

Baltimore Jan 17 1853

My dear Kate

In a letter to Sarah (which I suppose  
as usual she showed to all the family) I gave  
an account of my where about and what about,  
while in New York last week, where I was  
detained beyond my intended time by a snow  
storm. I was rather in a hum-drum mood  
during my sojourn, and, although I had Big  
Dancey, Gay balls, Italian operas and Bowditch  
Giovanna to entertain me, I would willingly  
have stolen back to my "native plains" and  
given up the "gay world" and all terrestrial  
 joys. The last evening of my detention however  
the weather and my dull humor cleared up: the  
cutter ~~drifted~~ under the influence of 'Sontag's'  
cherries: also in the 'Daughter of the Regiment'  
looked, played and sang divinely.

The next morning proving bright and fair I broke  
up my encampment and got down to the foot of  
Canal Street in time for the ferry boat which  
took over passengers for the Express train. I looked  
forward to a dull winter's journey and laid in  
a stock of newspapers to while away time, but in  
the gentleman's cabin of the ferry boat where I should  
I see but Thackeray. We greeted each other

cordially. He was on his way to Philadelphia  
to deliver a course of lectures. We both went  
before each other in the cars and the morning  
passed off delightfully. He seems still to enjoy  
his visit to the lecturers exceedingly, and enters  
into our social life with great relish. He had  
made a pleasant visit to Boston; seen much of  
Prescott (whom he speaks highly of) Ticknor, Long  
fellow &c. &c. said the Bostonians had ~~not~~ published  
a smashing criticism on him & which however  
~~did~~ not seem to have affected his temper, as I understood  
he cut it out of the newspaper and enclosed it in a  
letter to a female friend in New York. He had been  
at a ball ~~a night or two~~ at Mr Kennershaus  
where he saw some of my family - a niece (Sarah  
Clarke) who was engaged to be married - he advised  
her - gave her his blessing, and was pleased with  
the young man her intended. One of my uncles (I  
presume Shurcliff) was overcome by the heat of  
the room and fainted.

I parted with Thackeray at Philadelphia after  
which I should have felt rather lonely but I was  
consoled by the sight of an unusually handsome  
and <sup>young</sup> couple, who were travelling in company with  
others, but seemed to be especially devoted to each  
other and happy in each others society. I set them  
down for lovers and hope it will be a match: for  
they seemed especially suited to each other. I

took considerable interest also in another young  
couple; brother and sister; who from the names  
on their trunks, I found to be Scumbley of Virginia  
I set them down for children or grand children of  
a young fellow of Richmond, whom I knew in Paris  
~~about~~ nearly fifty years since, and ~~was~~ with  
whom I had many pleasant scenes. The young lady  
was very handsome with large dark eyes, and  
arched eyebrows, but appeared to be in delicate health,  
showing a sad cough. I hope it was only from a  
transient cold. Just before our departure from  
New York I had seen her hanging on the arm of  
a tall elegant young man, who had apparently  
come to the party to see her off - I hope it is some  
love affair that may bring her back to New York.  
I should like to see her dark precious eyes again  
and to find her recovered from her cough.

By the aid of noticing these young couples and  
hearing little histories about them I managed  
to while away time throughout the rest of the  
journey; until I arrived after dark in Baltimore.

I had to enquire my way to Mr Kennedys; or  
rather Mr Gray, as Mr K. shares the house of his  
father or law in Baltimore. The door was  
opened by Mr Gray. An old negro and Volney  
de Sham. Phil. an old negro were found a  
great friendship with me and Charlotte's best summer

and, I am told, rather values himself on our  
intimacy. The moment he recognized me he  
seized me by the hand with such exclamations  
of joy that he brought all old Mr. Gray and then  
Miss Gray into the hall, and then a scene  
took place, worthy of ~~being~~ forming a companion  
piece to the return of the prodigal son. In a  
moment I felt myself in my paternal home,  
and have ever since been a favored child of the  
house. To be sure there was no fatted calf  
killed, but there was a glorious tea table spread,  
with boiled vegetables and other substantial ac-  
cessories, worthy of a traveller's appetite.

Here then I am delightfully lodged, in the most  
hospitable quarters, comfortable mansion - with  
Kennedy's library and study at my command  
where I am scribbling this letter - and with my  
friend Phil now at hand to take care of me  
and attend to all my wants and wishes.

How long I shall tarry in Baltimore I cannot say.  
<sup>probably</sup> Not above a day or two. My charming friend Miss  
Steward of Richmond, who has been on a visit to her  
Kennedy, will be in Baltimore tomorrow, to consult her  
Physician, being out of health. I look forward with  
pleasure to meeting her and should be delighted to  
have her for a fellow traveller in the rail road, en-  
route to Washington. Give my love to all bodies and let  
me have the news of the Alliance <sup>your affectionate uncle</sup>  
(write to her, care of the Hon. J. P. Kennedy) Washington, D. C.