

New Letters of Abigail Adams 1788-1801

EDITED BY STEWART MITCHELL

INTRODUCTION

IN 1942 the American Antiquarian Society acquired a collection of two hundred and fifty letters written by Abigail (Smith) Adams, wife of the second President of the United States, to her sister Mary, who was married to Richard Cranch, of Braintree. These letters came from the estate of William G. A. Turner, of Malden, Massachusetts, having been inherited from Mary Greenleaf Dawes, the great, great granddaughter of that Mary (Smith) Cranch to whom all but one of the letters printed herewith were addressed.¹ It is interesting to note that sixteen letters, written by Abigail (Smith) Adams to her sister, Mary (Smith) Cranch, were included in the large, if strictly edited, collection of Abigail Adams letters which were published in 1840 by her grandson, Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886). Just why the letters now published were left in manuscript at that time may (or may not) be a mystery.²

From the two hundred and fifty letters purchased by the Society, one hundred and forty-two have been selected for present publication in the *Proceedings*. The first of these letters is dated November 24, 1788, and the last, February 7,

¹ *Proc. Am. Antiq. Soc.*, vol. 52, p. 178.

² In 1942, twelve letters written by Abigail Adams between 1786 and 1811 were published in the *Proceedings* of the Massachusetts Historical Society, vol. 66, pp. 126-53. These letters came from the DeWindt Collection in the possession of the Society.

1801. It was a stroke of good luck for American history that this group of manuscript letters did not pass into the possession of custodians who could have chosen to prevent their publication, or might have imposed a censorship based on some stubborn, if mistaken, concept of the past. No person whose forebears gave several great servants to the United States has any need, nowadays, for pious protection from

“. . . old, unhappy, far-off things
And battles long ago.”

Pride of descent is a superficial sentiment, and not sound. If we take a moment to think through the subject, we must see that any “family” is simply a social fiction, belief in which often becomes an absurd superstition. Families blend one into another: no individual belongs exclusively to any one. Was John Adams, for instance, an “Adams” or a “Boylston”? People who did not like the Adamses were known to say that no descendant of the emigrant, Henry, had amounted to anything until Deacon John Adams married a daughter of Peter Boylston and brought “brains” into the “family.” Or to what clan did John Quincy Adams belong—Adams, Boylston, Smith, or Quincy? The wearing by children of the last names of their fathers (in some societies, of course, the mother’s name prevails) is only a useful convention; that this custom determines character, and thus fate, is nothing more than amiable nonsense.

This foolish feeling about family can work two ways—as John Adams (who had the best of reasons for having less of it than his descendants) once discovered to his mortification. Dr. Shipton tells the story in the seventh volume of Sibley’s *Harvard Graduates*. The woman he selected for his wife was the second of four children: three daughters—Mary, Abigail, and Elizabeth—and an obscure son named William, offspring of the Reverend William Smith of Weymouth, who

had married Elizabeth Quincy. Parson Smith and his wife were prosperous. They kept a chaise, bought lottery tickets, and even owned slaves; so the good clergyman considered himself and his wife and children as persons of superior importance, at home. When Mary, the eldest daughter, married Richard Cranch, Smith preached to his congregation from the text: "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." When his youngest daughter, Elizabeth, married John Shaw, a minister, he selected the text: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." But in 1764, when young lawyer Adams came along, proposing to marry Abigail, this good man of God, who disliked members of the legal profession so fiercely that he would not allow the horse of a lawyer in his barn, making John tie his steed to a tree by the roadside when he paid a visit, chose the equivocal text: "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil." Some of the more sensitive descendants of John and Abigail Adams preferred to believe that it was the congregation, rather than the clergyman, who hated lawyers.

The letters which follow are printed precisely as they were written (except for the insertion of occasional commas and periods) without emendations or excisions. Editorial expansions of the text are enclosed in square brackets. No reader of the Abigail Adams letters which have already been published would guess, thanks to the editorial caution of her grandson, that the spelling of the writer of them was strange and wonderful—or so it seems to us nowadays. Chiefly because of delicate health, Abigail Adams never went to school; yet she was not illiterate—far from it. She learned to read and write at home, and became an educated woman. Spelling, we should remember, was commonly phonetic and individual, even in England, until the appearance of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* in 1755. It gradually became systema-

tized in the United States with the rise of Noah Webster, who published *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* in 1783. A grammar (1784) and a reader (1785) followed promptly. In 1806 Webster brought out *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*. By 1837 his *Grammatical Institute*, now called the *American Spelling Book*, had sold fifteen million copies. Thus, it was Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster who established orthodox spelling among people who wrote English, even if the meddling of some nineteenth-century editors has tried to cover up this significant fact. John Winthrop passed for a literate man in the seventeenth century, but in one and the same sentence he wrote his own last name three different ways.

These letters, as might be supposed, are full of references to current politics, and many of Abigail's opinions on what was going on in the United States are of great interest not only for themselves but because they probably reflect the private thoughts and feelings of her husband. Sometimes her statements seem to have been taken verbatim from the familiar conversation of John Adams. Yet these letters contain material even more valuable. They are packed with information as to conditions of life, especially in New York and Philadelphia at the close of the eighteenth century. They tell us how people lived, in spite of sudden and serious sickness and dangerous epidemics of small-pox and yellow fever, and the domestic trials of incompetent, and often drunken, servants, and slender financial resources in the face of inflation. Roads were often almost impassable, and even preachers dull and impossible. More than once Abigail grows nostalgic for the parsons of New England, who had been taught sweet reason at Harvard. People still suffered cruelly from poor food and bad water; influenza, dysentery, and small-pox were always about, and quinine seems to have been one of the few remedies, apart from the barbar-

ous practice of bleeding. The cures for disease call to mind the ghastly regimen which put strong George Washington in his grave at sixty-seven. From this welter of human unhappiness one physician of foresight emerges—Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, and “Peter Porcupine” thought even he was not above reproach. Around the tragedy of early death and the almost comically constant birth of babies, range the rigors of the weather—the numbing cold or the suffocating heat of our so-called temperate zone.

Perhaps the most pleasant aspect of the early letters is the intimate description of George Washington and his wife—the stately courtesy and nobility of our first President, whom Mrs. Adams affectionately calls “His Majesty,” and the kindness of his gracious lady. The close view of this good, if great man, to whom churlish fate gave only the last two years of life for the peace and quiet of “Mount Vernon,” is strangely refreshing in these soft days of cynical Lytton Strachey and his dismal disciples. John Adams emerges, on the whole, with credit from these letters; yet two of them quite unconsciously reveal the vanity and vexation which cost him the political success he desired and deserved. In 1798, when it was proposed to celebrate Washington’s birthday in Philadelphia, John Adams and his wife felt that the plan was a studied insult to the New England successor to the great Virginian. The letter of February 15 is loaded with detailed indignation at what Abigail thought was the outrageous plan for a grand celebration; a subsequent one (February 28, 1798), tells Sister Cranch how completely the obvious displeasure of John Adams and his wife had thrown a wet blanket over the whole business. Even after his death, Washington was praised far beyond their belief as to what was fitting and proper (January 28, 1800).

Through the background of these letters lurks the mischievous, if fascinating, figure of Alexander Hamilton. This

skilful, if sinuous, statesman disliked Adams, who probably had been so tactless as not to conceal his disapproval of that lurid private life in which Hamilton resembled Aaron Burr. These rival New Yorkers had many qualities in common—both good and bad—and John Adams had little use for either of them. Bitterly as they distrusted each other, these two gifted men managed, between them, to bring his political career to an end in 1800. Alexander Hamilton has got off too easily with most American historians. Many of his major misdeeds fall within the scope and time of these letters. As early as 1789 Hamilton so managed matters that Adams, on becoming Vice-President, received less than half of the electoral votes available—thirty-four out of sixty-nine cast. In 1793, he repeated his disloyal manipulation, even though the Jeffersonians were already raising their heads in opposition—and again to the mortification of Adams. The next year, while Federalist John Jay was delicately negotiating a difficult treaty in London, it was Hamilton who hinted to Hammond, the British minister to the United States, that Jay's demands on behalf of his country should not be taken too seriously.³ When word of this got back to England, the treaty which Jay brought home was rather the worse for Hamilton's indiscretion.

In 1796, when Adams seemed to most persons to be the obvious successor to Washington, Hamilton, who wanted Thomas Pinckney for chief executive, took care that the Vice-President should win first place only with the skin of his teeth.⁴ Nor do his intrigues with the members of the

³ S. F. Bemis, *Jay's Treaty*, New York, 1923, pp. 246-7. Mr. Bemis uses the word "amazing" in describing Hamilton's second interview with George Hammond, when Jay was already in London.

⁴ Just how Adams and Jefferson could have received 71 and 68 votes, respectively, from a college of 138 electors would be difficult to understand if one did not remember that until the Twelfth Amendment (1804) every elector voted for two first choices for President—not, as now, for only one. Thus Maryland, which had ten electoral votes, had, in fact, twenty first choices, and seven of these went for Adams and four for Jefferson. James Schouler, *History of the United States*, New York, 1908, vol. 1, p. 533.

Cabinet of Adams make a pretty story. He would have welcomed war with France in 1798, if only to further his personal ambition as a soldier, and plotted against peace so eagerly that the courageous act of Adams, on February 25, 1799, in regard to France was gall and wormwood to him. The fact that all of thirty years ago Samuel Eliot Morison proved that Adams must share with Jefferson, Victor Du Pont, and even with Talleyrand himself, the credit for avoiding war between France and the United States, does not subtract substantially from the well-deserved honor of the second President.⁵

After the sudden death of Washington in December, 1799, Hamilton seems to have looked at himself as the leader of the Federalist Party, with the President as his puppet. For Adams to usurp that leadership, as in dismissing Pickering, was too much for his pride and great desire for power. In this sense, the death of Washington was decisive, for it broke the one and only tie between the President and the vain New Yorker whom he liked to call an "alien." When Tench Coxe, whom Adams had ousted from office in 1797, published an indiscreet letter which Adams had written to him in 1792 implying that Hamilton was under British influence, Hamilton, after two of his letters of enquiry to the President had gone unanswered, prepared his untimely, intemperate, and notorious indictment of Adams in October, 1800. Hamilton intended this outburst to circulate secretly among the leaders of the Federalist Party, but a copy of it came into the hands of Aaron Burr, who promptly took care to see that it was published. This sealed the doom of John Adams.

And, finally, in 1800, it was Hamilton again, with Pinckney still in mind, who proposed to Governor John Jay of New York that he should steal a part of the electoral vote

⁵ 3 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 9 (1916), pp. 63-79.

of the state which Burr's political skill had won for the "Republicans," in order that Thomas Jefferson should not be President—even at the cost of a second term for the unworthy Adams!⁶ For the reaction within the Adams household to the tension attending the tie electoral vote between Jefferson and Burr, readers should turn to the last letter of this group, written from Washington on February 7, 1801.

