~my~~ the parlor reading the Churchman, conversing with the family & petting dear Uncle; [*word scratched out*] (my health & the weather not admitting of my going to read to the servants as I sometimes do) then, Cousin Mary conducted morning prayers & after they were over, I repaired to my own room, and engaged myself till dinner, in translating one of my little French Tracts, wh[ich] I found pleasant – not at all laborious & I hope, profitable. After dinner I resumed the occupation & accomplished six or seven pages, by half past four – then I knelt down by my bed side and tried to pray a few earnest prayers for dear Uncle – that his soul might be awakened to the things concerning his immortal soul, ere he shall be called home, then, took my Bible & went down in the parlor. He looked up, as I entered the room, as if he would like some attention, so I went up to his old corner chair by the hearth and standing by him, kissed his dear bald head and stood for some time smoothing his hair & inquiring about his feelings. During the whole time, he dwelt upon his symptoms – his extreme feebleness, his great depression of spirits. I evinced my sympathy and said all that I could, by way of encouragement & then, taking my seat in a chair near him laid my Bible on the little Table between us. He stooped forward, leaning his head, as if he still wanted me to pet him, and while I put my hand again on his head, he said “Markie, your kindness is a great comfort to me. I can never forget it – it is like a bright gleam of sun-shine through the dark clouds” – I evaded the subject, feeling that the little attentions I was enabled to show him, were very little, in comparison to what I would like to do. After some moments, I proposed to read to him in the Bible. Thinking the beautiful pathos of the Psaltery might touch his heart or find a response in his sad experience, I read one or two Psalms – I had no sooner finished, however, that he asked me to read what he was in the habit of reading in the Gospels – on my asking him which, he replied St. Luke or St. John – On opening my Bible at the third ch[apter] of St. John, commencing “Now there was a man of the Pharasees named Nicodemus &c – I read that, praying from my inmost soul, that the hearing of this solemn injunction about the necessity of the new birth, might in this hour of declining age, ~~might~~ sink deep in his mind and by God's holy influence affect his heart. I then read “Let not your heart be troubled” hoping not so much from its consolatory tone (for that seems peculiarly to belong to the professed christian) as in the efficacy of its Theology.

But, alas! What can I do? “Paul may plant and Apolos water, but, God giveth the increase.”⁵⁴ Uncle, observing my Bible, instead of the large one, I am generally in the habit of reading out of, asked if the print was not very fine; this led me to refer to the large black ancient Bible, resting

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”

on the etagère, – wh[ich] was the family Bible of his Father – He then spoke of the green covered Bible in two volumes, wh[ich] until now, always held its place on the centre table, but, is now, from motives of extreme carefulness (wh[ich] does not, by the bye, often attack members of the family) been retired to the top shelf of the Book closet. This bible he said Gen Washington imported from England at the cost of \$40, its great price being chiefly owing to its engravings, taken from the best pictures of the old Masters & it always staid in my Grandmother's room; but, the most valuable Bible, said he, was the one I presented to Christ's Church in Alexandria. This was of crimson morocco with silver clasps & the one always used by my Grandmother whom he added, you know, after the house-hold duties of the morning were over, always retired to her own room for an hour, where she read & literally held communion with her God. I asked if there was family prayer at Mt. Vernon, wh[ich] he said there was not & if he knew whether Gen. Washington was daily in the habit of reading his Bible, but, he said he did not know, as no one ever went into his room, when he was there alone.

Uncle mentioned once, being sent for by the Gen. early in the morning, to sign ~~some~~ a deed or something of the kind, before he was dressed. He observed that he was in his morning wrapper & slippers & his garment being open at the chest, he noticed that he was very hollow chested, at wh[ich] he expressed himself much surprised, considering he was so athletic. He remarked, also, that he saw at that time, hanging around his neck, the little miniature of his wife, (now in possession of my Sister Kate) wh[ich] he said he always wore. Gen. Washington was a very [*word scratched out*] neat man in his habits & dress. Uncle says he was always particular about his feet – wearing slippers to dress in, boots to ride & walk in & shoes in the house.

Yesterday, Uncle received a letter from a Mute Artist who is about casting a statuette in bronze & wishes to know particulars of Gen. Washington's costume. Of course, said Uncle he wore a cockade in his cocked hat – the idea of any one imagining that he did not. Dr. Rush, he said & other old gentlemen of that day, wore cocked hats, but, without a cockade, this being the peculiar mark of military distinction. It brought the tears to my eyes to hear dear Uncle say this evening, "Markie I will get you to answer that letter for me to-morrow – I will have to have an amanuensis now." As many many times, as I have offered my services in this line & been refused! In this admission of physical inability, what a sad record is written. It speaks more than his tottering steps, even, of how much he is failing, for it is a point he has never before yielded.

For several days, he has taken on interest in his painting & allowed conversation to flag when we have broached the most agreeable & interesting topics. Complains constantly of intense debility – wanders from room to room, finding no pleasure in anything & seeming unable to endure any position for ~~any~~ a length of time. Sometimes, he asks Annie & Agnes & or myself to play [the piano], but, he soon gets weary & returns to his old seat in the dining room. Speaks in meloncholy tone of his wonted activity – and fears he shall never again know what it is to be strong.

It has always been said, that Uncle did not care for appearances & surely any one to see not only himself, but, every thing with wh[ich] he has to do, might say it such was a very warrantable hypothesis; but, I was much struck with a little anecdote in this connection wh[ich] he related this evening.

Speaking of old Dr. Rush,⁵⁵ in his cocked hat & large gold headed cane, he said that he was one of the most cheerful & agreeable men in a sick room imaginable – that a Lady once came all the way from South Carolina to consult him and aft during the first visit of the Dr. wh[ich] lasted an hour, she was so agreeably entertained, that the Dr. left without having heard her allude to her disease at all – then, Uncle drew a comparison between himself & another Physician in Philadelphia who was extremely grim & unconciliating in his manners. While Whom, he said, attended him, during a severe fever wh[ich] he had in Phil at the age of about thirteen. Then, spoke of the yellow fever in Philadelphia in [17]93 – said he was there during part of the time – dwelt upon the efficacy of good nursing – said no one but those who had been sick, could fully appreciate the comfort of a gentle nurse – spoke with his wonted enthusiasm of Miss Nightengale & Miss Andrews.⁵⁶ This brought to the subject th of when he was once very ill at Woodlawn – when old Aunt Caroline,⁵⁷ his grandmother’s maid was sent down to nurse him. Said she was so attentive in ~~servi~~ng getting nice little delicacies for him to eat & she always served them up so nicely – so temptingly[.] The[n], he said she was so kind – once she said Master Washington lay y[ou]r head on my lap if you think you can sleep better & he did so & fell asleep & slept for two hours & she never moved – I record this to show what a sensitive appreciation he seems to have to little kindnesses.

He often speaks of the great obligation he feels under to Dr. Riley for his great attention to him – & his kindness not only now, but under all the sickness under wh[ich] he has attended him.

Yesterday Mildred left us for Mrs Halls. It is her first trial of boarding school. I trust it may prove a blessing to her. It surely will be so, for it will at any rate bring her temper under some discipline, wh[ich] is so essential for children of her age. Most willingly would I have devoted myself to her studies if she would have been controled by me – but, situated as we both were, I found it utterly unpracticable.

My dear Orton longs to be at school again – He has so much sensibility – in this, he is like me – This morning, he says he stooped down & patted Millies kitten, because he thought of her being at school, when at any other time he would have felt like putting his foot upon it.

Monday Sep 13 –

Uncle is so much better to night – This morning, I read to him for two hours or more, first in Rokeby & then in the Lady of the Lake –⁵⁸

Arlington House V—a

[Sunday] Sept 20, 1857

⁵⁵ Dr. Benjamin Rush (1746-1813), a signer of the Declaration of Independence and prominent American physician.

⁵⁶ Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), a British nurse who rose to prominence during the Crimean War. Annie M. Andrews (1835-?) worked as a nurse in Norfolk, Va. during a Yellow Fever epidemic in 1855. Details of her life a

⁵⁷ Woodlawn Mansion in Fairfax County, Va. was once part of the Mount Vernon estate. “Aunt Caroline” is Caroline Branham (?-1843), a woman who was enslaved at Mount Vernon and later at Arlington House.

⁵⁸ *Rokeby* (1813) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) were two poems by Sir Walter Scott.

This Sunday, also, have we been prevented from going to Church in consequence of the girls not returning from Goodwood,⁵⁹ as they intended. We miss them much & wish them at home again. Orton wanders about seeming lost, without his co[n]temporaries, but, has been quite industrious with his pen, & has done his chef d'oeuvre, in the way of etching, from Shiller's "Fight of the Dragon,"⁶⁰ during their absence; which, together with a little piece – two Cupids' struggling for a heart – he intends for Agnes' album.

It is a great consolation to me, to see Orton so home-staying & so domestic in his habits. He never seems to evince the slightest desire to go anywhere; but, ~~seems~~ appears never so contented as when busy with his drawing.

This evening he wore a rose-bud in his button hole & brought me two from the garden. This development of his taste for flowers, delights me.

Uncle, had almost recovered from his recent attack but to day is feeble again & dispirited by the weather – As he was lying on the sofa, ~~he~~ I asked him if I might read to him at wh[ich] he answered as usual, in a kind tone tho one of no particular interest, that he had no objection. I went to the centre table not knowing what book to take up, but inwardly praying, that I might select something that would attract his attention. After looking over several books I took up a little one, that I knew belonged to the Sunday school library & taking my seat by the sofa where he was lying, commenced to read & found the book to be "the Dairyman's Daughter."⁶¹ He listened for some time, when we were interrupted by the arrival of the mail-bag, which brought no letter for me, but one for Uncle & several for the other members of the family. Uncle gave me his to read. It was an invitation from the Mt Vernon Guards of Alexandria inviting him to dine with them on some great occasion. He observed that he w[oul]d answer the note politely but feared he would not be well enough to accept. This all over, Orton came in & took his seat and I asked Uncle if I sh[oul]d continue reading. He said I might and I went on – I never before, so much appreciated the Dairyman's Daughter. It is so prettily written, besides being so spiritual in its tone. It may truly be said to be the "simple annals of the poor."

The Isle of Wight was vividly brought to my mind as I first saw it at sun-set, the beautiful afternoon, our old ship Northumberland anchored off at Spit Head. I was glad dear Orton came in, for what he heard, may have been, some of the "good seed, dropped by the way side."

I thought my duetto audience, seemed interested, but, after a while we were again interrupted by a servant with a letter wh[ich] Uncle asked me to read, so, as it was getting dusky, & I feared to prove irksome, reluctantly laid my little book aside. Orton immediately called my attention to the exquisit view and we all three went out in the Portico to enjoy it more fully. The sky was suffused with sun-set clouds and the reflection on the Capitol windows & indeed the whole city of Washington, was perfectly resplendent. By some peculiar power of light and shade, the opposite shore, seemed nearer than I ever before remember it & the the [*sic*] white sails glistened on the intervening water. What unspeakable praise is due to God, for these, his inestimable benefits of beauty.

This evening, I read to Orton, in "the Southern Churchman," & while I was reading Cousin Mary asked me, if I had seen a certain Philadelphia paper relative to a subject aggitated by Uncle, with

⁵⁹ Goodwood was the home of Charles Henry Carter in Maryland

⁶⁰ "The Fight with the Dragon" (1825) by Friedrich von Schiller

⁶¹ *The Dairyman's Daughter* (1814) was a popular religious book about the experiences of Elizabeth Wallbridge.

regard to Gen. Washington being a Marshall of France.⁶² I said I had read the piece & cut it out of the Paper &c &c. Uncle, hearing us converse on the subject joined in & said that in this country, every thing that was written, must be refuted. He said he did not contend that Gen Washington was commissioned Marshall of France, but that he was so, by courtesy – that he did not care a straw about the title, nor did he ever refer to it, but, it was a subject often talked of in ~~those~~ his day & (besides the evidence of Maj Jackson, from whose mouth he often heard the recital of Col Lauren’s presentation to the King & in fact, the whole affair of his mission) he had often heard it spoken of by Revolutionary officers. Maj Col Ben Dulany,⁶³ particularly he said, told him that at Yorktown, Gen. W— was often addressed as “Monsieur le Marechal.”

When Col O’Hara surrendered his sword at Yorktown, it is related in Gen. Lee’s book,⁶⁴ Uncle says, that, he presented the sword first to Count de Rochambeau, who, immediately with the utmost gallantry ~~refer~~ waved his hand to Gen W & said – to Monsieur le Marechal” Then O’Hara apologized to Gen W for the mistake. This fact Uncle also says, is denied by Col Humphries.

October 1857

Sunday Oct 11 –1857

Arlington

~~This is~~

My pen refuses its office, as I attempt to write the records of the past week.

Oh! the changes, that a week can make. – He, who ~~used~~ has filled so many pages of my journal, no longer lives & moves & acts about us – no longer sheds the radiance of affection & kindness in our household – his hospitable welcome, greets no stranger – his dear voice is silent – Tonight, I kissed his cold cold forehead & sobbed, “good night Uncle” – Did he hear me in Heaven?” – I shivered as I kissed – how strange it seemed to hear no kind response no “Good night Markie or good night my dear child or good night my dear daughter.” Oh! my heart aches & almost breaks as I think that never more as I travel through this wilderness of life, shall I be cheered by his kind words – his affectionate tones – we all miss him every where – Oh! give me the grace – Oh! my Savior hear my prayer – give me grace – give us all grace & strength to bear all this sorrow as christians ought.

[A smaller page containing the following lines was sewed into the journal at this place.]

Pay respect to the aged.

⁶² It is unclear which Philadelphia newspaper this was. The *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia, Pa.), August 22, 1857, quoted a letter from G.W.P. Custis, claiming that after a dispute over who was to command the allied armies against the British, George Washington was named a Marshal of France. Similar articles quoting his letter were published in other states.

⁶³ Benjamin Tasker Dulany (1752-1818) was the owner of Clermont in Alexandria. He was also a personal friend of George Washington.

⁶⁴ Henry Lee III, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States, Vol. II* (Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1812), 360-62. Henry Lee III was Robert E. Lee’s father.

~~All thou too shall be aged,~~

They have steered their barque through the storms and calms of years and are now about to arrive at the destined Haven. [*Line scratched out*] What sorrows they must have experienced. We, in our brief lives may have ~~experienced~~ known a few sources of great grief – & every year we live we are more & more assured of the the [*sic*] truth of the Psalmist's words, that Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward,⁶⁵ but look at the griefs wh[ich] an aged person must ~~number~~ have necessarily endured – the disappointments, the trials of patience, the petty annoyances incident to every day life, & last though not least, the loss of friends ~~that also see the leaves that fall around us, in autumn's wind blast~~ As the beautiful leaves of autumn have these fallen around them, to say nothing of the many final partings that even take place, on this earth. This is but “the common lot” of all –

The conflicts of feeling – the changes in ourselves and in the world around us. We look with reverence, upon an antique building or monument, because it has witnessed scenes & is a souvenir of times, before our own, but, with how much more ~~reverence~~ veneration sh[oul]d we behold an individual who has lived & moved among the scenes of wh[ich] we read in History – in the society wh[ich] has almost past away.

Arlington House V—a [Tuesday]

Oct 13th 1857

The day on which we laid him in the cold, cold grave! –

Yes, he is gone – he the kind, the affectionate, the benevolent, the warm-hearted – he who was an object of interest to the nation and numbered among his friends, all who ever knew him – he, the attractive center of our home, he, the honored head of our family.

But a few hours have passed, since we followed to his last resting place, the mortal remains of my precious Uncle –

Oh! can it be, that we shall no more on this earth behold him, – and is it indeed, all over – must we return to the room, where he has suffered ~~& see no more, his~~ and be no more able, to minister to his relief – but, gaze on the empty bed and the old watch ticking on the wall above it.

Oh! my crushed heart, how will thou bear this? –

And to enter that old room – the room of the House-hold, where he has for so long ~~sat~~ seemed fixed, almost as the very walls, so constantly did he inhabit there – how shall I gaze on the empty chair now that he has gone, gone ~~indeed~~ forever.

Already, has my heart felt breaking, as I missed him everywhere. His little table by the old corner chair & the mail bag hanging behind it. The news-papers even, wh[ich] he perused with so much interest! – his favorite cat upon the rug! – ~~His silent voice breathing not the~~

As we all stand round the Table, his silent voice no longer utters “God bless us & make us thankful for what we are about to receive for Christ's sake.” Oh he is living everywhere in my heart – though dead to my weeping eyes.

⁶⁵ A reference to Job 5:7

Oh! blessed Jesus, sanctify to me this deep, deep sorrow.

