

Madrid December 31st 1843.

My dearest Molly: Through some negligence or
stupidity we have only rec^d. notice of the depa-
: ture of the French Courier, an hour or two before
he sets off; I can't resist the temptation
however of writing a few lines on the last
day of the year of grace 43: - How has
it ended with you? - I hope merily as
usual at Nevis in the midst of the family
and the frolics and shighrides and
mince pies and doughnuts and the ten thousand
good things which belong to the season - The
accounts of these doings will I expect reach
me before long by some London - Havre
packet: Here we have been quiet and studied
enough: The Americans dined with us on
Christmas day, but they did not make a very
bright party: I was out of sorts with a
cough &c.

cold & cough, and only got up before dinner because I felt it proper to make an effort on such an occasion. I ^{missed} ~~missed~~ the midnight mass from the same reason, and during the week have kept the house, reading the Conquest of Mexico in sheets, and Kohl's Russia.

We are in an agony of expectation as to the message which excites much interest in advance generally. I hope the "Northmen" will make common cause against any proposition to annex Texas, which according to some late accounts, does not seem very anxious to be swallowed up by her elder brother.

II There is a lull in politics after the late excitement. The session of the Cortes has been suspended by the Ministry in order, as they are themselves announcing, to make laws and decrees by royal ordinance - Yet the present Cabinet have a large majority in the Chambers, and suspend the sitting of the legislature to ~~make~~ ^{take} their measures with greater freedom: In fact the rule of the sword is becoming more and more apparent, and Narvaiz' military course & promptness is said to be disagreeable to the Moderados themselves: He is in fact the gov^t. which would not in all probability maintain

itself 5 days without him - The Queen Mother seems hesitating as to her return, which has been solicited together with two millions dollars to keep the machine in motion: - For the last year there has been no law to authorize the levying of taxes and the Congress has been suspended without remedying this illegality. How they contrive to get on at all passes every body's comprehension; they keep borrowing in advance and putting off the evil day:

I received by a Mr. Partridge of Balt. Lecky's pretty little fiasco from John Bryant, in excellent order, and found the perfume delightful. It amused me in the note to think of mama's wishing to send some cake, which would probably have arrived in a state of petrification:

It has been quite cold (for Madrid) and the ice has formed about half an inch thick in the duck pond in the retiro: It is now raining and seems trying to snow, which the weather wise say is a prelude to the warm weather of Jan^y and February - we certainly enjoyed delightful days last year during these months.

A party of my young friend sets off in three weeks for Andalusia: Livingston, a young Belgian Count Merode, and a Belgian Attache

Att. Dec. 31

Baron Beechman; the two last the most agreeable young men I have met here - Bulwer is expected daily having reached Bayonne on the 26th - I hear of a pleasant young girl in his suite - We have just heard of the death of his mother Mrs. Lytton.

I have a letter from Brewster dated Dec. 20 at Portsmouth, the day before sailing - He has been travelling in Holland and writes amusing notices of his tour: I hope you will meet him in the City this winter; - He's a little shy, but there's a great deal in him - His accounts of Medd are already ~~the~~ nearly a year old; but you will hear more from him than ^{yourself} the young Trojan.

So you see company tomorrow in town, and the rising generation of beaux are to pass in review - are there no bright lights among them to keep pace with the clever and accomplished young damsels who are flashing into society? - I must write to Fanny Anne for a catalogue which I am sure would be amusing enough - The compliments of the season to you all! - Here instead of running about with red noses & cold fingers, we do the things more genteelly by sending round our cards: Adieu