Yet Hamilton was not so bad as many of his enemies, or even Adams, was ready to believe. At the last moment he contributed his share of influence in order to keep Burr out of the White House, and this over the votes of most of the states of New England. His adultery with the so-called Mrs. James W. Reynolds—Maria Lewis posed, on occasion, as the wife of Jacob Clingman, the confederate of Reynolds—was a venial offense, after all, easily forgiven by anyone but Mrs. Hamilton, who managed to survive her gallant husband by more than half a century. The most engaging aspect of Hamilton's mind was his shrewd, if passionate distrust of what we call democracy. Yet his anxiety was hardly sound, for a deeper knowledge of history would have taught him that, sooner or later, democracy always makes ample amends for its errors by digging its own grave. "Historians," it has been truly, if tartly, observed, "are poor hands at predicting the future, but they have a power, not claimed even by the Deity, of altering the past. They always back the winner—after the race."

The claims of patronage and the onslaughts of journalists like Bache were not the only bane of Mrs. Adams and her husband. There were not enough offices for all the friends and supporters who wanted them, and those who went

⁶ As to the legend of the "great political revolution of 1800," see Edward Channing, *A History of the United States*, vol. 4, New York, 1917, pp. 235-7, which proves that Burr's influence was decisive in defeating the Federalists. Thus the "revolution" followed, rather than preceded, the election of Jefferson.

without them sulked. Newspapers were scurrilous, and the fact that the President's son was minister to Prussia and William Cranch, the nephew of his wife, was put on the federal bench in Washington caused much unfavorable comment. All these, however, were trials common to public life. Personal and domestic misfortunes were still more poignant. Here, for the first time, appear accurate and uncensored details as to some of the family troubles of the tribe of Adams. Not all, by any manner of means, for often Abigail was too angry or worried to commit her feelings to paper, warning her sister that she would have to wait for some of the bad news till they should meet again in Quincy. The fact that her letters were often opened in the mail and sometimes stolen, made her increasingly cautious, even as to politics. Not only were there many poor relations to be provided for out of none too ample resources, but there was wasteful and even wanton living close at hand. Colonel William Stephens Smith, the son-in-law of Abigail, was social and extravagant, and a speculator in public lands, and because he did not make money, but lost it, he must bear the just reproaches of successful men. Before long Smith had to call a congress of his creditors in order to effect a settlement of his debts. Meanwhile, his family increased more rapidly than Mrs. John Adams thought proper—and all this in spite of the fact that he was frequently away from home for protracted periods, during which no letters reached his lonely, anxious wife.

If John Quincy Adams, the pride and joy of his parents, was faithfully serving his country abroad, with his brother, Thomas Boylston, at his side as secretary some of the time, Charles Adams (1770–1800), the apple of his father's eye, was a cause of constant worry. Having been graduated from Harvard College in 1789, Charles migrated to New York, where he married the sister of his sister's husband, Sarah

Smith (1769-1828), and had two daughters. He planned to practise law, and at one time his father put him in the office and under the care of the none too watchful eye of "Mr. Hamilton." Charles, however, was unstable: he lived high, and took to drink. Two of his mother's letters (November 10 and December 8, 1800) contain painful descriptions of his last illness and pitiable death in New York City on Sunday, November 30, 1800.

The tragic end of this attractive, gregarious son is often adduced as the chief reason for the last-minute departure of John Adams from Washington, just before the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson. Yet Charles Francis Adams, John Torrey Morse, Jr., and Edward Channing stoutly disagree as to the real motives for Adams's hasty early-morning exit from the capital. It seems unlikely that the loss of a son already three months dead and buried was uppermost in his mind at that moment. Some people will continue to suspect that he visited his resentment toward the disloyal members of his own party on the innocent beneficiary of their treachery. Yet thought of the great service of John Adams to his country as president of the Senate for eight years and chief executive during four, blots out all memory of his vanity, his irascibility, and his suspicions. His casting vote, for one thing, gave Presidents their power to remove officials without senatorial consent—a right denied to none but Andrew Johnson.⁷ It is pleasant to remember that Thomas Jefferson and he, once ambition had grown stale, lived long enough to think well of each other, laying aside the rancor that had divided them long before, in the days of their struggle for power. For the best portrayal of both the light and shade in the complex character of John Adams, readers should consult the excellent estimate of James Schouler.⁸ For the courage and the kindness, the

⁷ Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 47-8.

⁸ Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 505-12.

generosity and loyalty of the writer of these letters, even under the stress of illness, disappointment, and misfortune, one cannot do better than turn to the text of them.

The several gaps in these letters are accounted for, in part, by periods of residence at Braintree, later Quincy, when Mrs. Adams had no reason for writing to a sister whom she saw from day to day. The most significant gap is the interval of six months between the letter of July 17, 1798, and that of January 17, 1799, during which time Mrs. Adams suffered a severe illness, and the President was consequently absent from Philadelphia, most unfortunately for himself, through a critical period of his administration. Every effort has been made to identify quotations—especially poetry—as well as obscure neighbors, and even servants. Not all these efforts have been successful. It is hoped that the footnotes will help, and not distract readers. The editor has endeavored to use these with discretion: a reference to Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea obviously calls for no comment, but the incident of Elisha and the rude children who were promptly devoured by bears is quite another, and little-known story. All cancelled words, as well as editorial additions to the text, are enclosed in square brackets. Genealogical charts of those members of the Adams, Cranch, and Smith families frequently referred to in the letters will be prepared for the reprint edition.

In preparing these letters for publication, the editor has received generous and invaluable assistance from a great number of people. In particular, he wishes to thank Allyn B. Forbes, Director of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and also the members of its staff; as well as Clarence S. Brigham and Clifford K. Shipton, Director and Librarian, respectively, of the American Antiquarian Society; Robert W. G. Vail, Director of the New York Historical Society; Nicholas B. Wainwright, Assistant Librarian of the Histori-

cal Society of Pennsylvania; Miss Dorothy S. Manks, Librarian of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society; Mrs. Henry D. Holmes and Miss Frances Holmes, of Montpelier, Vermont; and the late Albert Matthews. From first to last, the services of his secretary, Miss Marjorie M. Bruce, were continuous and excellent, and without them this work could not have been carried to completion.

STEWART MITCHELL

Calendar of Letters

1788

- Jamaica, [New York,] November 24: Birth of John Adams Smith. Colonel Smith's home at Jamaica 115
- Jamaica, December 15-18: Recovery of Mrs. William Stephens Smith. Mother and sisters of Colonel Smith. Anxiety for Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall . . . 116

1789

- "Richmond Hill," [New York,] January 24: Visit of William Smith. Social life as wife of Vice-President 119
- Providence, [Rhode Island,] June 19: Journey from Braintree and social life in Rhode Island 121
- "Richmond Hill," [New York,] June 28: Pleasant visits in Providence and Newport. Voyage from Newport to New York. George and Martha Washington, and social life in New York 123
- "Richmond Hill," July 12: Intense heat. Character and habits of George Washington. Sentiments and politics of Congress. Anxiety for Mrs. Richard Cranch, and future of her son. Correspondence between Mercy (Otis) Warren and Elbridge Gerry. Description of "Richmond Hill" 126
- "Richmond Hill," August 9: Burden of social duties. Form of reception by President and Mrs. Washington. Indolence and drunkenness of servants in New York. Political criticism of Washington and Adams. Household at "Richmond Hill" 130
- "Richmond Hill," September 1: Funding the national debt. Proposal to move capital to Philadelphia. Edward Church's libel against Adams 134
- "Richmond Hill," October 4: Superiority of Massachusetts preachers to those of New York. Adjournment of Congress and disappointment at inability to visit Braintree. Advantages of private over public life. "Bedlamites" in Congress . . . 138
- "Richmond Hill," October 11: Departure of Adams for Braintree. President Washington's tour of New England. Visit to "Prince's Gardens." Trouble with poor servants 141
- "Richmond Hill," November 1: Inoculation for small-pox. Second marriage of Dr. Cotton Tufts. Hopes for early return of John Adams. Supplies of food from Braintree and Boston 143
- "Richmond Hill," November 3: Pleasure and expense of living at "Richmond Hill." Trouble with servants. Plans for J. Q. and T. B. Adams 145

1790

- "Richmond Hill," January 5-10: Dutch New Year's in New York. President's reception. Character of Washington. Plans for future of her three sons. Character of her grandsons 146
- "Richmond Hill," February 20: Death of Mrs. Palmer. Hamilton's proposal for funding debt. John Gardiner a madman 148

New York, February 28: Illness of T. B. Adams. John Gardiner	151
New York, March 15: Plans for Joseph Cranch. New babies amongst relatives. Health of T. B. Adams. Consumption in Boston	152
New York, March 21: Future of Joseph Cranch. Marriages and births. Financial burden of large family	154
New York, April 3: A new grand-nephew. Satisfaction with Mrs. Smith's children. Beauty of spring at "Richmond Hill." Plans for Joseph Cranch. Thomas Jefferson. Poor preachers in New York	155
"Richmond Hill," April 21: Advice for recovery from childbirth. Henry Knox and advancement for Joseph Cranch. William Steuben Smith	157
"Richmond Hill," April 28: Attack of rheumatism and general illness in household. Trouble with servants, except for slaves. Polly Tailor	158
New York, May 30: Washington's illness. Beauty of "Richmond Hill"	160
"Richmond Hill," June 9: Influenza in New York. Furniture for "Richmond Hill"	162
New York, June 13: Possibility of moving capital to Baltimore. Excursion with Mrs. Washington	163
New York, June 27: New tenant for house in Braintree. Another grandson by Mrs. Smith	164
New York, July 4: Reopening of Dutch church. Picture of "Richmond Hill." Sedentary duties of John Adams	165
"Richmond Hill," July 27: Harvard Commencement. Tenant for house at Brain- tree. Scandalous Boston gossip about New York	166
New York, August 8: Birth of Thomas Hollis Smith. Visit of McGillivray and Creek Indians	168
New York, August 29: Farewell to Mrs. Washington. Philadelphia the new national capital. Careers of T. B. Adams and Joseph Cranch	169
New York, October 3: Moving to Philadelphia. Inoculation for small-pox	171
New York, October 10: Sorrow at leaving New York for Philadelphia. Tenant for house at Braintree. Clothing for cold weather	172
New York, October 17: Departure from "Richmond Hill" for New York City. Gift of wine to Cranches. Illness of John Adams	174
New York, October 25: Serious illness. Shipping furniture to Philadelphia. Cure for pleurisy	175
New York, November 7: Recovery from illness. Farewell to Mrs. William S. Smith. Treatment of small-pox	176
Philadelphia, December 12-14: Journey to Philadelphia. Illness in Adams house- hold. Dr. Benjamin Rush. Departure of Colonel Smith for England	177