[*In lighter handwriting*] This was a beautiful autumn day – In the morning, I gathered autumn leaves, ivy wreaths and flowers to adorn the grave, of my blessed aunt. Mr John Goldsborough⁶⁶ kindly accompanied me in to the Garden, where we added to our collection, some beautiful morning-glories – fit emblems I thought, of mortal frailty & yet so typical of the delicacy and purity of her, for whose grave they were intended. – I wonder if she saw me from her high abode – as I stooped & decked her grave with flowers? – was the spirit of her husband already with her's in heaven, I thought, as his body will soon be beside her in the earth? They were digging the grave of my poor Uncle – Oh how my heart ached, to see that cruel act & when I had finished my office of love, I [*word scratched out*] could not refrain my bitter tears – Mr G kindly took my hand and led me away – but, we spoke not a word, save that as we wended our way along the shaded path, while the autumn leaves fell fast, I observed that “it was a beautiful time to die” and he responded to the idea.

On my return to the house, I repaired to Marie's little room, where my darling Orton had strewn the bed, with the richest & most gorgeous leaves and flowers & there I wove a chaplet, for my dear Uncle's coffin – (Orton was so ~~every~~ sweet & kind, so obliging, so untiring, so gentle & considerate in doing everything for us –) Then, my dear Sisters & Aunt Britannia came & I went to see them – took them to my room and told them about my dear Uncle's sickness & about his death – how I was away from home – on a visit to Chantilly, ~~about~~ 22 miles from Arlington – how, on Wednesday, I rec[ieve]d a letter from Cousin Mary Lee & Agnes simply mentioning, that Uncle had taken a little cold & was quite unwell again, but, they hoped would be well in a few days – I felt uneasy even at this announcement, so much so, that I sat down immediately and wrote to my dear dear Uncle, expressing the deep regret I felt, at hearing such unfavorable news, & saying that if he was worse, he must certainly let me know & I w[oul]d return ~~immediately~~ at once – The next mail, brought a letter from Annie, written apparently under great mental excitement & distress, telling me of her Grandpa's extreme illness. I was not prepared for this – shocked & grieved, I commenced as soon as the first burst of emotion had subsided, to make my arrangements for speedy departure. Dear Aunt Cornelia & Bella showed the utmost tenderness & consideration & Cousin Turb⁶⁷ w[oul]d have taken me down in his Buggy that very afternoon but for pressing business wh[ich] prevented. The next morning Aunt Cornelia sent me down in her own carriage, & Bella kindly accompanied me – The ~~wide~~ ride was one of agonizing suspense. At first, I felt almost sure, I should not reach home in time, but, as we approached the vicinity, I seemed to believe by intuition, that he was still living – When I got ~~to the door~~ near the house, I asked the coachman to stop, lest the carriage wheels should disturb & getting out, hastened to the portico –

A servant met us at the door. I dared not ask how he was – I looked everything that w[oul]d implore the knowledge – Bella then asked. – When I heard that he was better – I sank down upon the sofa and wept bitterly. Poor Bella tried to console me – but, it was so refreshing to weep – Marie entered & spoke to me. Her voice faltered & I knew that she too, was weeping – but, I c[oul]d not for some moments, greet her –

⁶⁶ John McDowell Goldsborough (1813-1895), a descendant of John Parke Custis and distant relative of Markie.

⁶⁷ Chantilly Plantation was the home of Cornelia Lee Turbeville Stuart (1796-1883), a relative of the Custises and Lees. The other two names may be nicknames for her son and daughter.

When I revived, we embraced warmly & tearfully, but, I said not a word – When I did speak, it was to utter my thankfulness to God, for permitting me to arrive in time for I felt the intensest gratitude. Bella asked some questions which Marie answered – Agnes then came in looking gravely – but, seemed not as if she had been weeping – She kissed me affectionately & said she was glad I had come – they thought I would be here, that day and Marie said, Uncle had asked several times if I had been sent for & when I was coming. This touching remembrance, brought back the tears and I wept in gratitude.

I asked to go in, but, they said he was asleep – After a few minutes, however, I went, for I felt that the time could not be very long. Cousin Mary took me in and while she mentioned to Uncle that I had come, I knelt down by Annie – poor Annie, who was sitting on the floor her head buried in the old arm chair weeping bitterly.

Dear, dear Uncle! He looked up – awaking as it were to consciousness, as my name was mentioned & I went up & took his hand. There he sat in his bed, propped up by pillows, breathing so loudly & with that dreadful rattling noise and looking so thin – so reduced. I took his hand & kissed his noble head, as I always did when he was well. He pressed my hand so warmly & earnestly & said my dear child, “I thought – I have several times given up all prospect of ever seeing you again” – I replied, it is a great blessing to me, dear Uncle, that I am permitted to be here – to see you once more.

He pressed my hand several times, but, his utterance was so indistinct, that I could not hear all he said, though he talked a great deal. Feeling that perhaps he was becoming fatigued & that I was keeping away those who had been accustomed to be around him I withdrew from his side & stood near the fire –

When, he looked around and said “Markie, how is Orton?”

[The rest of the page is blank.]

Arlington House

Sunday eve – Oct 25, 1857

A sad day filled with memories – for, but a few Sundays ago, he was with us. – Marie & I, walked to-gether to our little tabernacle in the woods this afternoon. We were both, solemn & silent & spoke but few words. It had been long since Marie had been that way before, having been so much absent this summer, but, it had not been so many Sundays, since dear Uncle & myself had tread that Shaded road & I missed him in the walk and from his seat in the Old School House – how well I recalled the last Sunday he was there – how thoughtfully & slow, he walked along – how attentively he listened to the discourse of the young Theologian & how pleasantly he praised the ability of the Speaker (Mr. Walter Williams) Oh! could I but have known it w[oul]d be his last –

My darling Orton accompanied us part of the way en route to Alexandria – How my heart is troubled when I see how few religious advantages that dear child now possesses in the w matter of religious influence – Oh! God I pray thee, even through all these adverse circumstances, bring his heart to thee.

Mr. Wiley⁶⁸ discoursed this afternoon. We heard him for the first time. Neither Marie nor I were prepossessed – so little so, that we gave him no opportunity of speaking after Church, although he appeared to desire it. The fact is, we both felt sad & unlike making an overture to a stranger or having him accompany me home. He did not seem to be a person likely to appreciate our present circumstances. Had I been alone, I might have thought it right to make a sacrifice of my own feelings, in consideration of his being a stranger at our Station & to have extended to him the hospitalities of Arlington, but, Marie was with me, & I felt that it was her place not mine, to do this & as she did not, I make my actions harmonize with hers and yielded to my inclinations. So we walked home alone criticising the efforts of the young Divine. His versatility of speech is marvelous – I c[oul]d not help thinking if he had concentrated his mind on the theme he took to discuss, it w[oul]d have been more intelligible – Proteous⁶⁹ like, he had too many heads shapes. His ideas seemed to fly out in all directions like a fire-work-wheel and he parleyed so long that I am afraid his audience became somewhat wearied. He is apparently an earnest man however, and I trust a good one and I pray that his ministry among us may be blessed. The old woman who always makes loud lamentations was not dumb this evening & I noticed as is always the case, that her moaning & sobbing encouraged the speaker to great energy & enthusiasm of speech & action.

Mr. Wiley is not Mr Potter – tho’ perhaps better adapted to his congregation than was he. I missed my old friend, Mr Potter this evening & wished him back again. His kind & sympathising letter rec[ieve]d last evening assured me that his thoughts ~~are~~ were here sometimes, if he ~~was~~ is not.

The intense awkwardness of these young Divines is a subject of my intense pity. When they first get up to discourse, they make all sorts of rare gesticulations & say the most extraordinary things – then partially discovering what they have said, they try to unsay & this always makes things worse. Then, they look as if they should expire, but, it not being the time & place for this ceremony, they pluck up courage & plunge through as best they can. This evening for instance, Mr W said in a paroxysm of earnestness, ~~that~~ “we are all born heirs of hell, & if by Gods mercy we [*two words scratched out*] get there it will be by &c &c.” I do not remember the rest – but, this phrase is distinctly stamped on my mind, as being certainly a most wonderful [*word scratched out*] turn of the discourse.

When we were coming home, however, one of the servants stopped or rather joined Marie & I & while we were recalling two or three very striking paragraphs in the discourse, she observed that Mr Wiley seemed to be a very smart man, though she could not say he was such a pretty man or such a gentleman-like man, as Mr Potter. In fact she said, she had laid off Mr Potter for one of us young ladies & she was quite disappointed to hear of his marriage.⁷⁰

November 1857

Arlington House Virginia

⁶⁸ This may have been Rev. John Wiley, rector of Trinity Church in Charles County, MD. None of the ministers in the Episcopal Church in Virginia at this time were named Wiley.

⁶⁹ The Greek mythology, the sea god Proteus was able to assume any shape at will.

⁷⁰ Henry C. Potter married Eliza Jacobs in fall 1857 after returning to Pennsylvania.

[Sunday] Nov 1, 1857 – Sunday night

My heart is sad and lone and dreary – What an aching void I feel! On no day so much as on Sunday, do I miss my beloved Uncle – He was more constantly in the parlor on that day. He was always on the portico as the carriage returned from Church – always ready to help us out. To-day, when Mrs Fitzhugh asked us to remain a little longer after Church, Cousin Mary could not say – “No I thank you, Father will be waiting!” No, he waits no more for us, on this earth! Oh! how I missed him then, & remembered that he would not be at home, to welcome us again.

Last evening, Cousin Mary told me to call Ephraim to shut up the house. From the force of habit, I got up & going to the door leading into Uncle’s room, I called him (just as he used always to do). Cousin M however soon brought me to myself and to a flood of tears (in a few minutes afterwards when I left the room) by remarking in a subdued tone – “Markie, Ephraim does not stay in that room now.” No! it needed not that his valet should now stay in that room, to keep up the fire for his master to go to bed by. Sad reality for us! I trust it is a better change for him! God grant, that my poor and feeble prayers for his eternal good, may have mingled with those, of more exalted Christians & reached the Throne of our Heavenly Father!

We went to Alexandria to Church this morning. Mr Dana preached a good sermon. Dr Richards read remarkably well. The latter came up after Church, and with a look of deep sympathy which I did not expect & shall not soon forget, pressed my hand. I wanted to have spoken to Mr Dana – He who was with us in our hours of severest trial & who to me, especially, has shown so much kindness & sympathy, but, circumstances did not admit of it & I was obliged to forgo the pleasure –

To-night, Mr Randolph is here. He often came to see Uncle & they seemed to enjoy to talk together of the times that were gone. His presence, or else the time I have had for reflection this evening has rendered me incontrolably sad. I often feel that my sadness is a restraint on the rest of the family, who are so cheerful & loquacious. MCW

[Wednesday] Nov 11, 1857

~~I miss my dearest Uncle~~ For days & weeks, my mind has been in such of constant sadness, anxiety & care, that my pen has found nought worth writing, if I except the daily mercies & blessings of my Heavenly Father.

These are showered upon me & though mingled with sorrow & sighing.

To-day, my Cousin Robert Lee arrived, after days ~~and~~ of expectation & anxiety on our part.

Germantown Philadelphia

[Sunday] Nov 29, 1857

Christ’s Church Parsonage –

This morning I attended church with my Cousin Ellen Atkins in her husband’s beautiful little church next door – Mr Atkins took me in to his Sunday school in the morning – the room is a very commodious one & arranged so conveniently, so neatly & so tastefully & the children of whom 440, were present all looked so clean & neat. There seemed to be the most perfect order &

great earnestness & interest displayed on the part of both teachers & scholars. I could not but wish that our schools at the south were thus thriving.

One Hymn, the children sung, was especially beautiful, commencing “we are passing through Imanuel’s Land.”⁷¹ Next to the school room proper, is an adjoining room for infants[,] 118 were present to-day & they are taught orally by one of the Ladies. Mr Atkins in the soul of energy & order & this with a holy zeal of the cause of Christ, seems to me the great secret of success. The Church, internally & externally, is quite perfect of its kind. I know of no Church I altogether admire as much. There was communion to day – & Mr Atkins preached from the Text “watchman what of the night.”⁷²

This afternoon, there was Sunday school again – Ellen & myself sat in our rooms reading. Mr Atkins went into the Sunday school again towards the middle of their service to sing with the children from his new Programmes. He is enchanted with these programmes, which he has had prettily illuminated & made of colored paper, for the children’s Christmas celebration.

As I sat at my room window I saw the children in their Sunday-school & heard them singing.

To-night, I heard preach for the first time, Dr. Wm Bacon Stevens – Rector of St. Andrews, Philadelphia.⁷³ I was delighted with his appearance manner & the matter of his sermon. He is so mild & graceful & gentlemanly – so urbane. He was introduced to me & had some little converse at the chancel after church.

I have passed to-day, altogether one of the most satisfactory & profitable Sundays I have spent for a long time. Ellen & Mr Atkins adorn their profession to the edification of all around them.

[A poem copied on the next page]

France, thou pleasant Land of France!

The dearest of all lands to me;

Where life was like a joyful dance –

The joyful dance of infancy.

Farewell, my childhood’s laughing wiles,

Farewell the joys of youth’s bright days;

The bark that bears me from thy smiles,

Bears but my meaner part away.

The best is thine; my changeless heart

⁷¹ The lyrics are a slight alteration of “We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground,” part of the final verse of the Isaac Watts hymn “We’re Marching to Zion” (1707).

⁷² Isaiah 21:11

⁷³ William Bacon Stevens (1815-1887) was the fourth Bishop of Pennsylvania. At this time he was rector of St. Andrew’s Church in Philadelphia.

Is given, beloved France to thee;
And let it sometimes though we part,
Remind thee with a sigh, of me.

Mary Queen of Scotts Farewell to La Belle France⁷⁴

December 1857

[Tuesday, December 31, 1857]

The last day of the year 1857

Washington City – Dr. Storrow's⁷⁵ F Street North

No/28 between 21-22

How strange, that all things regarding me should be as they now are.

With my aunt & Cousin⁷⁶ whom I so long ago parted with in Paris – living in Washington, among old friends, to whom previous circumstances has rendered me a stranger. – in the vicinity of a locality, which was my home when when a child

⁷⁴ It is unclear whether Markie wrote this poem herself or copied it from somewhere else.

⁷⁵ Samuel Appleton Storrow (1827-1879), a medical officer in the U.S. Army who was then living in Washington, D.C.

⁷⁶ Margaret and Philadelphia Orton, her aunt and cousin on her father's side.

1858

January 1858

[Friday, January 1] New Years Day 1858⁷⁷

Arlington Virginia

A quiet day, spent in the usual performance of domestic duties by the family alone –

I spent part of the day in reading, part in writing and the remainder in knitting a pair of manchettes de laine⁷⁸ for ~~my~~ friend Mrs Tillinghast⁷⁹ –

Each of us having received from all the rest, a Christmas gift, there were no presents made with the exception of a little surprise in the way of a crat for Rob wh[ich] I placed seruptitiously on his plate.

We could scarcely realize that it was christmas day so uniformly did the hours run –

Arlington [Saturday] April 10. 1858⁸⁰

All the family went to Ch[urch] & left me alone, but after reading Dr. Chalmers⁸¹ till 12 o'clock – who sh[oul]dbe ushered in but Mr McCloud of the Seminary – a rare genius in his ways this doubtless a man of some talent. Our venerable Bishop Meade,⁸² returned in the carriage with Cousin M & the girls – He preached in Alexandria today for the first time for eighteen years. I was so sorry not to hear him. I never knew him so interesting as he was today – After Mr McLeod left he put on his wrapper & slippers & reclined for a nap on the sofa asking one of the children to comb his hair until he fell asleep wh[ich] as usual, it fell to my lot to do[.] He conversed so spiritually on a variety of subjects especially about the present state of religious revival going on in the country. Said that three or four of our Bishops had become converted during seasons of this kind. Virg. Bishops McIlvane, McCrosky, Elliott, & Johns. Tomorrow, we accompany him to the Seminary.⁸³

Washington City Navy Yard Sunday – [Monday] Jan 18. 1857 [1858]

The deepest & only snow storm of any importance, we have had this winter.

⁷⁷ This diary entry comes from the collections of Tudor Place. See Diary Entries, 1858-1859, Martha (Williams) Carter Papers, Tudor Place Archives, MS6_B4_F4.

⁷⁸ A kind of fingerless glove that goes past the wrist.

⁷⁹ This might be Rebecca Power Tillinghast (1790-1860) the mother of Rev. Nicholas Power Tillinghast (1817-1869), rector of St. John's Church, Georgetown.

⁸⁰ This unattached entry comes from the collections of Tudor Place.

⁸¹ Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), a Scottish Presbyterian minister who wrote extensively on morality and natural theology.

⁸² William Meade (1789-1862), third Bishop of Virginia and one of the founders of the Virginia Theological Seminary

⁸³ Charles Pettit McIlvaine (1799-1873), the Chaplain of the United States Senate; Samuel A. McCrosky (1804-1886), Bishop of Michigan; Stephen Elliot (1806-1866), Bishop of Florida; John Johns (1796-1876), Fourth Episcopal Bishop of Virginia and President of the College of William & Mary 1849-1854.

We c[oul]d not leave the house. My precious Orton, whose welfare is now the burden of my life, read to me several chapters in the bible, then I read to him in that most spiritual & profitable & deeply interesting book, "Life of Capt. Hedley Vicars."⁸⁴ How earnestly I pray that the example of that excellent man, may be long retained in the memory of my precious brother. At my suggestion, Orton finished the book this evening reading aloud to Kate Hurry & myself.

After he had concluded, he said "I know why the Allies gained the victory at Sebastopol⁸⁵ – it was because, so many people in England were praying for it -- & then referred to the Bible Promise where two or three are gathered together, there will I be in the midst of them.

He said this with apparent levity, but, I could see, that it was to hide deeper feeling, indeed, he confessed as much, when I chided him for speaking lightly or acting frivolously.

Oh! what balm to my heart, to see in this dear child any indications of spirituality. God grant that he may one day become a true Christian.

I believe most earnestly that he will. All my prayers & teachings will be heard & rewarded.

The records of Heaven alone, can tell how earnestly I tried to bring him up "in the way he should go." Oh! he cannot depart from it.

March 1858

Arlington House V__a [Tuesday] March 2, 1858

I have not recorded all the heart-loneliness that I have experienced, since I came back to dear Arlington. Since my return from Philadelphia I have been at home, I think a little more than six weeks and still there are moments when I feel the void in the house-hold, as much as I did not the day of my arrival.

Time can never entirely obliterate this, indeed, I would be sorry if it could. If those with whom we have been long and intimately associated for years, do not miss us when we leave this world, from whom may we expect such feelings. I do not therefore try to restrain my grief when a suitable opportunity occurs for me to indulge it – when at twilight we all in sable garb are assembled in the room of the house-hold, -- when the firelight glimmers on the pictured wall and each one, sitting or reclining, sleeping or musing, is silent and reserved, then my thought turn to the departed and my eyes rest upon that old corner chair, & I say to my self – Can it be, that I shall never more see the well known form, that for so many years filled that seat – there have I seen him, in so many moods, for so many years – my dear, my ever-to-be remembered Uncle! One heart, though not one alone, beats warmly sadly for thee! How brief now appears, that life, which was and will ever be, such a volume of interest to those who have enjoyed its outflowings or may hereafter peruse its written records. This brevity, is a melancholy commentary, on the instability of all that is earthly.

We all do fade as a flower.

⁸⁴ *Memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars, Ninety-Seventh Regiment* (1856) by Catherine Marsh,

⁸⁵ The Siege of Sevastopol was the last major battle of the Crimean War and lasted from October 1854 to September 1855.

Why can we not bring this great fact this indisputable certainty, this unalterable fiat, to bear on our daily deportment. No! “Man, thinks all men mortal but himself.” And lives under a constant delusion that he will live forever.

How changed is dear, beautiful Arlington, to me! How changed is my whole life, by this last stroke of Providence! – my inner life, more perhaps, than my outer; hence to the world, doubtless, I seem to go on, in the same routine. How far from a just estimate is this. “The heart knoweth its own bitterness.”

How well it is that it should be so, in the great organization of life! Else, how much more unhappy we should be, than we are now. No others must not cannot know, all our sorrows.

Oh! this seeming! – Oh! this being.

Arlington House Virginia [Friday] March 5, 1858

This sunny, calm day, rendered my walk of duty this morning, more agreeable than the same exercise yesterday.

I had intended to make my daily visit to poor “Uncle Gid,” but, the ground being frozen & the walking better than it has been for a long time, I decided to wend my way first to the farm, where I have not been for a long time. So bundling myself up in a shawl & a cloak, furs & head wrapping, with my brown straw hat & black veil to crown all (equipped, as Cousin Mary says, for a tour to Noverzembla⁸⁶) I started forth prayer-book & tracts in hand & made my first visit to old Austin Grey. I always thought he had an interesting face & to-day as he sat bending over the fire of his little cabin it appeared more so to me than ever. After conversing with him for a reasonable time on the subject of his physical maladies & expressing the sympathy I really felt for him, I proposing reading him a Tract. He agreed. The name of the tract was “The Old Barge-man.”⁸⁷ He seemed interested & so did “Aunt Airy” his Sister who sat with us. I hope that some good seed may drop in his heart, and that if my prescriptions for his bodily ailments avail not, he may, from my reading derive some benefit to his soul. Old Airy who was there, told me in speaking of “Uncle Gid’s” burn, that it was an old fashion among the negroes to collect & bottle the first snow that fell in March, wh[ich] was by them considered a sovereign remedy for burns.

I called in for a few moments to see Margaret, who greeted me with her usual cheerful welcome – then went over to make a visit to Patsey & her little tribe – all complimented me on my good looks, which seemed very unappreciative to one who has the consciousness of having suffered so much of late, with neuralgia.

I could not leave the Farm, without calling at the House of Mrs Dailey the overseer’s wife. The Irish after all are a warm hearted race & full of feeling, wh[ich] makes [them] to me always interesting. Mrs D commenced by expressing to me her gratitude for saving the live of her little Johnny, a sunny haired, blue eyed, fair little creature, who stood beside her while she spoke, but of which circumstance I was wholly ignorant. When was that? said I. Last summer, Miss, she continued in tones of emotion, when you sent him the pills. This recalled my first effort at

⁸⁶ Nova Zembla, a large Russian island north of the Arctic Circle which several explorers (notably William Barents and Henry Hudson) visited while searching for a Northeast Passage to East Asia.

⁸⁷ “History of Jonathan Brown, Bargeman” was a religious tract produced by the American Tract Society in 1830. It was a twelve-page excerpt from an episode *An Historical Account of My Own Life* by Edmund Calamy (1671-1732).

making pills, which to me, was so ludicrous at the time that I now felt no disposition to weep with the good woman; but, it was not long before my eyes were filled with tears & my cheeks wet with the dew of deep sentiment, for she spoke of my precious Uncle so warmly & so truly & brought his dear image to my mind so vividly, that I could not refrain.

She reverted to a little incident wh[ich] I will record. Last summer, her little Johnny was taken with a spasm (some time after the indisposition first alluded to). She supposed him dying & had her husband & several of the servants around her – finally in wild despair she sent one of the servants for “Aunt Sally” she said, whom she wanted to lay him out & prepare him for burial. As the servant was going, he met Uncle Custis just out of the door. He told him to wait & went in, told Mrs D to put on a kettle of water & as soon as it was hot she said tearfully, he put the child in with his own hand, he did & if he had been a near kin he could not have appeared more sorry, nor done more for him. Poor woman, she seemed so grateful & unceasingly poured forth her praises, said he too, he had saved her child who would else have been now in the g[r]ave.

On my return home, I found Cousins Charles & Louis Conrad who spent the day with us. Cousin Mary brought in one of her old boxes of letters & read for our amusement the wills of our Custis ancestors. Maj Gen. John Custis the first of our line, of whom we have cognisance, had no less than three wives & of course, he had to write a will for each. Sarah, Anne & Tabatha. Reading these old letters, seems to have become quite a mania with dear Cousin M. At all hours of the day may she be seen, coming in or sitting down with her arms or lap full of moth eaten letters, some of wh[ich] by date are one hundred & fifty years old. Having a decided taste for antiquities, I would give anything to possess some of these relics, but, I find from a few delicate hints, that I have made with regard to the subject, Cousin M seems disposed to retain them all in her family tho’ she has kindly given me one, out of the million & a copy of another. If I was less se[n]sitive & had less delicacy of feeling I might suggest that as a member of the family & equally with my Cousins here, related to the old Custis ancestors, might feel a desire to collect autographs & relics &c. This evening, I relieved my conscience by putting into Cousin Mary’s hands, some slips of Gen Washington’s writing, which dear Uncle had given to me to keep for him & wh[ich], now, though I wanted above all things I felt I had no longer a right to keep.

[Saturday] 28th of March 1858 – Tudor Place Georgetown DC

How many a year it has been since I spent a Sunday birthday at Tudor before! And how great the changes in all this time. I went to dear old St. John’s in the morning with Aunt Brit, Markie, Kate Upshur & Miss Wight. Mr Tillinghast preached an admirable sermon and through many adverse circumstances, I preserved a happy frame of mind during the day. In the afternoon, the weather was so very windy and disagreeable, that, I felt warned not to go to Church – remained at home, and finished a little translation I had commenced of a pious book which I hope was profitable to me in the doing and if I have it published, will be to others in the receiving. Before the family returned from Church, the bell rung and Thayer Abert & Capt. Walker were announced. It was a familiar sound & it really brought back many days of years gone by, to see them here together. We each remarked on it. They came to say good bye.

Thayer goes to Florida. Capt. Walker to Utah. I could not but feel sad, as they bade me adieu. I gave them each a little violet as a parting remembrance. Thayer said he would keep his and asked me not to forget him. Capt. Walker, unlike himself (meloncholy effects of matrimony!) made no

such sentimental speech. I wondered, when they were gone, when we should all meet again. I feel almost a conviction, that it will never be at Tudor Place.

I am looking forward to a visit from Mrs Campbell to-morrow. I await with some interest the issue of my first manuscript. How sweet & kind in her to take so much interest in my affairs.

Letters from dear Arlington this evening. My heart yearns towards that lovely & beloved home.

April 1858

Tudor Place Georgetown DC

Easter Sunday 1858 April [4]

Beautiful is the day, as the event which it commemorates, is joyful. I attended old St. John's with Kate, Aunt Brit, Miss Wight, my precious Orton, Markie Kennon & Mildred Lee.

The services were peculiarly solemn. I never knew Mr Tillinghast more earnest and persuasive, in his manner of delivering a sermon.

I was so glad to have my darling Brother sitting by me in Church. And most sincerely did I pray, that the words which we all heard with our outward ears, might inwardly abide in our hearts.

We had a remarkably large congregation & from the eloquent silence wh[ich] prevailed throughout, I thought all must feel the occasion as impressive as I did.

What truly, is more calculated to bring our hearts to a juster estimate of the brevity & uncertainty of life, than the sad & thrilling event wh[ich] took place on good Friday in Christ's Church. A death in Church! -- how awfu! A lady who like ourselves, went to Church in health and was brought away a palid corpse. It might have been one of us! -- it is only of God's mercy, that it was not. It does, indeed, seem a warning voice from God. Oh! may we heed it, and so, when our summons comes, whether it be in a little moment when we think not, or after days & weeks of waiting, may we be prepared for the great, the mighty transition.

There was an army officer in uniform in Church this morning. He had light hair like my precious Brother Orton & looked much like him, when his back was turned. A silent tear rolled down my cheek as I thought what happiness that day would bring, when I could see him likewise, kneeling at the table of our blessed Savior.

May 1858

May 1858

The memorable days of the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh of May, I spent in Washington, at Aunt Margaret's little domicile at 128 F Street between 21 & 22 --

My dearest of friends Dr. Austin Flint, arrived on the evening of the 4th of May. What quiet, silent anxiety [*word scratched out*] had been mine all day! Had my youthful hopes never known a disappointment, I should have looked forward with joyous rapture, incontrollable delight, unspeakable pleasure, to the arrival of my adopted Brother; but, as it was, I went about all day,

looking thoughtful & subdued, occupying every moment of my time – Wondering in my heart of hearts, if the evening would bring me happiness or misery [*line scratched out*] for unhappily for me, I know of no medium state, where those I love are concerned. I expected when the issue of this evening should be decided, to be either extremely happy or extremely the reverse.

As twilight came on, I sat by the window & Aunt Margaret sat there too and we watched until the twilight fearfully waned away[.] At length the servant came in to light the gass and I asked Pricilla please not to shut the s[h]utter of the window where I was sitting – She looked grim & unappreciative, shut the other one lit the gass & went out. Tea was brought in & Aunt M, though she had been sympathising in my pleasurable expectations, seemed now somewhat verging on despair, lest the Dr sh[oul]d not come or else, she was beginning to want her Tea. I could not tell which, but, she arose [*word scratched out*] from the chair near me and took her seat at the Tea table, so did Uncle Orton & Phillie⁸⁸ – The idea of my going to the Tea table, as long as I could stand by that window, never occurred to me & yet, I thought, if I refuse to take Tea, they will all laugh at me & I shall never hear the end of it. While I was in this quandary, I saw a carriage driving towards the house. Ah! it is the Dr – No, it stops at Capt Tilton's⁸⁹ – alas! Alas! But the coachman goes up & rings the bell and returns directly to the carriage. Oh! I see, he has [*word scratched out*] mistaken the house. It is the Dr. I could not speak, with agitation of joy, but, saying not a word, I walked out of the room & closing it, I opened the front door. It was really the Dr. We greeted each other and I hastened to ushur him into the parlo[r.]

June 1858

Arlington Virginia [Saturday] June 5, 1858

Returned from town, late last evening & found Cousin Edmond Rogers⁹⁰ here. We had no sooner gone into the parlor and settled down into a state of quiescence, than he opened to us the special object of his visit, which was, to investigate into the family geniology. Accordingly, nothing was talked about during the rest of the afternoon, but, family pedigree and when Tea was over, we all sat around the little parlor table – Cousin Mary Lee, Marie la fille myself & Cousin Edmond Rogers. Cousin Mary got out packages of old papers – some of them, moth eaten & dyed by the lapse of centuries and Cousin Edmond produced his note book & made copies of such as cousin M permitted; – others, were read aloud, commented upon, and laughed over as remarkable specimens of the idiocincricies of our ancestors, especeially, we enjoyed a letter of Col. Parke Pepper,⁹¹ to [*blank*] proposing to come over to America, to get a Virginia wife, very highly complimenting Virginia ladies in general. Cousin Edmond gave us information which he had gleaned, in his recent investigation among the branches of the ancestral tree and brought out a MS. of the Calvert Ancestry, which he read aloud to us.

I then spoke of the Custis Tree, which I had seen here, and distinctly remembered – but, Cousin Mary & Marie la fille had no recollection of it. I rather think they were absent from home last

⁸⁸ Thomas Orton (1782?-1865) was Philadelphia Orton's father. Markie spent time with both of them when she was in Paris.

⁸⁹ Edward Gibson Tilton (1805-1861) was a commander in the U.S. Navy and lived in Washington, DC.

⁹⁰ Edmund Law Rogers, Sr. (1818-1896), a descendant of Martha Washington through his mother's side. He was the owner of Druid Hill in Baltimore, MD.

⁹¹ Parke Pepper (1682-1777) was the son of Gilbert Pepper and Evelyn Parke, daughter of Col. Daniel Parke.

summer, when my dear Uncle had the Tree here and discussed it among us. I remember, perfectly, that the first Custis on the Tree came from Ireland. I cannot be mistaken in this, for it is indelibly impressed on my memory and with the family tree, was an old letter from Gen. Boliver⁹² to Uncle Custis acknowledging the reception of a relic of Washington which we also, read over and I think Agnes Lee, put them away somewhere together. When Agnes returns from Baltimore we shall know.

I gave Cousin Edmond a will of Col. Daniel Parke (wh[ich] Cousin Mary had given me) to copy. I was glad to confer upon him such a pleasure as it seemed to be.

Cousin Mary is slowly progressing with her book of dear Uncle's recollections. She intends to publish with these, many of the old family letters she has found. Among them, is a love letter, the most ardent glowing effusion proved to be from Col. Byrd of Westover to his wife previous to their marriage. It assumes the noms d'amour of Veramour & Fidelia⁹³ – addressing her as the adorable Fidelia and signed Veramour. Cousin Mary was anxious to publish this, but, Cousin Robert thought it contained too vividly the feelings of a man – did not like to hear it read jestingly, although it was written so many years ago – at least a hundred I suppose, if not more (though I cannot at the moment turn to the records). I can fully appreciate Cousin Robert's feelings in this matter. It seems like a desecration to place before the eyes of the world, an expression of feeling, which when written, was intended but for the loving eyes of one woman. How true is the Bible proverb "As in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man!"⁹⁴ So, every man and every woman, too, who has lived any time in this world & had a moderate share of experiences, must feel, when reading this, a responsive chord is touched & must surely come to the conclusion, that human nature is the same in all ages.