1791

Philadelphia, January 9: Philadelphia compared with New York. Loneliness for daughter. Indolent and drunken servants. Future of T. B. Adams	179
Bush Hill, [Pennsylvania,] March 12: Remarks on Colonel Smith. Plans for future of	

her three sons. Servant problems. Domestic affairs at Braintree. Washington's southern tour	181
Bush Hill, April 18: Supplies for garden and house at Braintree	184
New York, May 6: Visit with Mrs. William Stephens Smith. Supplies for house at Braintree	184
Philadelphia, October 30: Trip from Braintree to Philadelphia. New house in city. Domestic affairs in Braintree	185
Philadelphia, December 18: Social life and expenses at Philadelphia. Illness of John Adams. St. Clair's Defeat. Domestic affairs at Braintree.	186

1792

Philadelphia, February 5: Visit of Smiths and Charles Adams. Proposed trip of Smiths to England. Social life in Philadelphia. Unpopularity of Indian war	189
Philadelphia, March 20-21: Long illness. Plans for returning to Quincy. Provisions for household	190
Philadelphia, March 25-29: Impatience at long confinement. Supplies for Quincy. Reapportionment of House of Representatives. Mania for speculation. "Republican" hostility to Hamilton. Washington's head on coins	192
Philadelphia, April 20: Continued illness. Supplies for house at Quincy. Financial panic. Newspaper campaign against Knox and Hamilton	193
New York, April 29: Results of panic in New York. Plans for reaching Quincy	196

1795

New York, June 25: Providing for poor relations. Jay's Treaty. William Cranch, James Greenleaf, and the North American Land Company	196
---	-----

1797

Springfield, [Massachusetts,] April 30: Braintree to Springfield. Responsibilities as wife of President. Death of mother of John Adams	198
East Chester, [New York,] May 5: Visit with Mrs. William Stephens Smith. Farm at Quincy	200
Philadelphia, May 16: Colonel William Stephens Smith. Charles Adams and family. New York to Philadelphia. "Splendid misery" as wife of President	201
Philadelphia, May 24: Domestic and social routine. Decline in public character and morals. France and American Jacobins. Food from Boston	203
Philadelphia, June 3: Unseasonably cold weather. President's speech. "XYZ Mission." Violence of newspapers. Transfer of J. Q. Adams from Netherlands to Prussia. Bache and "Peter Porcupine"	205
Philadelphia, June 6-8: Trouble in town meeting. Adams eager to return to Quincy. Falsehoods of Anti-Federalist press. Ruin of Greenleaf and Morris	208
Philadelphia, June 23: Good news of house and farm at Quincy. Entertaining Congress at dinner. Expense of celebrating Fourth of July. Gerry for "XYZ Mission." Washington's approval of Adams. Fenno's <i>Gazette</i>	210

Philadelphia, July 6 (with enclosure): Fourth of July. Senator William Blount. Opposition to President leaving Philadelphia. Future of William Cranch. Gerry and "XYZ Mission"	212
Philadelphia, July 11: Gifts for family. Hopes for news from Quincy	215
Philadelphia, July 19: Preparations for returning to Quincy. Heat and dysentery in Philadelphia	216
Philadelphia, July [21]: Suffocating heat. Plans for two nephews, and care of niece	216
East Chester, [New York,] July [24]: Fatiguing trip from Philadelphia to New York	217
East Chester, July 29: Plans for departure for Quincy. Supplies for household. Care of Smith grandsons	218
Worcester, Massachusetts, October 5: Trip from Quincy to Worcester, on way to Philadelphia	219
East Chester, October 22: Visit with Mrs. William Stephens Smith. Lack of news from Smith grandsons. Long absence of Colonel Smith. Loneliness and desolation of daughter	220
East Chester, October 31: Low spirits of daughter. Letters from sons in London. Marriage of J. Q. Adams	221
Philadelphia, November 15: Disciplining John Adams. Long absence of Colonel Smith. Assistant clergyman for Quincy. Bache's abuse of Adams	222
Philadelphia, November 28-29: Troubles of Colonel Smith and family. Congress and the President's speech. French Directory a scourge to the world. Supplies of food from Quincy	225
Philadelphia, December 12, (with enclosure): Assistant clergyman for Quincy. Death of Mr. and Mrs. Hall. Letter from T. B. Adams. Sermon of Bishop of Norwich. Jefferson to dinner. Calvinism in Philadelphia. Criticism of Bache	227
Philadelphia, December 26: Dislike of Calvinism. Serious illness. Loneliness of daughter, and anxiety for Smith grandsons. Care of Hall orphan daughter. President and wife as "Darby and Joan"	231

1798

Philadelphia, January 5: Death of Halls, and care of their daughter. Death of nephew of Mrs. Adams. News of peace between Austria and France	299
Philadelphia, January 20: Denunciation of French Directory and its American supporters. Assistant clergyman for Quincy	302
Philadelphia, February [1-5]: Dismissal of Tench Coxe. Venality in Pickering's office. News of J. Q. Adams in Prussia	304
Philadelphia, February 6: Financial troubles of Colonel Smith. Letters from sons in Prussia	308
Philadelphia, February 15: Brawl between Griswold and Lyon. Bad manners of Philadelphians, and discourteous proposal to celebrate Washington's birthday	310
Philadelphia, February 21: Illness of Mrs. Adams. Financial troubles of Greenleaf and Morris. Failure of effort to expel Lyon. Anxiety for her brother	312
Philadelphia, February 28: Failure of ball in honor of George Washington	314

Philadelphia, March 3: Letters from Berlin. Death of King of Prussia. Foreign Intercourse Bill	316
Philadelphia, March 5: Mrs. Thomas Law. Superiority of New Englanders to people of Philadelphia. Failure of mission to France. Domestic affairs at Quincy	317
Philadelphia, March 13: Business difficulties of William Cranch. Tense relations with France. "Peter Porcupine" and Bache. Anxiety for J. Q. Adams	320
Philadelphia, March 14: Disputes over policy toward France. Latest styles in female attire. Visit of Indian kings	322
Philadelphia, March 20: Secrecy as to news from France. Bache's attack on Adams	324
Philadelphia, March 27: Vanity and vexation of life. Perverse wickedness of Directory. Division of American opinion over France. Foreign Intercourse Bill	325
Philadelphia, March 31: Bad manners of Virginians in regard to Foreign Intercourse Bill. Bache's ridicule of John Adams	327
Philadelphia, April 4: Failure of "XYZ Mission." Character and conduct of Talleyrand	328
Philadelphia, April 7: Publication of dispatches from envoys to France. Jacobin sympathy with France in the United States. Anxiety for personal safety of envoys	331
Philadelphia, April 13: Liberation of Greenleaf from prison. Letters from Berlin: friendly conduct of Frederick William III. Insolence of Directory towards the United States	333
Philadelphia, April 21: Trip of J. Q. Adams from London to Berlin. French bureaucracy under Directory. Malice and falsehood of Bache	335
Philadelphia, April 22: Work on house in Quincy. Jesuit Gallatin and Jacobins in Congress. Patriotic addresses to John Adams. French depredations. Care of Hall orphan	338
Philadelphia, April 26: First singing of "Hail Columbia." Sedition Bill. Bache's false report	342
Philadelphia, April 28: Alterations to house in Quincy. Demonstrations of loyalty in Philadelphia	345
Philadelphia, May 7: Mrs. Thrale's Dialogue on Death. French Revolution a scourge to all nations. Patriotic parades in Philadelphia. Financial difficulties of Greenleaf. Work on house at Quincy	346
Philadelphia, May 10: A French conspiracy in Philadelphia. Popular support of John Adams. Bache and his Jacobin slanders. Alien and Sedition Bill	348
Philadelphia, May 13: Fatigue of President Adams from answering public addresses	350
Philadelphia, May 13, to Mrs. John Greenleaf: Present for her daughter. Death of Mary Carter Smith	351
Philadelphia, May 18: Patriotic demonstrations in Philadelphia. Volunteer Corps. Anxiety for "XYZ Mission"	352
Philadelphia, May 20-21: Patriotic tension and false rumors. Danger of war with France. News from William Vans Murray. Exhaustion of President Adams	354

Philadelphia, May 26: Alien and Sedition Bill. Volunteer Corps. Robison's book on Freemasons. Victor Du Pont arrives in Philadelphia. Burke's opinion of French Republic	357
Philadelphia, May 29: Visit to frigate <i>United States</i> . Benjamin Russell's <i>Columbian Centinel</i>	360
Philadelphia, June 1: Financial difficulties caused by failure of Greenleaf. Work on house at Quincy	361
Philadelphia, June 4: Assistant for Anthony Wibird, and new secretary for J. Q. Adams. Alarm for American envoys to France. England only barrier to French domination of Europe	362
Philadelphia, June 8: Visit to "Belmont," Pennsylvania. Relations with France. Edward Church and John Adams	365
Philadelphia, June 13: News from J. Q. Adams. French invasion of Switzerland and Gerry's decision to remain in France	368
Philadelphia, June 19: Breaking up of "XYZ Mission" and villainy of Talleyrand. Alarm over Gerry	371
Philadelphia, June 23: Heat and disease in Philadelphia. Dilatory tactics of Congress. Hard work and homesickness of John Adams. Sedition Act for Massachusetts	372
Philadelphia, June 25: Depressing heat. Reception for Marshall on return from France. Invitation to visit "Mount Vernon"	374
Philadelphia, June 27: Reflections on the death of Jeremy Belknap and John Clarke	375
Philadelphia, July 3: Exhausting heat. Washington named commander-in-chief	377
Philadelphia, July 9: Capture of French privateer. Arrest of Bache and Burk. Absent treatment by Benjamin Rush. Unwillingness of Congress to declare war on France. Universal confidence in Washington	377
Philadelphia, July 12: Advice for William Smith Shaw, future secretary to President Adams	380
Philadelphia, July 13: Legal business of William Cranch in Washington. Benjamin Stoddert, first Secretary of Navy. Nomination of officers for Army. Disappointment at missing Harvard Commencement	380
Philadelphia, July 17: Senate waits word from "Mount Vernon." Gerry, and rumors of peace with France. Supplies for house at Quincy. Secretary McHenry returns with Washington's acceptance. Nomination of officers for Army	383
1799	
New York, January 17: Early and dangerous spring. News from J. Q. Adams at Dresden. Outburst of John Randolph of Roanoke	386
Brookfield, Massachusetts, October 13: Stay with Thomas Marshall and family at Weston. Worry over President's cold	386
East Chester, New York, October 20: Yellow fever in New York and Philadelphia. Work on house at Quincy	387
East Chester, October 31: Domestic illnesses. John Adams at Trenton, New Jersey. Family of Charles Adams, and his intemperance. Anxiety for J. Q. Adams	388