Cedar Grove King George County
Virginia

[Tuesday] June 29, 1858

Sunday the 27, wh[ich] was the day before yesterday, was a day so oppressively warm that I not feeling very well, decided to remain at home with Cousin Julia Stuart, while the rest of the family including Marie Lee, went to Church.

Cousin Julia was quite an invalid but, like most of the ladies of her time, or rather, like those of her generation in our own family, she is endued with the most superhuman energy, at all times and even when she is sick, she seems not backward in the duty of the hour."

⁹² On May 25, 1826, Simon Bolívar, the President of Gran Colombia in South America, sent a letter to G.W.P. Custis to thank him for sending him relics belonging to George Washington. Due to Bolívar's reputation as "the Liberator" of Spanish-controlled colonies in South America, Custis had asked the Marquis de Lafayette to give Bolívar two Washington relics through the Colombian ambassador. The relics included a portrait of George Washington and a medal he received from the Commonwealth of Virginia. An English translation of Bolívar's letter appears in the *Phenix Gazette* (Alexandria, Va.), September 15, 1826.

⁹³ "Veramour" was a pseudonym which William Byrd II of Westover used in love letters he wrote to several women. He called his wife Lucy Parke Byrd "Fidelia." Markie's romanticism aside, William Byrd II was far from faithful to one woman.

⁹⁴ Proverbs 27:19.

She [*word scratched out*] reclined on the little couch before the North Varander [veranda] window, in the upstairs hall, inhaling with pleasure the fresh air blowing from the river and and anon enjoying a beautiful little bouquet of flowers wh[ich] I had gathered & arranged in a glass on the table by her side – We conversed for some time to-gether & then she proposed that I should call Calvert⁹⁵ & that we should read together the morning Service. I readily acquiesced. She read the prayers and I the two lessons and little Calvert sat by us, like a Child that had been reared from the cradle, in the path way of religion – and so he had.

Cousin Julia then asked me to get Spurgeon’s Sermons,⁹⁶ if I was not as much averse to them, as my Cousin Bernard Carter,⁹⁷ and to read one for our mutual edification. I asked if Bernard was averse to them & in reply heard from Cousin Julia in her amusing manner, how Bernard on his recent Honey-moon visit to Cedar Grove, had denounced Spurgeon in the most violent terms – how she had accordingly, given him “Melville”⁹⁸ as a substitute and how in the end, his bride had [*word scratched out and torn*] persuaded him to reading one of the Sermons, which in the morning of the same day, he had said, would “polute his lips” – how he then changed his opinion and nobly acknowledged his error & how she, Cousin Julia took that occasion to tell him, she hoped it would be a lesson to him in future never to pronounce his opinion on a subject of which he was totally ignorant & to remember, that it was very unbecoming for a young person to express themselves so positively. The earnestness and excellence of spirit, with wh[ich] Cousin Julia related this little incident, made it very interesting[.]

I then remarked that I on the contrary was inclined to admire some of Mr Spurgeon’s characteristics and although he was exceedingly quaint in his manners & expressions from what I had seen in News paper extracts, I felt, that upon the whole, he was a good man – an extraordinary genius, raised up for a special emergency. I then turned to the Sermon on the “Resurrection of the dead” which after reading, we both acknowledged ourselves, profited and pleased. The latter part of it, is an awful, most forcable discription, of the fate of the lost soul – the first part, an embodiment of beautiful & consolitary ideas, on the “resurrection of the just” – seeming to prove from Scripture, that the body will actually go to Heaven, as well as the soul & there be capable of pleasure as it is on this earth proving also, the recognition of friends in another world, a subject always so replete with interest to me, who hope I have there, so many to recognise. It is a “beautiful belief” but, alas! to my mind, not a clear revelation of the Bible though many or rather several passages of scripture, are suggestive of such a doctrine.

We conversed for some time on the sermon we had read & I found that my ideas coincided with Cousin Julia’s.

As soon after dinner, as it was cool enough to take a walk, Ada proposed to me to go with her & read to the servants. It was a duty by no means, unfamiliar to me, so Ada[,] Julia & myself, with their little brothers, Richard & Calvert taking the Bibles & Plantation Sermons, set off on our walk to the Servants qua[r]ters – Julia & Richard ~~went~~ were destined for one[,] Calvin & Ada & Calvert & myself, went to another. Ada insisted that I should read to them a Chapter in the Bible

⁹⁵ Calvert Stuart (1847-1862) was Julia’s son. He was only eleven at this time. Four years later, he died of Scarlet Fever.

⁹⁶ Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), one of the most popular preachers of the nineteenth century. The first volume of his sermons was published in 1857, the second in 1858.

⁹⁷ Bernard Carter (1834-1912) married Mary Buckner Ridgeley (1834-1894) in 1858. He was Markie’s distant cousin on the Calvert side.

⁹⁸ This might refer to one of the novels of Herman Melville (1819-1891)

& explain it and offer a prayer. I blush to write it, but, I shrunk from doing so & tried to excuse myself. Ada, however, in her urgent earnest manner insisted – said that a voice of a stranger was sometimes more impressive than the teaching of one accustomed to the office. I acknowledged the truth of this, but had not been accustomed to pray aloud except, I said sometimes [*several words scratched out*] in the presence of the servants at Arlington, when I visited them in sickness. I pleaded my diffidence in the presence of strangers – my inaptitude to extemporize, my dissatisfaction with myself in my mode of expression in the most ordinary conversation – my great want of self-reliance & begged Ada to read & pray as she usually did and I would most heartily join with her in all the exercises; but, this would not do. Ada said she would read the sermon & give out the hymn but that I must read the chapter & explain it and offer an extemporaneous prayer, for that they did not like forms of prayer. Ada, I saw, felt as uncomfortable at the idea of conducting these services in my presence, as I did of doing so, in her's & Calvert's. But, why should it be so? We were both Christians – We were both anxious that the ignorant should learn the words of wisdom & were we ashamed to address our Savior in each other's presence? I reflected as we walked along through the woods – both of us were silent. Ada at one time, proposed that she should leave me; but, I could not hear to this – Must one Christian leave the room, because another one cannot sufficiently overcome their disinclination to pray in her presence? This was a pride of heart, unworthy of us – I was the oldest and had been longest, by many years, in the fold of my good Shepherd. The duty now appeared to me, as it had not before. I resolved ~~to~~ by God's grace, to overcome my feelings of painful reserve & prayed for strength to succeed.

It was near sun-set, as we approached a little Log Cabin in a dusty ~~little~~ yard, interspersed with a few trees and enclosed by a Virginia rail fence, wh[ich] old “Aunt-Babb”⁹⁹ the proprietor, came forward and commenced dilligently to take down. I faintly said, I thought, I could get over, when one or two rails were taken down, but, Ada observing my countenance of dismay when I first beheld this to me, insurmountable obstacle, declared that they all must be taken down for “Cousin Markie” was a City Lady and could not get over fences – I, however, would only allow three rails to be displaced & then with the assistance of Ada & “Aunt-Babb” got over. Ada then, saying she was a country girl displayed great dexterity. Before the house, in the yard, was a blazing fire. I remarked to A[da], that this was a warmer welcome, than I had anticipated, since it was one of the warmest days we had had this summer. She informed me, that the fire was kindled in the yard in the day time, to cook their meals, that their houses might not be made too warm – and at night, to run the musquitoes out of their houses. Will you go in the house or in the yard? said Ada, very hospitably. The house looked rather warm & dark & y[ar]d rather dusty, however, I concluded upon the latter, as a shaded seat under a tree presented itself. Ada & myself took our seats together, while Calvert was sent around to collect the congregation. I took this opportunity of reading over “the Sermon on the Mount” & Ada talked to Aunt Babb & Aunt Cela who ~~ha~~ soon arrived & seated themselves near us. Where the congregation were generally, in the habit of locating themselves, I could not see. A woman named Violet, however, was the only other, with two little children, added to our numbers. Calvert returned with excuses, why the others could not come & he dear little fellow, stood twirling a switch & looking most quistically, while Ada read out “the hymn “When I can read my title clear” and the two old women with most unearthly voices, commenced to sing after the quaint fashion of their race, Ada and myself vainly endeavoring to join our voices in unison. The solemnity of the occasion,

⁹⁹ All the “aunts” in this paragraph are enslaved women.

was all that prevented a smile, for the whole scene was ludicrous in the extreme. Calvert with his innocent childish face, twirling a switch in his boyish way & gazing first at one of the old women & then at the other & then at me, as much as to say, he wondered ~~how the scene appeared to me~~ what I thought of it. When the singing was at an end, Ada put ~~the Bible~~ her hand on the Bible wh[ich] lay in my lap & said – Read! I had not been prepared by the last scene for reading before the same audience, ~~but~~ especially, when as soon as I commenced, they began to groan & repeat my words and assent to all I said with earnest gesticulations, in a manner I had never seen them act before. By god’s grace, however, I was enabled to restore the solemnity of my feelings and keep before me during the while, the sacred office I had assumed in proclaiming God’s word to the ignorant. I endeavored as simply as I could to make such explanations as I thought necessary. When the Chap was read Ada read a sermon very understandingly & earnestly. She is a dear good girl & I trust she will always as she now does, adorn the doctrine of God her Savior. These “plantation Sermons” are admirably adapted for the purpose for wh[ich] they are intended. I shall get them for the servants at Arlington. When the sermon was ended Ada, looked expressively at me and arose, saying “Cousin Markie will you pray? I had not told her of my decision to do so, so she looked uncertain. I had decided in my heart and so I knelt down – we both knelt [*two lines scratched out*] in the dust, by the same little narrow bench, between two shady trees, where we had been sitting & I feebly presented to God our thoughts and desires – Oh! so feebly, so inadequately! but, I trust, that our Father in Heaven heard them. The poor women who listened, appeared to find in them responsive thoughts, if we might judge from their expressions.

When I read the Bible & even when I prayer, they, every few seconds burst forth in some audible response, such as, “jis so misses!” “so it is” “that’s true” “now aint that jis so?” “nothing is truer than that” “aint that now, the very truth” &c &c – When they first commenced to interrupt me with these quaint ejaculations, I felt quite embarrassed, for much as I have seen & ministered to these people in the same way, I never met with any who were such original specimens of their race, as these two old women –

They had been born & bread [bred] on the estate I presume & had never in their lives been out of the prescincts of their cabin & its vicinity – or at least it w[oul]d not be exaggerating to say, they had never been out of Chout Tank,¹⁰⁰ as they call their neighborhood.

It was with some little difficulty that I preserved my equilibrium at first, ~~but, remembering~~ especially while little Calvert, with his quiscial face, stood mid-way between me & them, regarding with great apparent interest & curiosity, both my face & their gestures & appearing as if he wondered what I thought of them – but, remembering the sacred office I had assumed – that we were as it were – though in such a poor way, “ambassadors of Christ” I instantly lifted my heart, in prayer for strength to resist every temptation to mirthfulness and the strength was granted and I was enabled to read on & make such explanations as I could with becoming solemnity of manner and I trust too, of heart, though God only knows, in this respect how far less deep & devotional my feelings are at all times, than they ought to be.

MCW

When we arose to take our departure, the old women took both my hands & arms (which were without covering) within their large coarse hands & [*word scratched out*] overpowered me with

¹⁰⁰ Chotank Creek in King George County, Va.

thanks & blessing & the same to Ada, tho' more profuse to me I suppose, because of my being a stranger.

MCW

September 1858

230 Broad Street Corner of Locust

Philadelphia

[Thursday] Sep 9th 1858

This morning, dear Orton & myself spent ~~the~~ an hour & a half or more, at the Studio of Rembrandt Peale. We went quite as strangers, without any introduction, but, my card having on it, the name of Martha Custis and Arlington, we were received with great courtesy. Not only Mr Peale came down, but Mrs Peale, also & both, were most polite & agreeable. Mr Peale opened the shutters upon his first coming into the room. Mrs Peale entering a few minutes later exclaimed with horror "Oh my dear, how can you have such a glare?" upon wh[ich], her husband mildly replied "I only wanted to show Miss Williams your pictures my dear!" Both Mr & Mrs Peale then turned & commenced to tell us about the different pictures. Mrs Peale said that here specialite, was painting heads and figures, but that of late, her eyes had become so bad, that she had been obliged to take up Landscape painting. She was very enthusiastic about the art and Mr Peale & herself, both ~~observed~~ remarked during our visit, that they never allowed a day to pass without painting two or three hours.

Mr Peales large painting of Washington, standing by a horse, looked as if it might have been very life like & ~~has w~~ bears testimonials to that fact, not only from my dear Uncle Custis, but, from many other distinguished contemporaries. Mrs Peale was very communicative, when she found out who I was. Told me that she ~~had~~ had been an artist, twelve years before her marriage – that she was forty years old when she was married & I forget how many years Mr Peale said she had been his pupil.

October 1858

Washington City DC [Saturday] Oct 9, 1858

Left Philadelphia on Wednesday, Oct 6th in the 1 o'clock train, for Washington – accompanied to the train by my comparatively new, but very kind friend Mr H Etting and my Cousin Phida.¹⁰¹ One cannot leave a place where one has been passing a month pleasantly, without some regrets.

Had my mind not been so taken up with Mr Etting's last act of kindness in the form of bringing me a paper of cakes & a news-paper & coming home from his office at an early hour, to go with me to the cars, I should have been deeply moved with regret as the carriage rolled away from Mrs Brown's. As it was, we chatted pleasantly all the way to the station. Mr Etting took us in to the cars & after finding a pleasant seat, went out to look for an agreeable companion to take the seat beside me, saying if he did not find one, he should be very much tempted to go on with me himself – would, at any rate, certainly go, part of the way himself. However, he met Mr Leiper, one of his friends, who was very polite to me as far as Chester, when he introduced at parting, Ex

¹⁰¹ Philadelphia Orton, the cousin Markie met in Paris.

Governor Robert I. Walker,¹⁰² who he said would with pleasure take care of me. I had often before seen Mr Walker, but never remember to have had a word of conversation with him. In fact he always seemed to me extremely uninteresting & I suppose if he ever took the trouble to think of me at all, he regarded me in the same light. However, although I never imagined that I could find the slightest enjoyment in Mr Walker's society (judging from his appearance & manner) still, I always had a sort of latent admiration for his course with regard to Kansas. I approved of his Kansas measures and I had heard from those of his family with whom I am intimate, that he was a generous and amiable man.

With these few vague prepossessions, we now met, in the familiar association of travelling companions. Our first topic, was on the propriety of Ladies travelling alone. We both agreed that in this country, it could be done with perfect propriety & I then told him that I had journeyed from London to Paris alone & indeed, twice crossed the Atlantic alone. He seemed extremely interested in the recital of my little experiences and my having been to Europe, at once opened a fund of agreeable subjects of conversation.

We told alternately, pleasant little incidents of travel. His, were of course, most interesting. His visit to the poet Rogers (the only wealthy Poet he had ever known) and an anecdote Rogers related by him of his Father, who put on mourning after the Battle of Lexington and never took it off till his death. A visit to the Brother or Brother in law of Lord John Russel, where he met with some of the Queen's maids of honor.

Spoke of a game of chess, that was played there between two characters, assuming to be the Queen & the President, in wh[ich] the Queen beat, when he, Mr Walker expressed his approbation saying that the Lady should always be thus honored or something of that sort. The English ladies were incredulous & I thought from what he said, rather unappreciative of his gallantry. We discussed Kansas. He said the country was beautiful & he had no where met with a more intellectual community – spoke with an air of great satisfaction of the people of Kansas having sided with him the late context.

Reading was the next theme. Mr Walker said there was one feature of youth that he still retained, i.e. his love for novel reading – that he often sat up till one & two o'clock in the morning reading novels – that he was a great reader & he could not put down a book unfinished. He thought Walter Scott had contributed more to the pleasure & amusement of the world, than any man living, though, he thought Bulwar¹⁰³ more talented. Expressed great admiration of Tasso¹⁰⁴ & Virgil & of course Shakespear & Byron, but thought not much of modern Poets.

I moralized on the evanescent feelings of childhood, seeing a little boy before us in a full gale of laughter, whom a few moments before, we had noticed overwhelmed with grief. Mr Walker said he would like to commence at the beginning and live over his childhood – to the present day. It had been he said, so full of enjoyment, even, he said, his manhood, he w[oul]d take that in too & as for his political course, he said, that if he had to live it over, he would not alter a single act of his life, he would not change a single vote or desire different, any measure that he had ever taken. I remarked that his judgment must be very clear, to enable him to act always rightly in such matters & asked him if he always decided at once, definitely. He said yes, in an executive office, that was indispensable. I expressed a wish that I might do so. He said there was an old

¹⁰² Robert John Walker (1801-1869), governor of Kansas May-December 1857.

¹⁰³ Probably Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873), an English writer, poet, and politician.

¹⁰⁴ Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), an Italian poet.

maxim that he always adopted which was – First, be sure you’er right and then go ahead. I said, but how can one always be sure they are right? There is no way, I added, but to pray to be guided aright. Is there? Mr Walker agreed that there was not. Matters pertaining to religion were several times touched on & towards the last, he manifested an interest that I regretted I had not seen in the beginning.

1859

March 1859

160 F near 19th Washington, DC

[Monday] March 28th 1859

A lovely day for my Birth-day. The violets & Johnquills & Hyacinths are all blooming and I can imagine that in the country, the birds are singing. How strange it seems to me to be in town, this beautiful spring weather, but, an impassable barrier separates me from my once loved country home & the current of my destiny has changed since last I noted down my birth-day. I trust that my mission to my Brother, may here be blest. May I make his home a happy one. Alas! how little there is in me to make others happy & yet, I can not help hoping, that my efforts may not prove entirely in vain. This morning after Orton went to the office, I went to dear old Georgetown, to see poor Stasia, to whom I had long promised a visit. The getting to her abode, was quite a pilgrimage, but I was fully repaid by her hospitable greeting – over & over again, did she assure me, that she was “so glad to see me.” How strong the tie that binds one to an old family servant – one who has known you from baby-hood & witnessed for all the years of your life, the numerous vicitudes of the family-circle. It seemed to me a sacred duty to go to see Stasia and therefore I selected my birth-day for its fulfillment. May I be thus mindful of all my duties through another year, if God be pleased to add to my life, another year. I called, also, on Mrs Shaaff¹ & Aunt Dick my Grandmother’s friends. It is sad to see passing away, those who has been so long associated with our history. On my return from Georgetown [here the entry ends]

April 1859

Saturday. Had my fourth visit from Dr Pope.² I feel more interested in my new physician every time I see him. How naturel is it, that a person should be interested in one, who has undertaken to cure her of severe suffering!

I cannot say that all my prejudices against a new system of medicine have as yet been entirely annihilated. I sometimes in thought turn lingeringly to the old, and wonder if I have done right in making the change, but, I do not know, and perhaps never may.

~~The~~ In many things we are all very ignorant and grope as in the dark.

I shall not be easily reconciled at what I have done, until I get the pardon of my most precious & esteemed Physician, where dear life is spent in advocating the system, which I have for a time forsaken. How many doses of “Pulcatilla”³ shall I have to take ~~on this score~~ for an upbraiding conscience?

Doc Pope is an intellectual man, ~~but~~, and a deep thinker. I should ~~think~~ suppose. He gave me a graphic & interesting account of his change from alopathy to Homeopathy that he was a pupil of

¹ Caspar Schaaf was a prominent resident of Georgetown. The woman mentioned here might be a relative.

² Gustavus William Pope (1828-1902), a Washington doctor who became a prominent advocate of homeopathy. He belonged to the Church of the Epiphany. Later in life he wrote several science fiction novels set on Mars and Venus.

³ Flowers of the genus *Pulsatilla* have long been used in homeopathy

Dr. Moth⁴ of New York & that his father was a distinguished allopathic Physician. He spoke of Samuel Hahnemann & became enthusiastically excited. I like to see a person advocate warmly what they espouse, it seems to give an assurance of sincerity. Dr. Pope asked me how I viewed afflictions – if I supposed they were sent from God as trials of our faith & when I replied that I did he said in his abrupt way, “You ought not to take that view of it.” – What have you done, that you should for instance, be so terribly afflicted with neuralgia? “I do not I replied, think that this or that affliction is sent for the punishment of any particular sin, but when I compare the holy requirements of God, with my imperfect actions & reckon all my short-comings, I feel that I deserve to suffer. “You dont deserve to suffer at all,” replied the Dr a little brusquely – “No, no, that is not the right view to take [several words scratched out] If you think that you deserve to suffer, then why do you send for me to relieve your pain. [Another line completely obliterated] because, I replied, we are permitted, if possible, to relieve our sufferings – instinct teaches us that ~~certain~~ there are certain remedies & it is naturel for us to seek them “No replied the Dr you should not seek them, if it is the will of God that you should suffer pain & affliction, ~~then you~~ & you think he sends it as a trial of your faith, why then you should strive to bear it patiently & not attempt to avert it. Suppose a malefactor is condemned to suffer for a crime, would it be right in him to try to evade the punishment? No be consistent, if it is Gods’ will, then, dont send for a physician & try to get relief. No, it is not Gods’ will, that you sh[oul]d suffer. Physical suffering, is brought on us all by ~~sin~~ ourselves. The other evening, when we were speaking of the same subject, he observed that the ways of Providence were inscrutable – Why, for instance, should the very best people have so much affliction while wicked people are often permitted to live on a whole life of prosperty. I confess, he said gravely & thoughtfully, it baffles my understanding. I feel that my Christian faith should have made some reply to all this, but, I sat musing on what had been said & partly because of physical inability to commence an argument & partly because with this inability I lose the powers of concentrating my thoughts, I was silent.

November 1859

[Monday] Nov 21 1859⁵

I cannot retire to my couch to-night, without recording the third visit of the Great Homeopathick, Dr. Herring.⁶ Two days ago, he saw me in bed. This evening he called about eight o’clock & his carriage stood at the door in the rain while he made a long & most interesting visit. He is a man on the down hill road of life – Medium hight, broad & athletic quite the German style of feature. Broad forehead, long black hair sprinkled well with grey & a heavy moustache on his upper lip. He speaks in broken English & in such a thick asmatic voice, that it is sometimes difficult to comprehend. He was in a happy mood this evening & conversed most agreeably. I told him I was not a Homeopathist – was only trying an experiment & thus far, it

⁴ Possibly Valentine Mott (1785-1865), a surgeon who helped found the University Medical College of New York in 1841.

⁵ This diary entry comes from the collections of Tudor Place. See Diary Entries, 1858-1859, Martha (Williams) Carter Papers, Tudor Place Archives, MS6_B4_F4.

⁶ Constantine Hering (1800-1880), the “father of American homeopathy.” As Markie recounts, he was the son of Carl Gottlieb Hering, a composer. He worked in Surinam in 1826 before settling in Pennsylvania in 1833. An 1850s picture of Hering in the collections of Drexel University’s College of Medicine shows him much as Markie described him but without a mustache.

was but justice to say, I was prepossessed in its favor. He then commenced a history of his life – Dresden, was his native place – His father was a professor or instructor of some kind & a great Musician. He, Dr. H. had graduated as an allopathic Physician & was writing a Book against Homeopathy writing this book against it, enlightened his mind on the subject & brought him to an examination which decided him in favor of this heterodoxy wh[ich] he had been opposing. At this time however, as he expresses it, he had not a cent, and a friend of his, invited him to accept a professorship in a very celebrated school Mr Brickmann's⁷ (I understood him) in Dresden. He did so – The school was under the patronage of royalty & the nobility of Germany & wealthy foreigners were educated there. In this way, he made among the pupils many influential friends. After two years, I think he said, he was sent by the King [*blank*] in command of an expedition to South America for the purpose of making discoveries & advancement in his science. He had charge of the animal department – a friend of the Botanical &c&c. They remained only [*blank*] but found it impossible in that length of time, to write a book

While there, he determined in practice Homeopathy. He thought he could cure leprosy – Among the slaves there he met with many lepers. He experimented & thought might have been more successful, had he at that time had more knowledge.

On his return to Germany he was invited in the House of some nobleman where he remained.

On his wishing to be married, the laws of Germany compelled him to buy a House & various other requisitions, wh[ich] very much clashed with the feeling of independence, wh[ich] had been nurtured by his sojourn in the United States, that he decided in his own mind he could never live there.

Dr. Herring spoke of Hahnemann⁸ said he had known him & that he had now in his possession some of his letters to his pupils – that he had studied them over & over that they were his greatest treasures that he had them bound in MS & put in an Iron safe. He would not part with them for any thing in the world. That he had learned a great deal from them. He then went off in a most eulogistic strain about the character of Hahnemann – He believed him to be inspired. He cured his patients at first from the mere desire to be a benefactor – that he became so interested in his patients, that he was often known to weep over a case he could not cure. That he said was a very child in heart, tho' so powerful in intellect. The great secret of his power was in his acute observation. He found for instance, that to give a person Belladonna produced certain effects; - then, he said, Belladonna will cure that disease – but in large doses it still increased, it. He therefore diluted & experimented, until he found the right dilution & so with all the medicines.

A panegyric was then passed on Homeopathy. Dr. H. said it was “the medicine of the time to come” I wondered at the expression & awaited as it were for an explanation. He added the Melenium [Millennium]. I did not quite grasp his meaning, but, he talked on in such a continuous strain, that I had no opportunity to ask or comment. It was however, most interesting. I have no room for the description of Hahnemann's second marriage to a french lady, who dressed in mans' attire, spoke many languages &c&c finally, married the old man & took him off to

⁷ Markie was slightly mistaken. Constantine Hering studied at Blochmann's Institute, now known as the Vitzthum-Gymnasium.

⁸ Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), the German doctor who created Homeopathy.

Paris. He died in 34 worth half a million. Madame Hanneman⁹ now resides in Paris & practices homeopathy.

I discovered that Dr. H asked me no questions about my health this evening – merely said, he was glad to see me down stairs. In fact, the other day he merely said where is the pain now & took a pinch of snuff & looked very learned & gave a paper of powders. He is far more agreeable as a man, than as a physician so far. MCW

2019 Walnut Street Philadelphia

Monday, Nov 28 1859¹⁰

A memorable day in the annals of my life, because it records the first gleam of hope, in the accomplishment of my ardent wish to become an artist.

Through the kind instrumentality of my friend, Mr Bohler, who introduced my name to Mr Stevenson & also, or Mrs Wade, who brought the subject before Mr Cope,¹¹ I have to-day been admitted at the Academy of Fine Arts,¹² to share the privilage of some others, in copying the antique Busts & Statuary. When I arrived, none of the gentlemen who had been spoken to about me, were there. I presented my ticket of admission at the door & ~~going~~ being shown by the Janitress, down in to the modelling room. I made acquaintance with a Lady artist who sat near the door, by asking her where I could procure drawing materials &c by the time she had given me all the information, very frankly & kindly, the Janitress brought in Mr Cope & introduced him to me.

Mr. Cope asked for my specimen & upon my producing a Head in armor, he looked at it up side down & said it evinced great talent. I smiled within my self, looked very grave & merely remarked, dryly, "~~it is~~ "You are holding it up side down". He altered the position immediately, but, in the new & better light, having said all he could say at first, he had nothing more to say. I appreciated his amiability, however & it made me feel more comfortable, though I could not feel that he was much of an artist.. The peice, notwithstanding, was the best I had with me, & it had been said before, to have some merit.

Mr. Cope br[ough]t up several young artists & introduced them & hoped they would give me all necessary assistance wh[ich] they all very gallantly promised to do. I then said I w[oul]d select my model. Mr Cope & Mr. [blank] a young artist walked around with me & selected the Head of Venus de Milo, after much discussing. I then went out to get my drawing materials. On my return Mr Cope met me at the door & introducing a Mr McNeHenry asked him to get me my stand & arrange it. He did so & Mr [blank] then came up & nailed my paper on the board & showed me how to draw the out-line.

⁹ Mélanie Hahnemann (1800-1878) did continue to practice homeopathy after her husband's 1843 but was convicted of practicing medicine without a license in 1847.

¹⁰ This diary entry comes from the collections of Tudor Place. See Diary Entries, 1858-1859, Martha (Williams) Carter Papers, Tudor Place Archives, MS6_B4_F4.

¹¹ Caleb Cope (1797-1888), President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

¹² Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

A Mr Night, was afterwards introduced & he also officiated in getting my model in a good light &c&c – I rather liked his face. He reminded me of my dear Cousin Custis Lee. He kindly put away my stand when I had finished [words illegibly crossed out] I used my peice of charcoal very awkwardly & was altogether quite discouraged with the result of my first day's efforts. I never drew before on a slanting board with charcoal or crayon, but, always, with fine lead pencils or a flat table. Mr Night told me as he was putting it away it "was first rate for a first effort," but, I think, it could scarcely be much worse. My Venus is always before ~~me~~ my mind's eye & I am quite impatient for to-morrow to come, that I may resume my labors. I earnestly prayed that God w[oul]d be with me & guide me in this undertaking. I w[oul]d do nothing without asking his blessing. ~~on it~~ In the improvement of this talent which thou hast given me, oh! God, I invoke thy holy influence & pray that in this as in every other act of my life, I may adorn the doctrine of Christ my Savior by walking consistently in my christian course & setting a good example to all who come within in contact with me.

Only three female artists were present to-day, Mrs Frederly, Miss Fitridge & Miss Franklin. Miss Fitridge has a remarkably interesting face. I received a letter from New Orleans to-day wh[ich] was the crowning of my joy.

Other Writings of Martha Custis Williams

Letters

Draft of a Letter to G.W.P Custis, circa October, 1857

My dearest Uncle,

I received letters from Arlington, by to-days mail, telling me that you were still quite unwell. By Cousin Mary's last note, I thought you had entirely recovered and was very sor

From Cousin Mary's note & Agnes' letters received by to-day's mail, I was very sorry to hear that you were again an invalid. I had hoped you were getting strong & well from your recent attack & was both astonished & disappointed, at the accounts of to-day.

I hope however, it is only a slight cold and when I hear again my dear Uncle you will be convalescing.

I am always particularly sorry to hear of your being unwell when I am away from home, because it gives me so much pleasure, to assist and comfort you in any way I can, when I am there.

I feel a deep sympathy for all who are suffering and a desire to relieve their pain or by little kind attentions, to render it more bearable, but, especially am I grieved when you whom I so much love & value are.

I hope if you are worse, you will let me know, or even, as you are, if it would be more agreeable to have my society you will write immediately and tell me so & I will come home at once.

Note, November 1853

[*Note in Markie's hand*]: A little bag worked for me by the venerable, Mrs Alexander Hamilton – Washington Nov 18, 1853

Letter, December 1853

Washington

Nov 18th, 1853

My dear Miss Williams

My Grandmother Mrs Hamilton has asked me to give you her kind regards, and to beg your acceptance of the little worked bag accompanying, whose only interest is that she knit it herself.

We have much pleasure in recalling our visit to Arlington; My sister & Father who left Washington on Wednesday write with me in the hope that if you come to New York, you will not fail to let us know where you are.

My Grandmother desires me to send her respects to Mr Custis, in which I beg to join.

Very truly yours

M M Hamilton

Miss Williams

Arlington

Letter, Margaret Hamilton to Martha Custis Williams, December 2, 1854
Near Dobbs' Ferry

Dec. 2nd, 1854

Will you excuse My dear Miss Williams my delay in answering your very kind, & most acceptable letter; and believe me that your sympathy in our loss is much prized.

I can scarcely realise that your beloved Grand Mother is gone, she seemed so young and fresh in her interests & feelings, as my sister and myself, who enjoyed her interesting account of your great ancestor, and the different relics she was kind enough to shew us, to the full; our morning passed with her, & the one at Arlington are most highly prized, & will be remembered and referred to during our lives. –

Nothing can replace the head, and centre as she seemed to be, to all of you younger people about her; to her daughter, please give my most respectful compliments, and condolence; Alas for the suffering hearts around us! God is good, and permits it, and we must be sure that our highest good is won from our trials.

I still hope that we may have the pleasure of receiving you at our country house, beautiful we think at all seasons, please to write to me whenever you may propose to visit New York or we may never know of your being there.

My parents & sister desire to send their compliments to your Uncle, & kindest regards to Yourself, in all of which permit me most heartily to join, who am sincerely yours

Margaret Hamilton

Miss Williams

Arlington

Letter to Ann Gertrude Wightt, May 1, 1856
Arlington House May 1 1856

My dear Miss Wight

You asked me when I last had the pleasure of seeing you, to obtain from Uncle Custis, some information with regard to the “the Order of Cincinnati.”

I have, therefore, from his lips, the following. At the close of the Revolution, in 1783, when the officers were about to separate & return to their several homes, they determined to form a Society among themselves, for the patriotic motives of meeting from time to time to recall the scenes of thrilling interest in wh[ich] they had mutually shared and at the same time, of creating a fund for the relief of their indigent members.

Since many of the officers, like Cincinnatus, were called from their ploughs and other domestic employments, to take up arms in defense of their Country, it was denominated “the Cincinnati.”

The Order, was a piece of blue ribbon, edged with white and embossed with a gold eagle. It was worn through the button hole.