- [East Chester, November 1-3]: Impending departure for Philadelphia. Envoys to France ready to sail. Attack of Thomas Cooper 390
- Philadelphia, November 15: Trip from New York to Philadelphia. Visit to camp at Plainfield, New Jersey. Social duties at Philadelphia. Celebration of the President's birthday. French fashions in America 391
- Philadelphia, November 26: Theory of the good life. Political violence of Thomas Cooper and his friends. News from J. Q. Adams. Stormy session of Congress anticipated 393
- Philadelphia, December 4: President's address to Congress. Eagerness for news from France. Domestic matters in Quincy. Dana as successor to Governor Sumner 395
- Philadelphia, December 11: Assistant clergyman for Quincy. Melancholy visit to Mrs. Robert Morris. President's speech to Congress. Popular reaction to peace with France. Disloyalty of Timothy Pickering 397
- Philadelphia, December 22-23: Death of George Washington. His character and conduct. Squabbles over new assistant clergyman for Quincy. Benjamin Rush and "Peter Porcupine" 400
- Philadelphia, December 30-31: Letter from Talleyrand to President Adams. Hamilton's prediction of imminent restoration of Bourbons. Mourning for Washington at Philadelphia. Danger lest Washington be praised beyond his deserts 402

1800

- Philadelphia, January 7: Assistant clergyman for Quincy. Blunders of Boston printers. William Smith Shaw's visit to "Mount Vernon." Business troubles of James Greenleaf. General Lee's oration on Washington 404
- Philadelphia, January 28: Indiscreet praise of Washington: Messinger's oration. Bonaparte an adventurer. Letter of John Randolph of Roanoke. Alterations to house at Quincy 406
- Philadelphia, January 30: Burden of social duties as wife of the President 409
- Philadelphia, February 12: William Cranch's candidacy for clerk of Supreme Court 410
- Philadelphia, February 27: Reverend Peter Whitney colleague to Anthony Wibird. Delightful weather at Philadelphia. Unpleasant prospect of removing to Washington. William Jackson's oration on George Washington. Improvement in health 412
- Philadelphia, March 5: Surrender of Thomas Nash to British. Danger of frequent popular elections. Public feeling as to George Washington 414
- Philadelphia, March 15-18: Dilatory tactics of Congress. A broken engagement. House for the Reverend Peter Whitney. Character of James Greenleaf. Immodest dress of women 416
- Philadelphia, March 22: Providing for the Porters in Quincy 420
- Philadelphia, April 7: Success of William Cranch in Washington. Beauty of spring in Philadelphia. Major and Mrs. Tousard 422
- Philadelphia, April 15: Alterations to house in Quincy 423

Philadelphia, April 17: Domestic details of removal to Quincy for summer, and Washington for winter	424
Philadelphia, April 24-26: Illness and success of William Cranch in Washington. Mrs. Joshua Johnson and social life. Indecent dress of young ladies. Preparations for return to Quincy. Arrival of Christopher Gore from England	424
Philadelphia, [May 3]: Character of Reverend Anthony Wibird. Last Drawing-Room at Philadelphia	427
[Philadelphia, May 5]: Alterations to house at Quincy. Importance of New York in coming election. Scurrilous attacks on Adams. Sectional animosity	428
Norwalk, Connecticut, May 26: Visit to Scotch Plains. Character and conduct of Colonel Smith. Bitter campaign for President, and disgust with world	430
New Haven, Connecticut, November 2: Impending departure for Philadelphia and Washington. Adams on his way to Washington	432
Philadelphia, November 10: Deathbed of Charles Adams. Election letter of Hamilton	432
Washington, November 21: Stay with Snowdens at "Montpelier," Maryland. Arrival at Georgetown. Adams's birthday at Quincy. Hamilton in disgrace. Adams's speech to Congress. The President's House in Washington	434
Washington, December 1: Sickness in family. Election of 1800	438
Washington, December 8: Death of Charles Adams	439

1801

Washington, January 15: Poor health in Washington. Dignified defeat better than resignation for Adams. Norton Quincy. Adams determined to leave public life	440
Washington, February 7: Public excitement over tie between Burr and Jefferson. Danger of popular government. Character of Burr and Jefferson. Prospect of hard journey back to Quincy	442

New Letters of Abigail Adams

PART I, 1788-1797

None of these letters, or any part of these letters, may be reproduced, with the exception of short passages for the purpose of review, without permission in writing from the Director of the Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Jamaica [Long Island, New York], Novbr. 24, 1788

MY DEAR SISTER:

I know you will rejoice with me that all was happily over & Mrs. Smith safely abed before I reachd her. She thought she should do as she did before, so told no one that she was unwell, untill Mr. Smiths Mamma & sister could scarcely reach her, and a Negro woman whom she has was obliged to officiate for her. Happily she had on some former occasions assisted some of her own coulour, but all were teribly frightned. However no one sufferd, but Mrs. Smith & my young Grandson are as well as usual at this period. Master William is the very Image of his Mamma at the same age, except that he has a great share of vivacity & sprightliness, the merest little Trunchion that you ever saw, very pleasant & good humourd.¹

I find this place a very retired one, Rural & delightfull in the summer. Mr. Smith has a large connection of Sisters & Brothers who as well as his Mamma appear very fond of their sister & her daughter & Grandsons.² Belinda who keeps chiefly here, is very pleasing & soft in her manners, much like my Friend Mrs. Rogers. I was so short a Time at New York that I saw nothing of it, and I feel as if I ought to return to my Family again, as soon as Mrs. Smith gets about, but it is a long journey, & the

¹ Abigail (1765-1813), the only surviving daughter of John and Abigail (Smith) Adams, became the wife, in London, June 12, 1786, of Colonel William Stephens Smith (1755-1816). Colonel Smith was born in New York City, the son of John, a wealthy merchant, and Margaret (Stephens) Smith, whose relatives were Loyalists; he was graduated from Princeton in 1774, enlisted at the outbreak of the Revolution, and served brilliantly under Sullivan and Putnam. Later on, he became an aide to George Washington. In 1785, he was appointed secretary of the legation in London, where he met the daughter of John Adams, the American minister. Colonel and Mrs. Smith had four children: William Steuben (1787), John Adams (1788), Thomas Hollis (1790), and Caroline Amelia (1795), who married John Peter DeWindt. For portraits of Colonel and Mrs. Smith, see *Old-Time New England: The Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities*, vol. 19, No. 3 (January, 1929).

For a blunt letter (1798) from John Adams to this son-in-law, criticizing his "pride and ostentation," see John Adams, *Works*, vol. 8, Boston, 1853, pp. 617-8.

² John Smith and Margaret (Stephens) Smith had ten children: four sons and six daughters. For a description of the daughters, see the following letter.

stages I find are very inconvenient for a Lady & wholly improper on many accounts for me. They are not hung upon springs & they drive very Rapidly over very bad road. I hope you will write me and give me some account of my Family, about which I am anxious. You will learn from Esther how she makes out. I wish to know whether she is able to take the care which is upon her. I also want to know how Mr. J. Q. A.'s health is. I know you will feel a care for all of them in my absence. Mr. Adams will Frank your Letters which please to direct under cover to Col. Smith.

My Love to my dear Neices and tell Betsy I design to be at Home to [her] wedding.³ Mrs. Smith joins me in affectionate Regard to you & Family. I am, my dear Sister,

Affectionately yours

A. ADAMS

I wish my dear Sister if it will not dissappoint Cousin Betsy that you would write a line to the chair maker at Milton to send the half dozen to Mr. Smiths store in Boston put up so as to send safely on Board the first vessel which shall sail for New York, & let him know that I will pay him on my return. Pray Mr. Smith to address them to Mr. Daniel Macormick, New York.⁴

Jamaica [Long Island], December 15, 1788

MY DEAR SISTER:

I thank you for your kind Letter of Novbr. 30th Decbr. 2nd. You judgd rightly I was almost melancholy to be a Month from Home, and not to hear once from Home in all that Time, but the post is long in comeing. I am Eleven miles from [New] York with a great Ferry between, and you are ten from Boston so that we do not always get our Letters ready for post day. I wrote you the day after I arrived here &

³ Elizabeth, daughter of Mary (Smith) Cranch and Richard Cranch (1726-1811), who married the Reverend Jacob Norton, Harvard, 1786.

⁴ Of William Smith, only son of the Reverend William Smith, and younger brother of Mrs. John Adams, very little is known. He was born in 1746, and seems to have married three times. Several of his children were reared by their relatives. The date of his death has not been found. His first wife was probably Catherine Louisa Salmon (married January 3, 1779); his second wife, Hannah Carter (married May 16, 1787); and his third wife, Martha White (b. 1755), daughter of Daniel and Sarah (Turner) White, by whom he had at least one child, Daniel White Smith (b. 1796). See *Records of Braintree and Boston Marriages: 1752-1809*.

Thus, in the letters which follow, "Mrs. Smith" may refer to any one of three, or possibly five women: the daughter of Mrs. John Adams, Mrs. William Stephens Smith; the mother-in-law of that daughter, Mrs. John Smith or, thirdly, one of the three wives of William Smith, the brother of Mrs. Adams.

trust you have long ago got the Letter. Your Neice is very well, except weak, & very free with her Mamma as I can instance to you, for [I] having written a Letter to her Pappa & seald it, she comes in & says O, Mamma what, is the Letter seald, why I must see it, and very cordially opens it to read. The little Boy grows finely, but I dont feel so fond of him yet as I do of William. Whether it is because he was Born in our own House, or the first or the best temperd child I cannot determine.