Gen Washington, was the first President & was presented with a magnificent Order, set with diamonds, by the officers of Count De Grasse’s Fleet. Upon the death of Washington, this order was left in his will to the next President, Gen Pinkney of South Carolina and has since descended to each succeeding President.

The Cincinnati China (used at Mount Vernon) was by order of Gen Washington who obtained permission of the french government, to have it stamped according to his direction at the manufactory at Sevres.

Though I have not given you these facts exactly in Uncle’s language, I hope they they will be comprehensible.

Very affectionately yours Martha Custis Williams

Draft of a Letter to Henry C. Potter, September 21, 1857

Arlington House
Near Alexandria, Va
Sep 21 – 1857

“My dear Mr Potter”

Your charming interesting letter, dated nearly a month ago, came to cheer me one quiet evening and bringing so much of yourself, along with it, as almost to delude me into the idea, that you were, at least, spiritually in the ~~room~~ vicinity. Need I say, how agreeable the delusion?

I was glad to hear that you received the picture safely and that it will remind you of your visits to Arlington and especially of me, for I always had a weakness, for liking to be remembered by my friends.

Your discription of your parish, ~~was~~ is very graphic & I think I can imagine, Mrs Henry C. Potter and yourself presiding at the Rectory. À propos, allow me to congratulate you, en avance, upon the important event, which is so soon to be consummated – and to my congratulations, let me add my fervent wishes – not, ~~as it is the~~ in fashionable ~~to say~~ parlance, that “your brightest hopes may be realized” “that, you may be perfectly happy” or, that no [torn] drops may [torn] ~~roses~~ garden of your [torn] lived long[torn] that these [torn] wishes: Our [torn] earthly bliss, [torn] ed, ~~and~~ “perfec[t] [torn]the heritage [torn] and in the [torn] “~~there must be~~ [torn] as Longfellow [torn] “there must be [torn, the letter ends here]

Draft of a Letter to Lawrence Williams, September 25, 1857

Chantilly Fairfax Co Virginia

Sep 25, 1857

My dearest Brother.

I am now accomplishing a long anticipated visit, to my Cousins, the Stuarts of Chantilly – a charming country residence, where all is hospitality and kindness. ~~I left Arlington~~ Two gentlemen and four young ladies are guests in the house, besides Orton and myself, so you may imagine, we have a cheerful time. ~~I left Arlington~~ Horse-back riding buggy riding and romantic strolls in the long aven[u]es and arbors, is the order of the day [*the rest is torn off*]

Draft of a Letter to Custis Lee, October 13, 1857

Arlington House V___a Oct 13. 1857

My dearest Custis,

With my letter, you will receive those of your mother, your sisters and Brother, all filled with expressions of grief & sympathy, at our common loss.

Yes, he is gone – he, the kind, the affectionate, the benevolent, the warm-hearted – he, who was an object of interest to the nation and who numbered among his friends, all who ever knew him; he, the beloved centre of our home, the honored head of our family. But a few hours have passed, since “we laid him in the cold, cold grave,” and my first act is, my dear Custis, to write and tell you, how much we have thought of you during the agonizing period of his suffering – how much we have longed for you to be with us and how much we sympathize with you in receiving this heart-crushing information, in the midst of strangers.

Draft of Letter to G.W.P. Custis, October 5, 1857

Chantilly Fairfax Co. V-a

Oct 5 – 1857

My dearest Uncle,

I received both Cousin Mary's letter and Agnes' by the mail of ye to-day

Draft of a Letter to Lawrence Williams, October 14, 1857

Arlington House Virginia Oct 14 1857

I almost fear my my dearest Lolo, that you will hear of our sad bereavement through the news papers, before you receive the intelligence by my letter; but, I have not sooner found the time and opportunity, propitious for writing to you.

Yes, he is gone – our beloved Uncle – the radiant center of our home, (as others have said, “the sage, of Arlington”). His warm heart is now cold – his eloquent lips are silent – he never more will live and move among us. Though I write this, I cannot realize it. A veil of sadness, like the indian summer mist, seems to shroud this beautiful Arlington. The autumn leaves were never so gorgeous, nor the turf so green as now – but, alas! the one who perhaps more than all others appreciated their beauties – where is he? I wander about the house, here and there, wanting something, I know not what – expecting some one – missing that dear one every where. My heart aches to [*draft ends here.*]

Draft of a Letter to Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee, post-October 1857

[Interwoven with diary pages in Folder 5]

My dearest Cousin Mary,

Now that my beloved Uncle has gone, I do not consider that I have any longer a right to consider Arlington my home.

I say this, with all due respect and affection to yourself and every member of the family.

I should have written or said this sooner, but did not wish to intrude my affairs upon you, while your mind was engaged with subjects of more present import.

At the time of my Grandmother's death, when I first felt myself homeless, I proposed to myself seeking a position as Teacher in some family [*draft ends here.*]

Mount Vernon, before the Revolution

[*In pencil:*] Written for Blanche Berard

I have been enabled to gether but little information, with regard to Mount Vernon, prior to and about the time of the revolution. But what I have gleaned from various sources I will transmit in my own language. My honored Uncle, Mr G.W.P. Custis, was not born until the year 1781, almost two years before the close of our National contest, and consequently, cannot be expected to afford any personal recollections, on this subject. He was however, from the earliest ~~youth~~ childhood, an inmate of the family at Mount Vernon. and from what he remembers to have seen ~~in his time, we may suppose and heard in his time, from~~ or heard from his mother ^Eleanor

Calvert [*inserted in pencil*] and Grandparents ^the Washingtons [*inserted in pencil*] in his time, we may very nearly judge of an anterior date.

The centre part of the House as it now stands, ~~was the on~~ only, without the upper story, was the original building before the Revolution. ~~This consisted of~~ [The following is scratched out with four diagonal slashes: “It was a simple small ~~frame house painted white~~ white frame House consisting of a large Hall passing through from north to south with two rooms on either side.”]

The habitation before the revolution was a small white frame House

Situated on a little elevation, commanding a beautiful view of the fair Potomac and about less than a ¼ mile from the waters edge was a small white frame habitation ~~House~~ with a gabled roof.

The interior of the primitive habitation, consisted of a spacious Hall and four small rooms “passing through the house from the north & the south entrance”, on the first floor and above, four such contracted apartments as this kind of low roof would admit. Negro Huts were scattered about the premises & it is to be presumed, that at this time the grounds were little adorned, except, but ~~the~~ nature’s noble forest.

The furniture was simple as is illustrated by a long pine table, with draws in it, wh[ich] used to sit in gen. Washington’s study until the hour of his death. It used to be covered with a green cloth. This relic is now at Arlington.

The may deduce from the fact that the Colonies were a at that early day wholly dependent on England, not only for articles of luxury but ~~of the~~ for those of absolute necessity, that all the furniture was obtained from the mother country – and since Gen Washington was then one of the most distinguished men in the country & Mrs W— of one of the wealthiest & most noble families in the country, it is but, reasonable to suppose, that they inherited the tastes of their ancestors & that consequently their furniture was of the English stamp. Indeed, much of it, now extant, proves this to be the case.

To quote from a little Book very well written entitled “The lives of Mary & Martha Washington” by Margaret Conkling¹

“The following Memoranda of articles to be ordered from Europe, the originals of wh[ich] were found by Mr Sparks among Washington’s Papers in his own hand writing will serve as passing indications of the refined & elegant taste that directed everything within the precincts of the new abode of Mrs Washington.

Direction for the Busts – one of Alexander the great; another of Julius Cesar another of Charles 12 of Sweden & a fourth of the king of Prussia N.B. These are not to exceed 15 inches of hight – & ten in width 2 Busts of prince Eugene & the Duke of Malborough – somewhat smaller 2 Wild Beasts not to exceed 12 inches in hight & 18 in length.

Sundry small ornaments for Chimney-piece”

¹ *The Lives of Mary and Martha Washington* by Margaret C. Conkling is an alternate title for *Memoirs of the Mother and Wife of Washington*, which was first published in 1850. Both titles were sold throughout the 1850s.

We also find Col. Washington seeking, by importation from France & England to adorn his plantation with the graceful drapery of the blue hills of the “sunny south the far-famed verdure of rural Albion” the book continues.

At the Period to wh[ich] this refers these domestic arrangements were comparatively unusual in the colonies and that not only all articles of Luxury but a considerable portion of the essentials of household convenience & daily comfort were imported from Europe. It will be perceived that what w[oul]d now scarcely be regarded in the light of luxurious indulgence were then, within the reach only of the most wealthy. Even the clothing. Even the clothing of the servants & the ordinary impements of agriculture as well as most of food not the produce of his own plantation were ordered by Col. Washington from his English agents.

The manners of these ancient times seems to have been simple & unaffected, courteous & hospitable. Energy seems to have been a characteristic of these older times – Mrs John Parke Custis – accompanied her husband (Gen. W’s aid) in horseback 600 miles in company with Mrs Washington in her chariot.

Undated Draft on Mount Vernon

In Fairfax Co. Virginia – nine miles below Alexandria and fifteen miles below the seat of government is Mount Vernon, the Homestead of the Illustrious Washington

More than a century has elapsed since the foundation of this ancient mansion. Prior to & at the time of the Revolution, it was but a small white frame one story House, with a gabled roof. It was However, beautifully situation [situated] – on a gradually rising eminence, not a quarter of a mile from the water’s edge it commanded a majestic view of the Fair Potomac. The grounds around the house were but little cultivated and negro huts were scattered here & there in the vicinity of the main building. Nature’s noble forest, was probably by far the most ornamental of all its surroundings. The Interior consisted of four small rooms & a spacious Hall, through the centre of the House. These were occupied as Parlor Dining room & two Bedrooms – and were furnished with that simplicity which characterized those early colonial times. Every article of Luxury & even those of absolute necessity, were imported from Europe.

In one of the catalogues, of articles to be imported (for which we are indebted to Mr Sparks) we find mentioned among other things, several Busts of distinguished men and “sundry ornaments for chimney piece.” Not to omit, many elegant and costly articles of dress, which evidently manifest the dominion of a refined & cultivated taste, in the midst of a comparatively rude habitation.

It was not until the year 1783 when the Pater Patria bade adieu to the care & turmoil of public life, that he undertook on any great scale, the improvement & cultivation of Mt. Vernon. It was at this time that a north & south wing were added to the building – a quaint old Belfry surmounted by a weather cock, was placed on top of the center roof – out buildings built arbors & gravel walks formed & the grounds around laid off with a view to embellishment & [*sentence ends here.*]

The customs of this “olden Time” were from all accounts, those of the most perfect sincerity the manners of the most entire simplicity, though not without courtesy & kindness. From an old London Magazine giving a little sketch of Washington in 1790, I quote the following, as giving some idea of the manners & customs of the times.

Washington’s manner was full of affability – grave & perfectly Easy. Neither with Gen. or Mrs Washington was there the Slightest restraint or ceremony. There was less of it than I ever Remember to have met with, where perfect good breeding & Manners were at the same time observed.

This account alludes to Washington as wearing on this occasion a dress of purple satin (it was at the Presidential mansion in New York. In every movement there was a polite gracefulness equal to any met with in the most polished circles in Europe.

Hospitality seemed to be the ruling characteristic of society. Ostentatious, almost a stranger in its ranks. A warm & cordial welcome from the inmates of home, appears to have been all that was desired or expected, by the guests. When we survey the exterior of one of these old fashioned mansions, we are forced to conclude they like the hearts of their inhabitants must have been elastic.

Slavery existed, as in its primitive establishment – there were consequently, sufficient numbers of servants, to render house hold duties comparatively light, as well as [sentence ends here.]

Origin of the Order of the Cincinnati [1856?]

[Note: this account is undated. In light of the letter Markie wrote to Gertrude Wight, however, it seems likely Markie produced it in April 1856.]

This evening, it occurred to me to ask Uncle Custis how and why the Order of the Cincinatti originated & he gave me the following account.

At the close of the Revolution in 1783, when the officers were about to separate, they determined to ~~determined~~ to form a society among themselves for the ~~commemoration of the~~ to commemorate the scenes of their mutual patriotism. Many of them had left their ploughs & other domestic employments and taken up arms, in defense of their country – It was therefore thought appropriate to call the Society after the Roman Cincinnatus Gen Washington was the first President until his death. The order of the Society was a blue ribbon edged with white and a gold eagle on it. The ribbon was tied through the button hole. Count De Grasse, who assisted in our victory at York Town procured by subscription among his fleet a magnificent order set with diamonds which he presented to general Washington & which according to Gen W’s will, was to descend to each [several words scratched out] president of the Society. Gen. Pinkney of South Carolina was the second president. The society, when all who were first members of it had gone, was composed of the decendents of Revolutionary officers.

[On the page after the above]

In Fairfax Co. Va. 9 miles below Alexandria & 15 below Washington is the Seat of the Illustrious Washington. Mount Vernon, in the times before & during the Revolution was but a small white frame house, with a gabled roof surmounted by a cupola a weather cock.

The interior consisted of four small rooms & a spacious Hall through the center of the House. A parlor, dining-room & two bed-rooms, seems to have been its occupation. These were furnished with primitive simplicity with the exception of such articles as may have been imported from the mother Country. These were doubtless few, when we consider the difficulty of transportation; for in those days, it often took months to accomplish the voyage. Every article of Luxury & even those of necessity were imported.

Situated on a slight elevation of ground, commanding a beautiful view of the fair Potomac and a quarter of a mile from the water's edge is [*Sentence left unfinished*]

Novel draft written July-August 1857

[*Note: Although Markie changed the names of the people mentioned in this unfinished draft, the story is clearly based on real experiences. Obvious examples include the following: Markie taught Sunday school in Georgetown; her relatives, the Fitzhughs, owned an estate called Ravensworth; her uncle G.W.P. Custis painted Revolutionary War battles; she was injured after falling from a horse in 1852; and while she recovered from the aforementioned injury, her father's sister invited her to come visit her in Paris. Thus although it is presented as a fictional story, this roman à clef is likely based on Markie's actual experiences.*]

[In pencil] Commenced July & Aug – 1857, during my sojourn at Arlington with my beloved Uncle, the last summer of his life –

~~Ellen Wyman~~ Nans Career was the name of the little girl, who is the subject of my narrative.

We both lived in the same Town – I was a Teacher in St. Jude's Sunday-school – she was my little pupil. I did not seek Nans but, ~~she came to me~~ as it were, fell to my lot. Doubtless, she was sent, by that omniscient God, who seeth the end of all things, from the beginning.

I found her one Sunday-morning, sitting with my class, in the old Sunday-school room, under the church, & upon inquiring of the Superintendent, learned, that she was a little stranger, whom, he remarked, he w[oul]d sh[oul]dbe very glad if I w[oul]d ~~take in~~ make one of my pupils. I had already, as many children as I had thought I c[oul]d conscientiously attend to, ~~but~~, and was about to decline; but, the child's imploring looks changed my determination and I said – Very well, Mr M, ~~she can~~ let her stay with me.”

~~Ellen Wyman~~ Nans Career was between eleven & twelve years ~~of age~~ old. She was of the usual ~~high~~ stature of children of her age tho' delicately formed; a very fair skin, dark brown hair & expressive & intelligent hazel eyes – Withall, she had kind & gentel ~~manners~~ disposition, which ~~are~~ is much more to be admired in little girls ~~and boys~~ than ~~any~~ mere beauty of feature.

I asked my little stranger pupil, her name – her age, her residence, - what program she had made in learning and ~~all~~ about her family. Her modest deportment and pleasing manners, quite won my heart and I said to myself, “I am sure ~~Ellen~~ Nans will be a favorite with me” – and so she was.

From that day, she always knew her lessons[,] was always punctual & regular in her attendance of Sunday-school, ~~I had no fault to find with her~~ Always listened to my instruction on religious subjects with ~~affectionate~~ interest and affection & I often felt happy when I thought, that I might be in the hands of God, an humble instrument in bringing her soul to a saving knowledge of “the truth, as it is in Jesus”. Almost a year had elapsed, one day, ~~Ellen~~ Nans came up to me, as I was leaving the Sunday school room, her face beaming with smiles and said – “Miss Adel when will you come to see us? – Mother & Father want so much to see you! Le me think ~~Ellen~~ Nans, I replied – Wont you come this week, Miss Adel? Well, let me see, Monday is my Bible Class day and Tuesday – I have another engagement; we must always remember our engagements you know ~~Ellen~~ Nans and never make promises that we cannot perform, but, on wednesday, if Providence permit, I will with pleasure, go and see you. Monday and Tuesday passed away and on wednesday, I remembered my promise to my little pupil ~~Ellen~~ – She lived ~~down in~~ in the heart of the Town, I on its suburbs, therefore, I had to set out on my walk, early in the afternoon, that I might have time to make a good long visit ~~at~~ [word obliterated] It was a lovely ~~afternoon~~ day in the leafy month of June & ~~I put on my bonnet, and culling a few rose buds as I walked~~ I could not resist the pleasure of culling a few rose-buds as I strolled down the long white-gravel walk to the gate & wended my steps towards the ~~part of the~~ avenue of linden Trees which shaded ~~part~~ a portion of my walk.