Dec'br. 18th, [1788]

Mrs. Smith has had several of her Neighbours to visit her since I have been here. They appear to be Geenteel people, but all the acquaintance she has upon the Island are of the ceremonious kind. In their own Family are four young Ladies, all of them agreeable, sensible, well behaved women. Peggy the oldest is tall, agreeable rather than handsome, and the most particularly attentive to her manners without discovering any affectation of any Lady I have met with. Belinda the second daughter has less of person to boast of than her Elder Sister, but she has that Interesting countenance & openness of manners that Interests you at first sight, nor are you dissapointed upon a further acquaintance. Her temper and disposition appear perfectly amiable, accomodating and kind. I have more acquaintance with her than with either of the others. I found [her] here when I came, taking charge of Mrs. Smiths Family during her confinement. This she performd with much ease and tender sisterly affection. At Home their Mamma has used them to the care of her Family by Turns. Each take it a week at a Time. Charity is the third daughter, and if it was not for the loss of one Eye which she was deprived of at two years old I think she would be the Bel of the Family. She has been absent till last Sunday ever since I came. I have seen her but once. She is more social, has read more and appears to have the greatest turn for literature of either. She has a taste for drawing, for musick &c. The fine arts seem to be the objects of her attention, and as she has a most inquisitive mind, she would shine with brightness if she had Books to direct her and masters to instruct her. She dresses with neatness but great simplicity, rather in the Quaker stile, avoids all publick company, assemblies &c but is strongly attachd to her Friends. I take from Mrs. Smith part of her History for, as I observd before, I have seen her but once. Sally is the fourth daughter, about 17, tall as Mrs. Guile, a fine figure & a pretty Face, unaffected and artless in her manners, modest and composed. She wants only a little more ani-

mation to render her truly Interesting. She has dignity, & that you know is inconsistent with a gay, playful, humour.¹ This Belinda has. They are four fine women and well educated for wives as well as daughters. There are two young ones, Betsy & Nancy, one of ten & the other seven years old. Daughters so agreeable must have a worthy Mother, and this is universally her character. Mrs. Smith is a Large, tall woman, not unlike Mrs. Gray. She is about 50 years old and has been a very Handsome woman, tenderly attached to all her children. She has I tell her been too indulgent to her sons, of whom she has four, but of them an other Time.² She is really a Charming woman as far as I have been able to form an acquaintance with her, and she has been here a good deal & I have visited her. We have had company several Times from N[ew] York and I have had many & repeated requests to go there, but my Trunk is, I know not where. I have only one morning gown & a green satten which I very fortunately had in my small Trunk or I should not have been able to have seen any body. I have no shoes but the pair I wear, no Bonnet, very little Linnen & only my calimanco Skirt, and there are very few things of Mrs. Smiths that I can wear.³ I am sadly of. We had yesterday a cold snow storm, hardly enough to cover the ground, but it has cleared up very cold. I think of my poor dear & pity him. I long to get back to my Family, but must wait for snow as the roads are too bad to Travel without. I regret daily the distance, but Mrs. Smith comforts herself with thinking that I shall very soon be nearer to her, but I fear I shall not have much comfort if that should happen. 'Tis only on plain ground that one walks easily. Up hill or down is painful. I am afraid J. Jr. will turn Hermit, if business does not soon call him into the World, but how much better is this, than having no given object, no pursuit. I had rather a son of mine should follow any mechanical trade whatever than be a gentleman at large without any occupation.

I am sorry to hear my good Mother had met with such an accident.⁴ It is one source of my anxiety to get home, that I have thought for some

¹ This Sally, or Sarah Smith (1769–1828), married Charles Adams (1770–1800), and became the mother of two daughters: Susanna Boylston (1796–1846) and Abigail Louisa (1798–1838).

² The four sons, and eldest children, of John and Margaret (Stephens) Smith were William Stephens, John, James, and Justus.

³ "Calimanco," obsolete for "calamanco." A woollen stuff of Flanders, glossy on the surface, and woven with a satin twill and chequered in the warp, so that the checks are seen on one side only; much used in the eighteenth century. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁴ Abigail Adams refers to her mother-in-law, Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall (1709–1797), who married again after the death of the father of John Adams.

months that she would not Live through the winter. Pray present my duty to her and tell her that her grandchildren & great grandchildren talk of coming to see her. My Love to my [your?] two daughters. Tell Betsy she must not steal a march upon me. If she waits an other month Mrs. Smith will come & be Bride[s]maid. Present me kindly to Brother Cranch & go as often as you can & see my good Gentleman.⁵ Tell Esther she must write to me & let me know how she makes out. My fingers are so cold I can scarcely hold a pen. Adieu my dear Sister. Write as often as you can. Mrs. Smith desires me to present her duty & Love. She will write soon.

Yours most tenderly

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill [New York], Janry 24, 1789¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

I embrace this opportunity By my Brother to write you a few lines tho it is only to tell you what you would have learnt from him, Namely that we are all well. He is come in persuit of Betsy Crosby. How well the child might have been provided for if the Dr. had lived, I cannot pretend to say, but two thirds of her property is already consumed, every minutia being charged to her as the account will show. However this is no concern of mine.² I am not without hopes my dear Sister of coming to Braintree and spending several months with you during the next recess of congress. How long they will set this Session I cannot pretend to say, but rather think they will rise early in the Spring. I think it would be a pleasure to me to have a small Family, and be able when I returnd to visit my Friends a little more than I have done. I never rode so little as I have done since I resided here. There are no pleasant rides, no variety of scenes round New York, unless you cross ferrys over to long Island or to the Jerseys. I have however enjoyd a greater share of Health than I

⁵ John Adams did not come down to New York until April 20, 1789. See footnote 8 to the enclosure with the letter of December 12, 1797.

¹ The manor house of "Richmond Hill" stood near what is now Macdougall Street, in Greenwich Village, New York City. Its original proprietor was Abraham Mortier; at the time John Adams and his wife occupied it, "Richmond Hill" was the property of a Mrs. Jephson. Aaron Burr sold it on June 17, 1797. It was subsequently removed to a new site, was turned into a theatre, and demolished in 1849. For a picture of the house, see the *New-York Magazine* (June, 1790), where it is described as the residence of Vice-President Adams. I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*, New York, 1915-1928, vol. 3, p. 951; vol. 5, pp. 1254-5, 1274, and 1304; also, vol. 1, plate 55A, and pp. 416-7.

² Dr. Ebenezer Crosby, Harvard, 1777, Yale, 1782, died in New York City in 1788. William S. Pattee, *A History of Old Braintree and Quincy*, Quincy, 1878.

have for some years past & been less afflicted with the Complaint which used to allarm as well as distress me.

How is my Neice Mrs. Norton?³ Give my Love to her & tell her I hope to find her with a fine Girl in her Arms when I return to Braintree. Tell Lucy she is quite as usefull as if she was married.⁴ I want to see her much as well as the rest of my dear Friends. To many of them I owe Letters, but I really hate to touch a pen. I am ashamed to say how laizy I am grown in that respect.

I could give an account of visiting and receiving visits, but in that there is so little variety that one Letter only might contain the whole History. For Instance on Monday Evenings Mrs. Adams Receives company. That is her Rooms are lighted & put in order. Servants & Gentlemen and Ladies, as many as inclination, curiosity or Fashion tempts, come out to make their Bow & Curtzy, take coffe & Tea, chat an half hour, or longer, and then return to Town again. On Tuesday the same Ceremony is performed at Lady Temple's,⁵ on Wednesday at Mrs. Knox's,⁶ on Thursdays at Mrs. Jays⁷ and on Fryday at Mrs. Washingtons, so that if any person has so little to employ themselves in as to want an amusement five Evenings in a week, they may find it at one or other of these places. To Mrs. Washingtons I usually go as often as once a fortnight, and to the others occasionally.

So I learn that my Young Friend Nancy⁸ is seriously thinking of

³ Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, to whom sons were born in 1790 and 1791. See the letter of February 5, 1792.

⁴ Lucy Cranch (1767-1846), who married her first cousin, John Greenleaf (1763-1848).

⁵ "Lady" Temple, so called, was Elizabeth Bowdoin (1750-1809), daughter of James Bowdoin (1726-1790), one of the richest and most influential men in the Province of Massachusetts, and subsequently Governor of the state of Massachusetts (1785-1787), during Shays's Rebellion. Elizabeth married John Temple (1730-1798), a native of Massachusetts, and surveyor-general of the customs under George III. After November 11, 1786, this John Temple called himself "Sir" John Temple, claiming succession to the baronetcy of Stowe, in Buckinghamshire, but this claim was never proved or acknowledged. *Burke's Peerage*, London, 1938, "Temple of Stowe," pp. 2393-4. Temple was British consul-general at New York from 1788 to 1798. On June 17, 1797, he bought Aaron Burr's mansion-house, "Richmond Hill." Portraits of "Sir" John and "Lady" Temple are in the Massachusetts Historical Society. They had two children, "Sir" Grenville Temple (1768-1829) and Elizabeth Bowdoin Temple (1769-1825), the wife of Thomas Lindall Winthrop, father of Robert C. Winthrop (1809-1894), Speaker of the House of Representatives (1847-1849).

⁶ Lucy (Flucker) Knox, wife of Henry Knox (1750-1806), first Secretary of War, 1789-1795.

⁷ Sarah Van Brugh (Livingston) Jay, wife of John Jay (1745-1829), first Chief Justice, and daughter of William Livingston (1723-1790), first Governor of New Jersey.

⁸ Anna (Nancy) Greenleaf (1772-1843) married William Cranch (1769-1855), whom John Adams (February 27, 1801) appointed judge of the United States Circuit Court of the District of Columbia.

becomeing the Madam of a parish. Be sure to tell her, that I like it much as it will be so fine a half way House to call at when I go & come From N[ew] York to Braintree. But laying selfish considerations aside, I hope she is like to be settled to the mind of herself & Family.

My best Regards to Mrs. Quincy⁹ and all other Friends.

Brother says you wrote to me by Mrs. Cushing.¹⁰ She is not yet arrived. Adieu.

Yours most tenderly

A. ADAMS

Providence, [Rhode Island], June 19, 1789¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

This day is the Aniversary of my Landing in Boston and Tomorrow that of my departure from it. Many are the mercies I have to be thankful for through all my Perigrinations. All the painfull scenes I have past through, has been the temporary seperation from my Friends. Fatigue either of Body or Mind I scarcely name amongst them for I have my pleasures and gratifications which I set down as a balance to them. Cousin Lucy² has told you that I left Home about 8 oclock. We proceeded to Man's Inn³ in Wrentham before we stop'd, 27 miles, where we dinned upon roast veal, roast chickings, sallad &c. West India sweet meats I ought not to forget in the desert. It is really a very good Inn. We sat off at three oclock and reachd Attleboroug[h] about five where we Rested. I met with Mr. and Mrs. Mason & Miss Powel going to Newport. We past an agreeable Hour together. At six we renewed our journey and reachd Providence at half after seven. We put up at Daggetts Inn⁴ just at the entrance of the Town situated upon a Hill opposite the State House⁵ commanding a fine view of the River & the

⁹ The wife of Norton Quincy (1716-1801), Harvard, 1736, the uncle of Abigail (Smith) Adams and Mary (Smith) Cranch.

¹⁰ Hannah (Phillips) Cushing (1754-1834), wife of William Cushing (1732-1810), justice of the Supreme Court (1789-1810). Cushing refused the office of Chief Justice in 1796.

¹ Footnotes for this and the following letter are chiefly drawn from *Rhode Island History*, vol. 1, no. 4 (October, 1942), pp. 97-104.

² Lucy Cranch (1767-1846), daughter of Richard Cranch (1726-1811) and Mary (Smith) Cranch (1741-1811), who married John Greenleaf (1763-1848).