After traversing a few quiet streets, I found myself at [obliterated word] Nans’s residence – It was a tall old fashioned, red brick house, with a long flight of steps, leading up to the front door.

I went up and rung the bell and as I stood on the ~~little~~ porch, I espied my little ~~pupil~~ favorite, playing in the yard. As soon as she caught a glimpse of me, she ran in the house and by the time her Father had opened the door, she stood breathless at his side. But Nans, though she smiled a welcome, looked sad and her dress was unneat and her hair looked as if it had not been combed since morning, all of which I wondered at, as she was always remarkably tidy & particular in her appearance at Sunday school. What could be the reason? I had not arrived unexpectedly, for this was the day which I had appointed for my visit. Mr ~~Wyman~~ Career, too, wore a mournful, distressed expression of countenance, but seemed very glad to see me and with perfect unreserve, asked me to walk in, saying as we approached towards the parlor door (Nans following) “We are in great trouble Miss Adel, our little babe, is, we are afraid, dying.” – “Oh! I am very sorry to hear it, I said partially withdrawing – perhaps it would be more agreeable to you, that ~~we~~ I should come some other day – perhaps Mrs ~~Wyman~~ Career would rather not see a stranger, now?” Oh! yes, we have always wanted to see Nans’ sunday-school-teacher – walk in Miss Adel. Nans has told us so much about your kindness to her and your pious instruction, that you are the very person we want to see, now.

Thinking, that by God's help, I might be the means of speaking comfortable words to a sorrowing family or saying something that might lead them to think of eternal things, in their true light, I went in.

Mrs Career ~~said~~ sat in a rocking chair in the middle of the floor, clasping her little babe to her bosom, while ~~agonizing streaming~~ unbidden tears rolled down her cheeks – Mr Her husband ~~observed recognized~~ introduced me as I entered – [multiple words written over] speaking as if my name had been with them a household word. I went up and with tenderest sympathy offered my hand and with tearful ~~pity~~ interest gazed at the dying child, but, I I did not speak ~~for some moments~~ for, in the presence of deep grief, one feels that the ground they tread on almost is holy ground; but I took a chair that had been handed me, and sitting down within the ~~little~~ sorrowing circle, I my eyes naturally rested, when every ones elses did, upon the one object, of sad solicitude. Alas! poor little Baby, how pale, how ~~pittiful pityful~~ pitiful you look – with what imploring ~~looks~~ gaze do those blue eyes slowly turn on us – the little ~~chubby~~ cherub face, the beautifully moulded limb, which but a day or two ago, might have been a model for a sculptor's studio – where are they now? – vanished in the conque shell ~~hue~~ tint – livid is the lily hue – strangely move those soft angelic orbs – wildly strike ~~those~~ the little hands, ~~the~~ which once, so gently ~~nessled~~ lay ~~upon it in its~~ thy mothers' ~~bosom~~ breast; - changed is thy mortal form, agonised ~~are we!~~ are those who loved thee Jesus! Savior! thou who hast wept, behold ~~our~~ this sorrowing scene! – bend on us, the eyes of thine omnipotent compassion – bring back this fragile flower, revive its withering leaves! The vital spark has not gone out – oh! kindle it again; - Nought is impossible with thee, Oh, God! so I thought, in the minutes of my silence, but, so I did not speak. ~~The heart is overflowing with unspoken thoughts.~~

~~But, I must say something for there sentiments are known only to the omniscient—their mute language reached not the ears of man!~~

The heart oft times, overflows with thoughts – that are never uttered.

But, I had long enough indulged in these musings, and it was time to say something that ~~ought~~ would ~~direct the thoughts~~ manifest my feelings of sympathy, as well as direct ~~their~~ the minds of those around me in the only channel of true consolation.

I remembered what the psalmist wrote, "How forceable, are right words!"² and in my mute language, I prayed that God would teach me what to say – that my poor endeavor, might be couched in the form of "right words." – that I ~~might~~ should not speak myself, but, that my mouth, might be, but the instrument of conveying the words of Jesus.

And so I commenced: I am very sorry for you, Mrs Career, - for you all, I added, turning my eyes upon Mr C and Nans, (who seemed to look towards me, for sympathy) I wish I could do something to relieve your distress – Do you say, all human means have been tried? – Yes, miss, I believe so – I am afraid so, replied the Father, while the poor mother sobbed aloud, at so hopeless a suggestion & Nans looked first at one and then at the other and put her apron up to her face. "Nothing is impossible with God, I said, and what "we ask in prayer, believing ~~it be~~

² The quote is from Job 6:25, not Psalms.

~~in accordance with god's will~~ we shall receive" – let, us kneel down and pray, that if it be in accordance with Gods' Holy will, the little child may ~~be restored~~ live? Mr C pressed her right hand to her head and bowed it reverently, over the precious object of her prayers; while Mr C & Nans arose and knelt with me –

I was ~~but~~ a young girl, at the time, and it had been but a few years, since I was numbered among the children of God, so that I was not accustomed to pray before others and had I allowed myself to dwell upon the thought of how I was going to acquit myself, in the eyes of my fellow mortals, I should not have been enabled to utter a word, but, I strove not to think such worldly thoughts; - I was deeply impressed with the great need, of those for whom I was about to pray and of the omnipotence of God – these two ideas, filled my soul, and if, when I first knelt, my voice faltered, it was ~~because I felt~~ the consciousness of how weak & feeble were the words that I could speak, in the ears of the almighty. But I remembered where the scripture said – "My strength shall be made perfect in weakness" - & so, my faith was increased, and I went on – "Father our in heaven, our only refuge in time of trouble – look upon the sorrow of this afflicted family – In wisdom, Thou hast [several words obliterated] grieved them. – thou has brought low ~~upon~~ on the couch of sickness, their cherub child, - In pity behold it, pale & suffering [two and a half lines scratched out] tho' but a tiny creature, of such brief existence, strong are the ties, that bind it to these poor bleeding hearts, around thee – Oh! thou who canst, "speak the word only" and she shall be healed!" Or else, if it must be, take to thine home in Heaven its angel spirit and grant to these surviving ones, for whom I pray, the blessing of they Heavenly Grace – Teach them "that earth hath no sorrow

that Heaven cannot heal" and that in thy Holy Bible, there are words of consolation, beyond the power of mortal man to speak. By this hour of deep distress, teach them of a Saviors' love and bring them to that faith in Jesus, which shall eventually save their immortal souls. And God the Father Son & Holy spirit, ~~we commit them,~~ be their portion now & forever. Amen.

We then arose from our knees, and after reassuring the family of my sympathy and expressing the kindest ~~solicitude~~ anxiety for their welfare & the recovery of the child, I took my departure, saying as I passed out of the door, that I would go home, by way of the Dr's, and ask him to step in & see them once more.

Mr. ~~Wyman~~ Career thanked me gratefully, for my visit & begged that I would come again – the sorrowing mother looked a sad assent to her husbands' words and Nans said she would "try to be at Sunday-school next sunday –

I bade her assist her mother, in whatever way she could, during the week & to study her lessons during her spare moments, if she did not feel too much fatigued. This, however, was scarcely necessary, for ~~this~~ the little girl always knew her lessons. She was not only fond of study, but, she loved to please her Teachers and I ~~trust~~ hope also, she ~~have~~ had a ~~hi~~ still higher motive – she ~~loved~~ the desire to please her God.

[Ten lines illegibly scratched out]

With how much certainty do we oftentimes speak of what we shall do on the morrow and on the next day and on the next, as if our ways were in our own hands – as if we could direct our paths; - but, God sometimes, signally shows us, otherwise. Does he not in his sacred Word declare, “We know not what a day may bring forth”? – that his ways, are not our ways, and that “we know not what shall be on the morrow.”

Little did I think, as I gazed on Nans’ ~~pleasant~~ pensive smile at parting, that it would be many years, ere I should again behold her.

But, it was so. I was prevented calling ~~again~~ a second time that week, as I had intended – on sunday, a severe nervous headache, kept me at home and on Monday, my very beloved aunt of Ravensworth [“wood” is written over “worth”], came in unexpectedly and urged me [several words obliterated], to return with her, to the country, to remain some weeks; adding, that as ~~she~~ her husband & herself were quite alone, it would really be a charity, to give them my society. My Sunday-school class suggested an objection; but upon my Aunt promising that if I positively refused to remain longer, I might return on saturday. I accepted the invitation.

Ravensworth wood, is one of those old ancestral mansions, which one loves to read of in England’s lore, but seldom have the pleasure of encountering in our own Country. The estate embraces many hundred acres – the house is ~~of a pale cream color~~ large, with corridors & wings of a pale cream color ~~facing the river is a spacious portico, with~~ A grand old portico with eight huge Corinthian columns faces the ~~river~~ Potomac and a beautiful green lawn, interspersed with cedar trees sloped gently down to the river. To the ~~right~~ left is a large dark lattice fence enclosing about an acre of ground, tastefully laid out, in flower beds, gravel walks & trees. To the right, a vegetable garden concealed from view, by a hedge of altheas & cedars. But, standing out in bold relief, from this, and nearer the house, is a large willow tree, sweeping the green turf beneath, with its graceful wreaths. Around this tree, clings some quaint tradition I believe, but, for circumstances wh[ich] I need not mention, here, I will let it pass untold. A thick forest forces a dark shady background to the whole. Within, the antiquated walls of Ravensworth are hung with pictures of ancient date as well as those of the original of the artists. Others, are the efforts of the untutored genius of the family [two lines scratched out.] The master of the establishment himself, was endowed with remarkable talent in this branch of the arts. & altho at the time I write, had over step’d the allotted years ~~for~~ age of man, ~~still wielded his~~ kept up his studio & ~~wielded~~ handled his brush with wonted facility, bringing ever & anon upon the walls an enormous display of canvas, which in the most incredible time he would cover with a revolutionary Battle, in wh[ich] he was not as half the beholders believed, an eye witness or an individual participant, but, which he had hea[r]d of with absorbing interest from those who were – Nothing impresses a fact so deeply on our minds, as knowing the ~~indiv~~ persons concerned & the ~~places~~ localities with wh[ich] it is associated. My dear Uncle had known personally, had shaken hands with, had been looked upon as a youth of distinguished advantages & position, by one half of the generals whom he painted in his pictures & of the others, he had heard so much, from their companions in arms, that he felt as if they too had been his acquaintances. Hence, it is not wonderful, that ~~he~~ ~~should~~ to him there should have been a vitality in history, wh[ich] it could not possess for others. He read with a feeling such as we would have, on looking over a picture gallery, in which every

portrait was a friend or acquaintance. My uncle was not as only thus interesting on account of his birth & associations, but for his genius, his genuine hospitality & true hearted, kindness & affection. Nor was he the only interesting member of ~~this~~ family. My aunt, ~~I know not whether she was ever beautiful~~

“She was not fair,

Nor beautiful; - those words express her not, But oh, her looks had something excellent,

That wants a name!

In her external appearance, there was a rare combination of feminine dignity and christian ~~meekness~~ humility – with a good deal of reserve towards strangers she was ~~remarkably~~ extremely kind ~~towards~~ her friends, or those in whom, for their own merits, or from association with those ~~whom~~ she loved, she had any reason to feel interested while she ~~always~~ felt a lively concern for ~~all, who came within the range of her spiritual influences~~ the spiritual welfare of all who came within the range of her acquaintance

In the seclusion of her country home, where sometimes during the winter months, when the weather & roads were bad, she was for weeks deprived of visitors, she found an inexhaustible resource, in reading. She loved good books – especially memoirs. When young persons were staying with her, she delighted to have them read to her, while she busied herself in knitting or netting while she listened. In the selection of a Book, she generally consulted the ~~taste~~ pleasure of her reader or endeavored to direct their choice to something wh[ich] she thought might be instructive. I have often, however, known her readily consent to the choice of a Book wh[ich] she had herself read many times, and manifest the greatest sympathy with the interest of the reader, merely because she knew it would be gratifying to them ~~the wish of a friend &~~ perhaps at the same time, encouraging a taste, wh[ich] she approved & thought might lead to good. I never saw any one, live, so much out of one’s self. No one could be with her with out observing this – and then, she possessed with all, her own perfection (If I may thus speak of mortal) so much charity towards the weaknesses, the short-comings & imperfections of her fellow ~~mortal~~ beings.

Relate to her a care in wh[ich] a person had acted ungratefully or perversely, she woul always mildly suggest that perhaps ~~that~~ we did not know all the circumstances, ~~before we judged~~. And she would often speak of the strength of temptation, as a reason why a person sh[oul]dnot speak so [word scratched out] & harshly of another’s conduct. She used to say, ~~that~~ with regard to the negroes, with whom, in her position at the head of such an establishment, she of course, had much to do, that she never liked to put her precepts into positive commands, lest, by so doing, she induced them to be deceptive, as well as otherwise immoral – I was very much struck with the following incident – Upon sending two or three little children out one afternoon to gather strawberries, she, instead of saying as many would, “Don’t eat any of them” her ~~injunction~~ mild injunction was “and children, dont eat any more of them than you can help.”

I have a vivid memory of this, for it seemed to show such a charity towards the infirmities of human nature. She then added turning to me – “I know they will eat ~~just~~ some of course, it is but naturel & I want them ~~to-k~~ not to commit the sin of doing it without my knowledge.”

It was like Paradise to be at such a place with such a person as my aunt – We walked together & talked of Heavenly things – we praised God for the beauties ~~ful things~~ with wh[ich] he had garnished the earth & ~~of~~ for the blessings of religious hope, which we in his infinite mercy were permitted to enjoy & in this sweet converse, the difference in our ages seemed annihilated; tho’ I have often wondered since how this could have been. – We talked of good books & the good characters they contained & my aunt w[oul]d ~~joined~~ with me, in wishing, she ~~could be~~ like them – I thought she was already, altho’ I forbore saying so – I believe. We mutually loved flowers too, & she enjoyed & appreciated my extacies over a rose and the delight with wh[ich] in our walks, I stopped to gather wild flowers; but, I must not longer indulge myself in discribing this ~~sweet visit~~ delightful visit; wh[ich] ~~was made if possible, more agreeable by the arrival of a friend from the City~~ suffice it to say there is an end to all things & so in the course of a few weeks (for the weather together with a slight indisposition had detained me, far beyond the time appointed time for my return) I ~~returned~~ went back to my own home, which was ~~indeed~~, scarcely less beautiful than Ravensworth wood. On my way, unfortunately, I met with an accident [several words illegibly scratched out] which although it seemed to be trivial at first, proved day by day, more serious in its effects at ~~although~~ I was confined to my bed for six weeks & indeed, almost six months to my room – Then, for the first time, since my dedication to God in the ordinance of confirmation, I was obliged to give up my sunday-school class & other ~~saered~~ pious duties in connection with the Ch. It was a sad thing to me, to hear the Bells singing their sacred melodies, sabbath after sabbath, and know that I could not partake of the precious services to wh[ich] they invited. ~~At length~~ I heard of the well being of my clan through my Sister (who was also, a teacher in our school) and that little Nans came punctually with her ~~h#~~ clan mates & that her Baby Brother had recovered.

One day, while pursuing the even tenor of my ways, unsuspecting of change, tho’ I cannot say quite undesirous for it, a letter came ~~from~~ bearing the Post Mark of London. It was from my dear Fathers’ sister, informing me, that she intended going with her family, to pass the winter in Paris and urging me to join them in London and partake with them, the ~~same~~ enjoyment of their sojourn. Tho’ I sometimes build castles in the air, I do not think a visit to Paris, had ever been one of them. In fact, it was not only the last place ~~where~~ that I ever expected to go, but the last place I ever wished to go. Paris! it was but another name, for gayiety - & worldliness, and even in imagination, I ~~shoud~~ shrunk from the total uncongeniality with wh[ich] I sh[oul]dbe surrounded sh[oul]dI consent to go. When my physician came in I proposed the plan to him, he said it was the very thing for me – that by all means I must go. The subject from that moment began to take a serious form and I ~~prepaired~~ in a few days, I found myself, absolutely pre-

[Narrative draft ends here]

Views on Slavery [1858?]