³ David Man kept an inn at Wrentham as early as 1724.

⁴ Daggett's Inn was the Mansion House, sometimes called the Golden Ball Inn. It was situated on Benefit Street, opposite the Old State House, which was pulled down in 1941.

⁵ This State House is still standing on North Main Street, and is now the Sixth District Court.

whole Town. We are tolerably well accommodated, but should have been much better if the Governour⁶ had not taken the best Chamber before I came, (the court being now in Session) and he has not had the politeness either to offer to give it up or to make me a visit, tho he has had much conversation with Polly⁷ and now & then takes a peep at me from [the] entry. My first inquiry was after a packet. I found only [Captain] Browns here. He came & I like him. He has a very good packet & Bears a good character himself, but says he cannot be ready to sail till Saturday morning. The wind to day is directly against us.

In about an hour after my arrival I received the visits of the following persons. Mr. & Mrs. Arnold, the Gentleman was one of the Committe who came to Mr. Adams, from the Towns of Newport & Providence. Mr. & Mrs. Francis, this Lady is the daughter of Mr. John Brown of this Town, so celebrated for his wealth.⁸ Miss Bowen the sister to the late Governour.⁹ Colonel Peck, Mr. Robins, Tutor to the Colledge & Mr. Shrimpton Hutchinson and Mrs. Nightingale, all of whom in the Name of many other Gentlemen & Ladies regretted [*sic*] that I had dissappointed them in not letting it be known when I should be here as they had agreed to meet me several miles out of Town. Mr. & Mrs. Francis invited me to take up my abode with them. I excused myself, but have promised to take Tea & spend the Evening if I do not go out of Town. This morning I am to take a ride with them to see the Town & to return my visits, if I am not prevented by company, but my wish is not to be detained a moment. Pray write me & let me know by the next post whether my furniture is all on Board Barnard & when he will sail. I should be glad to hear how Mrs. Brisler is.¹⁰ I left her in great affliction.

⁶ John Collins, of Newport (1717-1795), third Governor of the state of Rhode Island (1786-1790). Collins cast the deciding vote in the State Senate (January 17, 1790) which led to the calling of the convention by which Rhode Island entered the Union, May 29, 1790.

⁷ Polly Tailor, the maid of Mrs. Adams. For further reference to Polly Tailor, see letters of October 11 and November 3, 1789, and April 28, 1790.

⁸ John Brown (1736-1803), son of James and Hope (Power) Brown, was the third of four brothers, Nicholas, Joseph, John, and Moses, of the mercantile firm of Nicholas Brown & Company, of Providence. In 1787, he became a partner in Brown & Francis, and in December of that year the *General Washington* cleared for the East, the first ship in the beginning of trade that brought fortune to Rhode Island for more than half a century. John Brown married Sarah, daughter of Daniel and Dorcas (Harris) Smith. Abby Brown, his daughter, married John Francis.

⁹ Miss Mary Bowen, sister of Lieutenant-Governor Jabez Bowen, who was graduated from Yale in 1757 and died in 1815. Bowen also had two half-sisters, Elizabeth (Betsy) and Nancy.

¹⁰ Mrs. Briesler was the wife of John Briesler, major-domo to John Adams.

I feel the want of Mrs. Brisler as a Hair dresser. On other accounts Polly does very well. Matilda¹¹ is well, & her finger much better. Let Mrs. Storer know if you please.¹² My best Regards to all my dear Friends. It grieved me to see you so dull. You used to keep up your Spirits better. Do not let them flagg. A merry Heart does good like a medicine.¹³ We shall hear often from one an other, and the seperation be renderd less painfull by that means.

This moment a Card is brought me from Mr. Brown & Lady with an invitation to dine with them to day & that they will visit me at ten. I accept it, as [Captain] Brown cannot go till tomorrow. Adieu my dear Sister.

Most affectionatly yours

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Richmond Hill, June 28th, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote you from Providence some account of my polite reception there & closed my Letter just as I had accepted an invitation to dine with Mr. Brown & Lady. The forenoon was pass't in receiving visits from all the principal Gentlemen and Ladies of the Town, who seemed to vie with each other, to convince me that tho they were inhabitants of an Antifederal State, they were themselves totally against the measures persued by it, and that they entertaind the highest Regard and Respect for the Character with which I was so intimately connected, altho to their great mortification they had been prevented the Honour of having any share in placing him in His respected Station.¹

Mr. Brown sent his Carriage & son to conduct me [to] his House which is one of the grandest I have seen in this Country. Every thing in and about it, wore the marks of magnificence & taste. Mrs. Brown met me at the door & with the most obliging smile accosted me with, "Friend I am glad to see the here." The simplicity of her manners & dress with the openness of her countenance & the friendlyness of her behavior charmed me beyond all the studied politeness of European manners. They had collected between 22 persons to dine with me tho the notice was so short, & gave an elegant entertainment upon a service of Plate.

¹¹ Matilda was a kind of companion to Mrs. Adams.

¹² Hannah (Quincy) Storer (1736-1826), daughter of Josiah Quincy, who married as her second husband Ebenezer Storer. John Adams courted Hannah Quincy before he married Abigail Smith.

¹³ *Proverbs*, XVII, 22.

¹ Rhode Island refused to ratify the Constitution and join the Union until May 29, 1790, and then only by the close convention vote of thirty-four to thirty-two.

Towards evening I made a Tour round the Town, & drank Tea & spent the Evening with Mr. & Mrs. Francis whom I mentioned to you before. Then the company was much enlarged, & many persons introduced to me who had no opportunity before of visiting me. Amongst those Ladies with whom I was most pleased was the Lady & two Sisters of Governour Bowen. About Eleven I returnd to my lodgings and the next morning went on Board the Hancock packet. We had contrary wind all day, by which means we did not reach Newport untill seven oclock. I had been only a few moments arrived when Mr. Merchant came on Board and insisted that I with my whole Family should go on shore & Lodge at his House.² He would take no refusal. He sent his daughter down to receive & accompany my Neice, & came himself in a few moments with a carriage to attend me.³ At his House I was kindly & Hospitably Treated by his Lady & daughters. We slept there & the next morning were early summond on Board the packet. Captain Brown had very civilly taken his wife to attend upon me, & accomodate me during my passage. I found her a very well Bred Geenteel [*sic*] woman, but neither civility attention or politeness could remedy the sea sickness or give me a fair wind or dispell the Thunder Gusts which attended us both night and day. In short I resolved upon what I have frequently before, that I would never again embark upon the water, but this resolution I presume will be kept as my former ones have been. We were five days upon the water. Heat, want of rest, sea sickness & terror, for I had my share of that, all contributed to fatigue me, and I felt upon my arrival quite tame & spiritless. Louisa was very sick, but behaved like a Heroine. Matilda had her share but when she was a little recoverd she was the life of us all. Polly was half dead all the passage & sufferd more from sea sickness than any of us. Charl[e]s eat & slept without any inconvenience.⁴ When we came to the wharff, I desired the Captain to go to our Friend Mr. Macormick and inform him of my arrival, if he was not to be found to go to the Senate Chamber & inform Mr. A[dams], who from the hour of the day I knew must be there. Mr. Otis⁵ the Secretary came to me with a

²Henry Marchant (1741-1796), a prominent attorney of Newport, one of the signers of the Articles of Confederation, member of the Continental Congress (1777-1780 and 1783-1784), and federal judge (1790-1796).

³This niece was Louisa Smith, who made her home with John and Abigail Adams, and is frequently mentioned in the letters which follow. Louisa was the daughter of William Smith, the brother of Mrs. Adams.

⁴The three sons of John and Abigail Adams were John Quincy (1767-1848), Charles (1770-1800), and Thomas Boylston (1772-1832).

⁵Samuel Allyne Otis (1740-1814), brother of James and Mercy (Otis) Warren, and father of Harrison Gray Otis (1765-1848). Samuel A. Otis was chosen Secretary of the United States Senate in 1789 and served until his death, April 22, 1814.

Carriage & I reach'd Richmond Hill on Thursday one oclock to my no small joy. I found Mr. Adams in better Health than I feard, Mr. & Mrs. Smith quite well & everything so well arranged that Beds & a few other articles seem only necessary towards keeping House with comfort, and I begin to think that my furniture will be troublesome to me, some part of it I mean, whilst Mrs. Smith remains with me. Master John was grown out of my knowledge. William is still at Jamaica. Our House has been a mere Levee ever since I arrived morning & evening. I took the earliest opportunity (the morning after my arrival) to go & pay my respects to Mrs. Washington. Mrs. Smith accompanied me. She received me with great ease & politeness. She is plain in her dress, but that plainness is the best of every article. She is in mourning. Her Hair is white, her Teeth beautifull, her person rather short than otherways, hardly so large as my Ladyship, and if I was to speak sincerely, I think she is a much better figure. Her manners are modest and unassuming, dignified and feminine [*sic*], not the Tincture of ha'ture about her. *His Majesty* was ill & confined to his Room. I had not the pleasure of a presentation to him, but the satisfaction of hearing that he regreted it equally with myself. Col. Humphries,⁶ who had paid his compliments to me in the morning & Breakfasted with me, attended Mrs. Washington & Mr. Lear,⁷ the Private Secretary, was the introducer. Thus you have an account of my first appearence. The Principal Ladies who have visited me are the Lady & daughter of the Governour,⁸ Lady Temple, the Countess de Brehim⁹, Mrs. Knox & 25 other Ladies, many of the Senators, all their Ladies, all the Foreign ministers & some of the Rep[resentative]s.

⁶ David Humphreys (1752-1818), youngest son of the Reverend Daniel Humphrey [*sic*] and Sarah (Riggs) Bowers, widow of John Bowers. Colonel Humphreys, Yale, 1771, was aide-de-camp to George Washington.

⁷ Tobias Lear (1762-1816), born at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and graduated from Harvard College in 1783. Lear was private secretary to George Washington from 1785 to 1793.

⁸ George Clinton (1739-1812), first Governor of New York (1777-1795 and 1801-1804), elected Vice-President of the United States in 1804 and 1808.

⁹ The comtesse de Brehan arrived at Philadelphia on February 26, 1788, with her brother, Eleonore-François-Elie, comte de Moustier (1751-1817), French minister to the United States from 1787 to 1790. Madame de Brehan, eccentric both in appearance and deportment, was a painter, and made several miniatures of George Washington. G. A. Eisen, *Portraits of Washington*, New York, 1932, pp. 454-6 and 669. A letter which she wrote to Jefferson on September 3, 1787, from Brest, on her way to America, thanking him for the loan of his book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Paris, 1784-5, will be found in the Jefferson Papers, in the Coolidge Collection, at the Massachusetts Historical Society. This letter is written in English, but with obvious effort. See, also, Katharine M. Roof, *Colonel William Smith and Lady*, Boston, 1929, p. 196.

We are most delightfully situated. The prospect all around is Beautiful in the highest degree. It is a mixture of the sublime & Beautiful. Amidst it all I sigh for many of my dear Friends and connections. I can make no domestick arrangement till Brisler arrives. Remember me affectionatly to all my Friends particularly my aged parent,¹⁰ to my children to whom I cannot write as yet, to my dear Lucy & worthy Dr. Tufts,¹¹ in short to all whom I love.

Yours most tenderly

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, July 12th, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter by Mr. Brisler who reachd here on the 4th of July, since which you will easily suppose I have been very buisily engaged in arranging my Family affairs. This added to the intence heat of the season, some company (tho for three days I was *fashionably* not at Home,) and some visiting which was indispensable, having more than fifty upon my list, my Time has been so wholly occupied that I have not taken a pen. Yet my thoughts have not been so occupied, but that they have frequently visited you, and my other Friends in the Neighbourhood, and tho I have here, as to situation one of the most delightfull spots I have seen in this country, yet I find the want of some of my particular connection's, but an all wise Providence has seen fit to curtail our wishes and to limit our enjoyments, that we may not be unmindfull of our dependance or forget the Hand from whence they flow. I have a favour to request of all my near and intimate Friends. It is to desire them to watch over my conduct and if at any time they perceive any alteration in me with respect to them, arising as they may suppose from my situation in Life, I beg they would with the utmost freedom acquaint me with it. I do not feel within myself the least disposition of the kind, but I

¹⁰ The Reverend William Smith died in 1783, and his wife in 1775. "Aged parent" refers to the mother of John Adams, Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall (1709-1797). For a diary of the Reverend William Smith, see 3 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 42.

¹¹ Cotton Tufts (1732-1815) of Weymouth, an uncle of Mrs. Adams by marriage, and nephew of John Tufts (1689-1752). Like his father, Simon, Cotton Tufts became a physician. He had full charge of the private affairs of John Adams during the latter's absence from home: John Adams, *Life and Works*, Boston, 1850-1856, vol. 9, p. 548n. Cotton Tufts first married Lucy Quincy (died 1785), daughter of John Quincy. His second wife (October 22, 1789) was Mrs. Susannah Warner, of Gloucester. See letters of November 1, 1789, and March 21, 1790; and for reference to his first wife, that of May 16, 1797. For a diary of Dr. Cotton Tufts, see 3 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 42.

know mankind are prone to decieve themselves, and some are disposed to misconstrue the conduct of those whom they conceive placed above them.

Our August Pressident [*sic*] is a singular example of modesty and diffidence. He has a dignity which forbids Familiarity mixed with an easy affibility which creates Love and Reverence. The fever which he had terminated in an absess, so that he cannot sit up. Upon my second visit to Mrs. Washington he sent for me into his Chamber. He was laying [*sic*] upon a settee and half raising himself up, beggd me to excuse his receiving me in that posture, congratulated me upon my arrival in N[ew] York and asked me how I could Relish the simple manners of America after having been accustomed to those of Europe. I replied to him that where I found simple manners I esteemed them, but that I thought we approachd much nearer to the Luxury and manners of Europe according to our ability, than most persons were sensible of, and that we had our full share of taste and fondness for them. The Pressident has a Bed put into his Carriage and rides out in that way, allways with six Horses in his Carriage & four attendants. Mrs. Washington accompanies him. I requested him to make Richmond Hill his resting place, and the next day he did so, but he found walking up stairs so difficult, that he has done it but once. Mrs. Washington is one of those unassuming characters which create Love & Esteem. A most becoming pleasentness sits upon her countenance & an unaffected deportment which renders her the object of veneration and Respect. With all these feelings and Sensations I found myself much more deeply impressd than I ever did before their Majesties of Britain.

You ask me concerning politicks. Upon my word I hear less of them here, than I did in in [*sic*] Massa'ts. The two Houses are very buisy upon very important Bill's, the judiciary, and the Collecting Bills. The Senate is composed of many men of great abilities, who appear to be liberal in their sentiments and candid towards each other. The House is composed of some men of equal talants. Others, the debates will give you the best Idea of them, but there is not a member whose sentiment clash more with my Ideas of things than Mr. G[erry].¹ He certainly does not comprehend the Great National System which must Render us respectable abroad & energetick at Home and will assuredly find himself lost amidst Rocks & sands.

My dear Sister some parts of your Letter made me melancholy. Are

¹ Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814), signer of the Declaration of Independence, who helped to make the Constitution and then refused to urge its ratification; Anti-Federalist member of the House of Representatives (1789-1793).

you in any difficulties unknown to me? I know very well that a small Farm must afford you a scanty support and that you are a sufferer from being obliged to receive pay in paper but I know your prudence & oconomy has carried you along, tho not in affluence, yet with decency and comfort, and I hope you will still be able to live so. You have one daughter comfortably situated. Your son will from his merit & abilities soon get into some buisness. Your other daughter, you have every reason to be satisfied with. Do not look upon the gloomy side only. How easily might your situation be changed for the worse. Even if you were in possession of Riches yet there is a competency which is so desirable that one cannot avoid an anxiety for it. I have a request to make you. Desire Mr. Cranch² to make out his account which he has against Mr. A[dams]. I gave Cousin Lucy a memmorandum. Let the balance be drawn and inclose to me, and I will send you a Receipt in full. This I consider myself at full liberty to do, because the little sum Lent you was my own pocket money. Put the Letter under cover to Mrs. Smith. It will then fall into no hands but my own. But cover the whole for a frank to Mr. A[dams]—Do not talk of obligations [*sic*]. Reverse the matter & then ask yourself if you would not do as much for me?

I wish it was in Mr. A.'s power to help Mr. Cranch to some office at Home which would assist him. Mr. A. exprest the same wish to me, but at present he does not see any, tho a certain Lady in the full assurance of hope, wrote him that he now had it in his power to establish his own Family & successfully help his Friends and that she is sure of his patronage for certain purposes, to which Mr. A. replied, "that he has no patronage but if he had, neither her children or his own could be sure of it beyond his own clear conviction of the publick Good, that he should bely the whole course of his publick and private conduct, and all the maxims of his Life, if he should ever consider publick Authority entrusted to him, to be made subservient to his private views, or those of his Family and Friends." You cannot mistake who the Lady was. I know no other equally ambitious, but I presume her pretentions & those of her Family will fail, as I think they ought to if one quarter part is true which has been reported of them. I fancy a constant correspondence is kept up between Mrs. W[arren]³ & Mr. G[erry] and like enough with several

² Richard Cranch (1726-1811), husband of Mary (Smith) Cranch (1741-1811), the woman to whom these letters are addressed. "Cousin Lucy" was their daughter.

³ Mercy (Otis) Warren (1728-1814), historian, poet, and dramatist, and sister of the famous James Otis. Although Mrs. Warren was a friend of Abigail Adams, the publication of her *History . . . of the American Revolution* (1805) led to a sad quarrel with John Adams.

other jealous Partizans, but I hope they will never have sufficient interest to disturb the Government. I really believe Mr. G[err]y to be an honest Man. The other has been gravely misled, and I do soberly think by the unbridled ambition of all she told me upon her last visit, that she did not perceive any alteration in *Mr. A's* conduct towards them. I am sure she must have told what was not true if she had said there was none in mine, for I feel it, and I cannot deceive. With regard to Mr. A. he has dealt by them like a sincere Friend, and an honest Man and their own Hearts must approve his conduct, however grating to their feelings. I am most sincerely sorry for the cause. They were my old and dear Friend's for whom I once entertaind the highest respect.

Col. Mrs. Smith, Charles & little Jack are gone this week to Jamaica to get out of the Bustle at home and are not yet returnd. C[harles]⁴ will not go into any company but such as his Father or Col. Smith introduces him to. He appears steady and sedate & I hope will continue so. Time and example will prevail over youthfull folly I trust. My Love to Mrs. Norton. How does she do? Louisa appears very happy, but I am obliged to keep her a mere prisoner on account of the small pox of which there is always danger in N[ew] York. As soon as the weather will permit [I] shall have her inoculated. I find as many servants necessary here as in England, but not half as well calculated for their buisness. The distance from Town requires one or two extra as they are obliged to go & come always four, & frequently six times a day. We have to send constantly to market in addition, but notwithstanding all this I would not change this situation for any I know of in Town. Richmond Hill is situated upon the North River which communicates with Albany. Pauls hook⁵ as it is calld is in full sight & the Jersey shore. Vessels are constantly passing up & down. The House is situated upon a high Hill which commands a most extensive prospect. On one side we have a view of the city & of Long Island, the river in Front, Jersey and the adjasant country on the other side. You turn a little from the Road and enter a Gate. A winding Road with trees in clumps leads you to the House, and all round the House, it looks wild and Rural as uncultivated Nature. The House is convenient for one family, but much too small for more. You enter under

⁴ Charles Adams (1770-1800), who was preparing to practise law in New York. See footnote 1 to the letter of May 16, 1797.

⁵ Paulus Hook was also spelled "Pauls" and "Powles" Hook, and is the present Jersey City, the site of which was originally called Communipaw. Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, vol. 6, pp. 453-4. Paulus Hook was the scene of one of the most brilliant actions of the Revolution, when "Light Horse Harry" Lee attacked and captured the British garrison there on July 19, 1779.

a piazza into a Hall & turning to the right Hand ascend a stair case which lands you in an other of equal dimensions of which I make a drawing Room. It has a Glass door which opens into a gallery the whole Front of the house which is exceeding pleasant. The Chambers are on each side. The House is not in good repair, wants much done to it, and if we continue here I hope it will be done. There is upon the back of the House a Garden of much greater extent than our Braintree Garden, but it is wholly for a walk & flowers. It has a Hawthorn hedge & Rows of Trees with a Broad Gravel walk.

How happy would it make me to see here my dear Brother, Sister, Nephew, Neices and to delight them with the prospect. Mr. Guile & Dr. Craige dinned with us yesterday.⁶ I find I have local attachments, and am more rejoiced to see a citizen of my own State than any other. Remember me affectionatly to my worthy Mother & Family, to Mrs. Palmer & family who I hope are comfortably situated, to Mrs. Brisler too. I hope she will be able to come this way before long.⁷

My Letter is written in haste, the weather very hot, and I too laizy to copy.

Most affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

Tell Lucy she must write to me.

Richmond Hill, August 9th, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

If I should ask why I have not heard from my sister or Friends, for several weeks past, would she not answer me by retorting the question? In replie I could only say that I had designd writing every day for a long time, but we have had such a lassitude of weather, and such a long continuence of it, that I have really felt unfit for every thing which I was not necessitated to perform, & for many of those which I have been obligated

⁶ Andrew Craige (1743-1819), of Boston, apothecary, financier, and speculator. During his service in the Revolution, Craige was made Apothecary-General. In 1791 he purchased the Vassall house in Cambridge, now known as the Craige-Longfellow house. Craige married Elizabeth Nancy Shaw.