[*The following document appears before Markie's September 1858 journal entries.*]

Among other anecdotes of the advantage of servants learning things which pertain to their temporal welfare, a lady told me the other day the following. She was visiting a friend in Philadelphia when one morning a Lady acquaintance came in with a letter, which she said she had just recd from a servant at the South for a fellow servant of hers ("Uncle Paul" she called him, who had served with her in the same family & who had been freed some time previous) and to ask "Uncle Paul" if he thought she could get along in Philadelphia as she had some thought of going there and did not wish to undertake the expense it would involve on an uncertainty. Accordingly, Uncle Paul came in. The lady describes him, as one of these respectful, genteel old servants, whom any one to see, might immediately tell that he had been reared in the family of a gentleman. He stood with his hat in his hand after two or three reverential bows to the ladies, said he had come at their bidding. My friend then drew forth the letter she had recd from Alex and read to him the question wh[ich] she there asks as to her going to Philadelphia. The old man listened with interest and when she had concluded made a low bow and said – Misses, if you please, tell Alex – Yes, I think she can get along in Philadelphia – we is both brought up behind our master's chair -we knows how to behave ourselves & we can get along, but, those free people, who has never been taught any manners – who don't know how to treat people with politeness, wont get along her or any where else. People must be kind to each other in this world and specially servants ought to know their places and not be always aiming to be something they cant attain to! For my part, I don't think tis any use for colored people to be spiring to be like white ones – if they were to use soap by the dozens cakes t'would'nt make no impression on their color, no more can all the airs they put on, make um like the quality.

You think, then "Uncle Paul" that every body had better try to keep in their own sphere. Yes Misses just so. In their own what – what is dat udder word you say misses.

Sphere, do you mean Paul.

Yes dat is it Misses – tell if you please de sact meaning of dat word – not but that I know what you was gwyng to express – but, you know we colored folks aint over come with larnin any how – we cant vail ourselves of dictionary and grammar you observe.

Well, Uncle Paul, I will try to explain to you as well as I can, what a sphere is. Look on the table there and see if Johny left his slate there & bring me that pencil you see on the mantelpiece. Mrs _____ took her seat by the table and placing her slate before her, bade "Uncle Paul" look at what she was going to do. Taking up the pencil, she drew a circle. Now said she, the dictionary says, a sphere, is an "orb, a circle, a circuit, the compas of knowledge, or action" I cannot, however, illustrate it better, than by saying, that this circle that I have drawn is a sphere or a circle. Now, we all have our spheres as it were. We all move in a certain circle of society – servant & master, man and woman, grown people and children. First of all, there is man & woman – a man has his duties – a woman has hers. Grown people have their circle to walk in an children have theirs and when either affects to behave like the other, of course, their conduct becomes, among sensible people, a subject of ridicule. [The following sentences are scratched out: "In society for instance, ever in our republican government, providence has placed people in different positions & different spheres – a person may enlarge their sphere as much as possible, but do not let them go out of it. Different circles – which may by work or by idleness indolence make those circles as large or as small as we please."]

Providence has placed people in these different circles, for some good reason, which perhaps we are not wise enough to define, but since God in his wisdom, has thus seen fit to organize the world, it is not for us to ~~argue~~ question its propriety. Let us then, servants & masters, children & parents, grown people & children, all endeavor in the words of our catechism “do our duty, in that state of life, in which it has pleased God to call us,” and then we shall, in the truest and broadest sense of the word, keep within our own spheres.

The principle object of this explanation, is to show, that there are different spheres in society and that it is the duty of every body living, to adorn the sphere in wh[ich] God’s Providence has placed him.

Servants have there sphere which they can adorn, also.

Who is more respected, than a good servant? – one, who ~~trys to do his duty~~ does his duty, as far as in him lieth, both to his master in Heaven and his master on earth. Everyone feels interested in such an one. The master & mistress of the family ~~respect~~ feel a confidence in him, the children all look up to him or her with affection and the fellow servants find a valuable example and may well follow in his foot-steps, for it will be for their advantage in this world and their eternal profit, too, if they are actuated by high and holy principles.

There is no lesson so desirable for a servant to learn as contentment. “Be content with such things as ye have.”

My dear people, I full well know, that you have not everything in this world wh[ich] you may desire. The richest person living has not, because, those who know most of human nature, says, that “the more we have the more we want.”

Still, I know you have not many things which might add not only to your pleasure, but to your comfort. It is not for me to say, why, you have not these things. Perhaps your master has not the means of giving you everything that he might like to give you if he could afford it. If you were the only servant he had to take care of, you would probably want nothing, that would add to your comfort and convenience or if he had only three or four, he might have the means of doing for each one, as his kind heart might suggest, but as it is, how is it possible?

You are aware, that you are but one out of a hundred and more, who all have to be provided for only your masters’ purse – who all have to be thought of and cared for, individually, body and soul by him. It is a great charge! It is an awful responsibility! Think of it! Just reflect on it a little while and tell me if you have no sympathy for your master – and if you would not rather be in your own position, humble and dependent as it is – though not without its comforts and its little pleasures, if you would but acknowledge and make the best of them – than in his. Why! Remember he is to be sure, in one respect, a master but, in another and a far more comprehensive sense, he is a slave – a slave to your interests. The most of his time, and surely I may say without exaggeration, the most of his thoughts, as well as those of yr mistress, are taken up in one way or another, with you – either in preparing those things which are ~~necessary~~ essential for your bodily necessities or in reflecting on such means as will conduce to their moral cultural or as might and I am happy to say, it, to a certain extent, often the case, devising those methods, which will most effectually tend to secure you religious advantages.

You may ask, why, then, if slavery is such a curse to the slave-holder – why if it is considered such an evil, do you continue to keep us in bondage – why do you not set us free? This seems to

be a very reasonable question, but “the why” such a course is not more often pursued, would involve more chapters of explanations than I am here enable to give.

In the first place, in the majority of instances, you have not been ~~purchased by~~ voluntarily purchased by yr masters – you have come to them in the way of inheritance. You are according to the institution of slavery of intrinsic value to them, therefore, supposing it advisable to relinquish all right to you, that to set you free – they would be, thereby, in depriving themselves of your services, at the same time, be peradventure, placing themselves in a state of poverty. This is not to lightly estimated. While we live in this world, it is the maxim of the world to be just to ourselves (that is where injustice to others is not, is not thus involved, which in this instance we do not believe is the case.

But now, suppose every slave-holder wishes to set their servants free. Would it be a wise step? Would it be feasible? Do you not see that it could not. For instance, it is against the laws of certain of the Slave-holding states, if not of all of them, that slaves set free, should be proved for by their masters and mistresses, for a certain length of time (and a very good law, too, else they would become paupers on the community) Now how much money do you think it would take to provide for eighty to a hundred slaves according to this law – one or two might be so provided for, but, the number I have mentioned, is quite a different thing. And then, what if they might be set free without this provision. Would they not die of poverty and be a marvelous disadvantage to the community in which they were placed.

No, it is my firm conviction that slaves had better remain in a state of slavery. I speak not in reference to their masters, for I believe it is never to their advantage or to their comfort or pleasure, that it sh[oul]d be so – but as far as the slave is concerned I really think, it is infinitely better for him, temporally, spiritually, to remain in a state of bondage – that is, of course, if they are cared for as servants ought to be. This conviction is forced upon me, from my intimate acquaintance with the race. They are not suited for freedom. From a long ancestry of bondsman, they are peculiarly dependent in their dispositions. Accustomed themselves, as were their ancestors before them, to act under the direction and assistance of others, they have naturally no self-reliance. It seems utterly impossible for them to think and judge for themselves. I know not how far the children of slaves might, if transferred to new influences & associations might become capable of self reliance & thriftiness, but I doubt whether such a change is practicable, knowing as I do their innate qualities.

Undated Obituary Draft

Mr. Custis was born at Mt. Airy Md in April 1781 & therefore 77 when he died. Mt. Airy was the seat of his maternal Grandfather Benedict Calvert, decendant of Cecil Calvert Lord Baltimore. Daniel Park Custis the first husband of Mrs Washington & grandfather of Mr Custis was born at Arlingotn on the Eastern Shore of Va. & was long an extensive tobacco plantation in New Kent Co. Virginia on the banks of the Pamunky. He married Martha Dandridge & here to he died at the age of 30 leaving the young widow a large fortune & the care of two young children. Young John Parke Custis one of these children was an aid to the Chief at the Seige of Yorktown. An attack of camp fever obliged him to leave his post for his home at Eltham before the conclusion of the Seige. Soon after the capitulation Washington informed that the decease [disease] menaced his stepson hastened to Eltham. Arrived at his home he was informed that Mr

Custis had just expired. It is said that Washington was profoundly affected. He wept like a child. When he recovered his composure, he said to the weeping mother "I adopt his two children as my own from this hour.[""]

Uncle was 6 months old when adopted by General Washington. He remained in his family until the death of his Grandmother at wh[ich] time he was 21 years of age. He recd. A fine education was appointed cornet of horse in 1799 & was soon after maid aid de camp to Maj. Gen. Charles Cotesworth Pinkney of SC.

Hon John Custis was aid de camp to Washington & a member of the Virginia Legislature & was much respected for his public & private character. He died at the age of 28 leaving four children.

Gen & Mrs Washington, sat side by side, at the side of the table. The Gen on Mrs W's right hand. They had an English man cook at Mt. Vernon both before & after they returned from Philadelphia. His name was Richard Burnet. This man, Uncle says, was brought up in the Kitchen of the Duke of Northumberland & was an excellent cook. He married a beautiful woman daughter of John Alton the gardner who was also an englishman & so great a favorite with Gen Washigton that he left his family a legacy at his death, as he did that of Thomas Bishop his favorite groom They had also an English woman as a house-keeper both in Philadelphia & at Mt. Vernon.

At Mt. Vernon Gen & Mrs W sat side beside at the foot of the table with their backs to the fire.

Uncle narated a little incident which I will not[e]. One day when the soup was removed from the Dinner Table the Ham which usually took its place, was not brought in. Upon inquiry, of Gen. W Mrs Washington informed him that it had been attacked by his favorite hound Vulcan & was unfit to be brought in. Uncle says he remembers how the general's countenance changed & how he laughed when he heard of the exploit.

To-day I received a note from Mr Janvier asking to introduce Mr Thomas Buchanan Read. How passing strange!

He requests Mr Lear to use his endeavors for ascertaining the best schools in Philadelphia with a view to placing Washington Custis, Mrs Washington's grandson, at the best. If the college is under good regulations, & they have proper tutors to prepare boys of his standing for the higher branches of educations, he makes a quaere if it w[oul]d not be better to put him there at once, the presumption being that a system may prevail there by wh[ich] there by wh[ich] the gradations are better connected than in schools wh[ich] have no correspondence with each other.

In referring again to Washington Custis education, who he had adopted as a son and whom he appears to have taken a great interest, he wishes inquiry to be made as to the higher branches taught at the college with a view to placing his nephews &c.

Mount Vernon Nov 7, 1790

A letter full of minute details. It sets out with expressing his renewed anxiety respecting the education of his adopted Son Washington Custis, remarking that if the schools in the College are under good masters, and are as fit for boys of his age (he was probably about eight at this time, for we were school-mates in Philadelphia at the dates of the earliest of these letters) as a private school w[oul]d be, he is still of opinion he had better be placed there in the first instance; but the propriety of the step will depend: 1, upon the character and ability of the masers; 2, upon the police & discipline of the school; and thirdly upon the numbers of the pupils. If there be too many pupils, justice cannot be done to them whatever may be the ability of the masters, noting, that what ought to be the due proportion is in some measure matter of opinion, but then an extreme must be obvious to all. Washington's Domestic Life By Mr Rush³

G.W.P. Custis Obituary [1857]

Obituary Notice of my dear Uncle's death – attempted at the urgent request of Mr Dana –

When, in the Providence of God, an individual, who has occupied an exalted position among us, is taken from our midst, it very naturally becomes a subject of interest with the community, to know something more of his history than, that he lived and died.

If this may be said of distinguished personages, as a class, how loudly does the occasion wh[ich] has so recently transpired call for a memorial – how preeminently does the character before us, solicit not only the interest of the community in wh[ich] he lived but, of his country-men at large.

The following brief sketch, is from the hand of one, who has known him long and loved him well.

George Washington Parke Custis was in the first place, an individual of extraordinary note, as having been the adopted son & privaliged house-hold inmate the youthful associate of the greatest man, the world ever knew. He was born at Mount Airy Maryland the Seat of his Maternal grandfather, Benedict Calvert (a decendent of Lord Baltimore) on the last day of April 1781. Of his father, the Hon John Custis, little is recorded in History as he was cut of[f] before he had reached the prime of manhood – having died at the early age of 28. He was however, at the time of his death, aid de camp to the Gen Washington & had previously, occupied a distinguished seat, in the Legislature of Virginia. His Father, Daniel Parke Custis, the first husband of Mrs Washington – a man no less celebrated for his mental endowments and wealth, than for his personal appearance if we may judge from his portrait, wh[ich] hangs in the old Hall, at Arlington House. And his Father again, was John Custis who married the beautiful daughter of Col. Parke who was aid de camp to the Duke of Malborough at, the Battle of Blenheim and an especial favorite of Queen Anne. There are several traditional annecdotes of this gentleman but in such an essay as the present, it is sufficient to say, of him, that he was one of the first member[s] of the Custis family that came to this country – that in those old Colonial times he

³ *Washington in Domestic Life* by Richard Rush

held the office of King's Chansellor under [blank] and resided as a very wealthy planter at a splendid estate called Arlington on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

I have said that Mr John Custis died at twenty eight, leaving a widow & four Grand children – whom in latter times have been known as Mrs Law, Mrs Peter, Mrs Lewis & Mr Custis the subject of this memoir. The two latter, are the two children whom Gen Washington mentioned as intentioned to adopt & over whose early years, he ever afterwards watched with the solicitude of a father.

Mr. Custis then, was six months old, when he became the adopted Son of Washington and of his devoted grandmother whom than her noble was was not less distinguished for virtue and excellence.

Nothing as regards his infant years at Mount Vernon, has yet been brought to notice -but, at the age of 8 years, we find in a letter written by Gen Washington to Mr Lear (Rush's Domestic Life of Washington)⁴ inquiries made as to the best school in Philadelphia saying that he has in view placing Washington Custis Mrs Washington's grandson at the best. The gen wants to know of Mr Lear if the Collage is under good regulations if they have proper tutors to prepare boys of his standing for the higher branches of education &c&c. This was in 1790.

We have heard an interesting account of his appearing in New York in a suit of blue & butt – exactly the counterpart of Gen. Washington's & marshalled in a mimic company on the fourth of July with the Sons of Hamilton, Knox & Clinton. In After years he is seen at the College in Annapolis, from whence he is known to have written many interesting letters to Gen. Washington. After this, he resides with with Gen. Washington, when the executive mansion was in Philadelphia & as his son was a recipient of all the honors bestowed upon himself & family. Then & there, as afterwards when they removed to Mount Vernon, he was he was the intimate associate not only of Washington & his honored family but saw & knew under the most advantageous circumstances, all of the most interesting & distinguished characters of his day.

Officers of the Revolution fresh from the Laural fields whose very names were shrined in military glory – the Representatives of the first Congress – the Heads of all the executive Departments, Foreign Ministers Men of Science – all bowed at the shrine around which he ever revolved a satelite.

We have spoken of Mr Custis high decent – of his ancestral renoun – we have shown him to be the gifted son of fortune. We have seen how brilliant his career, merely regarding him in connection with others – we have seen how great a man can be merely from his association with other men – and if this was the only source from whence his distinction was derived, my little narative w[oul]d now be complete, but how far different who that was ever privaliged to know Mr Custis as a friend or even converse with him as a casual acquaintance, that is not ready to acknowledge him to have been under any circumstances a remarkable man. He was indeed, in the strictest sense of the word, a genius, as well as a man of talent. In the early part of his life, he

⁴ *Washington in Domestic Life. From Original Letters and Manuscripts* by Richard Rush (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1857).

was eminent as an orator – at one time he was very successful as a dramatic writer, several of his plays having been performed with great effect. As a poet, there are among his writings sufficient evidence of what he could do in this line, had he chosen to exercise his powers. As a letter writer, he is of world repute – nor will any one deny that he well deserved the title of a true artist, whatever might have been the defects in his productions.

Had he commenced painting in his youth and pursued it under competent instructors, fine models, & with the same zeal & perseverance that he has given to the art since the age of in his lone studio at Arlington, he would doubtless at the time of his discease, have ranked among the first of American Painters.

Conclusion

The diary entries included here conclude as Markie left Arlington House to embark on a new chapter of her life.