⁷ Mrs. Palmer was Mary Cranch, widow of General Joseph Palmer (who died in 1788, leaving his wife and two daughters destitute) and sister of Richard Cranch (who married Mary Smith, the sister of Mrs. John Adams). One of the daughters, Elizabeth Palmer, married her first cousin, Joseph Cranch (who was the son of John, the brother of Mrs. Palmer and Richard Cranch). See the *New-England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 27, pp. 40-1: "Richard Cranch and His Family."

to, from my situation, such as dressing, receiving & paying visits, giving dinners &c. I have never before been in a situation in which morning noon & afternoon I have been half as much exposed to company. I have laid down one rule which is, not to make any morning visits myself, and in an afternoon after six o'clock I can return 15 or 20 & very seldom find any Lady to receive me. But at Richmond Hill it is expected that I am at Home both to Gentlemen & Ladies when ever they come out, which is almost every day since I have been here, besides it is a sweet morning ride to Breakfast. I propose to fix a Levey day soon. I have waited for Mrs. Washington to begin and she has fixd on every fryday 8 o'clock. I attended upon the last, Mrs. Smith & Charles. I found it quite a crowded Room. The form of Reception is this, the servants announce & Col. Humphries or Mr. Lear, receives every Lady at the door, & Hands her up to Mrs. Washington to whom she makes a most Respectfull courtsey and then is seated without noticeing any of the rest of the company. The Pressident then comes up and speaks to the Lady, which he does with a grace dignity & ease, that leaves Royal George far behind him. The company are entertaind with Ice creems¹ & Lemonade, and retire at their pleasure performing the same ceremony when they quit the Room. I cannot help smiling when I read the Boston puffs, that the Pressident is unmoved amidst all the dissipations of the city of New York. Now I am wholly at a loss to determine the meaning of the writer. Not a single publick amusement is their in the whole city, no not even a publick walk, and as to dinners, I believe their are six made in Boston to one here, unless it is for some particular person to whom a Number of families wish to pay attention. There are six Senators who have their Ladies and families with them, but they are in Lodgings the chief of them, & not in a situation to give dinners—as to the mode of visiting, less time is expended in this way, than in sending word to each person & passing an afternoon with them, tho I own on the score of pleasure that would be to me the most agreeable. I have returnd more than sixty visits all of them in 3 or 4 afternoons & excepting at the Pressidents, have drank tea only at two other places and dined but once out, since I arrived.

Indeed I have been fully employd in entertaining company, in the first place all the Senators who had Ladies & families, then the remaining

¹ The earliest instance of the mention of "ice cream" in print seems to be that of 1744 in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 1, p. 126: *Oxford English Dictionary, Supplement*, p. 490.

Senators, and this week we have begun with the House, and tho we have a room in which we dine 24 persons at a Time, I shall not get through them all, together with the publick Ministers for a month to come. The help I find here is so very indifferent to what I had in England, the weather so warm that we can give only one dinner a week. I cannot find a cook in the whole city but what will get drunk, and as to the Negroes, I am most sincerely sick of them, and I can no more do without Mr. Brisler, than a coach could go without wheels or Horse to draw it. I can get Hands, but what are hands without a Head, and their chief object is to be as expensive as possible. This week I shall not be able to see any company unless it is to Tea, for my Family are all sick, Mrs. Smiths two Children with the Hooping Cough, Charles with the dysentary, Louisa & Polly with a complaint similar. To Charles I gave a puke last night & his complaints have abated. Louisa & Polly are to take one to night. If we had not been so fortunate in our situation I do not know how we could have lived. It is very sickly in the City.

As to politicks, I presume many of the dissappointed candidates will complain. Some will quarrel with men & some with measures. I believe the President strove to get the best information he could, but there are some men who will get much said in their favour when they do not merit it. The News papers will give you the debates of the house. To the President, their system is as liberal as I could expect. I leave the world to judge how it is with respect to their vice President from whom they expect more entertainment. The House was New furnished for the President & cost ten thousand dollars as the Board of Treasury say. The use & improvement of this they have granted him, which is but just & right. He never rides out without six Horses to his Carriage, four servants, & two Gentlemen before him. This is no more state than is perfectly consistant with his Station, but then I do not Love to see the News writers fib so. He is Perfectly averse to all marks of distinction, say they, yet on the 4th of July when the Cincinnati committee waited upon him he received them in a Regimental uniform with the Eagal most richly set with diamonds at his Button. Yet the News writers will fib, to answer particular purposes. I think he ought to have still more state, & time will convince our Country of the necessity, of it. Here I say not any thing upon the subject. It would be ascribed to a cause I dispise if I should speak my mind. I hear that the vote which Mr. A[dams] gave in the Senate, respecting the Removal of officers by the President independent of the Senate, has been by some of his own state construed, as

voting power into his own Hands, or having that in view, but his Rule through life has been to vote and act, independant of Party agreeable to the dictates of his conscience, and tho on that occasion he could have wisht on account of the delicacy of his situation not to have been obliged to have determind the Question, yet falling to him, he shrunk not.² Not a word did any of our state say when his vote reduced the duty upon molasses. All was silence then. They could not possibly asscribe it to any sinister motive but uneasy wrestless spirits are to be found in all quarters of the world.

And now my dear Sister I wish to know how you do. Mrs. Norton, Lucy not a line from either, nor a word from Sister Shaw.³

Mr. Bond will tell you that he saw us all. He was out two or three times. I wish you could come with our dear Brother Cranch & spend the Evening with us. We do not have company on Sundays. We go to meeting, but alas I do not find a Dr. Price.⁴ I hope I shall visit Braintree next summer. I wonder Sister Smith has never written a word to Louisa. I am glad to find Tommy⁵ has got a good Chum. I hope he will continue steady. Charles studies with Mr. Hamilton, goes to the office when his Father goes to Senate & returns with him at 4 o'clock. He has not discoverd the least inclination for getting into company and has no acquaintance but George Storer.⁶ Pray make my best regards to all my Friends. To my Mother present my duty. Remember me to

² On the question of whether the power of removal of federal officers belonged (according to the Constitution) to the President alone, or went hand in hand with the process of appointment, thus requiring confirmation, the Senate divided nine to nine, and "John Adams then performed one of the most important acts of his life" by giving his casting vote, as presiding officer, for free presidential power of removal. Adams cast the decisive vote twenty times—more frequently than any of his successors in office. Channing, *A History of the United States*, vol. 4 (1917), pp. 47-8.

³ Elizabeth (Smith) Shaw (1750-1815), wife of the Reverend John Shaw of Haverhill, and subsequently the wife of the Reverend Stephen Peabody, who, suddenly becoming a widower, is said to have proposed to Elizabeth immediately after delivering the funeral sermon of her first husband.

⁴ Richard Price (1723-1791), nonconformist minister and writer on morals, politics, and economics, was a famous preacher in London for many years. In 1771 he advocated the reduction of the British national debt, and in 1776 he attacked the justice and policy of the war against the American colonies. Price became the intimate friend of Benjamin Franklin, and in 1778 the Continental Congress invited him, without success, to remove to America. Apart from his *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, 1756, Price is chiefly famous for Edmund Burke's scathing denunciation of his approbation of the principles of the French Revolution. Mrs. Adams heard Price preach in London during the years 1785-1787.

⁵ Thomas Boylston (1772-1832), son of John and Abigail Adams.

⁶ One of the three children—Charles, George, and Mary—of Hannah (Quincy) Storer (1736-1826).

Mrs. Palmer and family. The Beautifull prospect here from every quarter makes me regret less than I otherways should do the spot I quitted. The rooms are lofty and was the House in good repair I should find it very convenient for my own Family. At present we are crowded for want of chamber room. My family consists of 18. How does the place look? I must get my Butter all put up & sent me from Braintree. I have Breakfasted constantly upon milk. I cannot eat the Butter here. I must write the Dr.⁷ upon several subjects by tuesdays post. I shall not get ready by this.

Pray let me hear from you. The season is plentiful. Let us rejoice & be glad. Cheer up my good Sister. A merry Heart does good like a medicine. We all send abundance of Love. I must go to look after my invalids.

Ever yours

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, Sepbr. 1, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

I Received your kind Letters and meant sooner to have replied to them, but many avocations have prevented me. I am fully apprized of all you mention in your Letter respecting your situation and wanted no apologies for your conduct, but I still insist upon what I first wrote you, & it will pain me to hear you say any thing more upon the subject. I never could apply it more to my satisfaction. I shall never I trust feel the want of it. If I should and you are in a situation to render me service, I will then accept it. I regret that it is not in my power to assist my Friends more than I do, but bringing our minds to our circumstances is a duty incumbent upon us. We have lived through dangerous Times, and have reason to be thankfull that we are still in possession of our Liberty & so much of our Property; yet still there is no reason in our being cheated by our Friends as well as Robbed by our Enemies. I have reason to think that congress will take up the matter and Fund the debt.¹ I

⁷ Dr. Cotton Tufts, who was acting as the steward of the Adams property in Braintree. See footnote 11 to the letter of June 28, 1789.

¹ Hamilton's proposal for funding the debt, or debts, of the United States, was not taken up till the second session of the First Congress. The fierce debate over his report concerned three different items:

1. The foreign debt of the Union, \$11,710,378, owed to France, Holland and Spain.
2. The domestic debt of the Union, incurred by the Continental Congress, \$42,414,085.
3. The state debts, estimated at \$25,000,000.

Everyone agreed that the foreign debt should be paid in full, but many persons bitterly

wish they would set about it before they adjourn'd or rather defered their adjournment, till they had compleated more buisness but they have had arduous work, and want a respit.

I fear they will Remove from this place. I am too happy in the situation of it, I fear, to have it lasting. I am every day more & more pleased with it. Should they go to Philadelphia I do not know how I could possibly live through the voilent Heats. But sufficient to the day; I am sorry to hear Mrs. Norton is unwell, but from your Letter suppose her situation will be mended by time and you will e'er long know that a Grandchild is almost as near to your Heart as your own children; my little Boys delight me and I should feel quite melancholy without them. William came from his Grandmamma Smiths an almost ruind child, but I have brought him to be a fine Boy now.

My dear Lucy I long to see her. I am glad she is gone from home to amuse herself a little. I wish she could come to Richmond Hill and she would say it was the most delightfull spot she ever saw. My Love to her and Cousin William.² Louisa is worried that her Mother does not write to her. I really am surprizd that she has not written a single line either to me or to her, because I wrote to her before I left home and I cannot suppose that she could take any umbrage at my taking her away; I wish you would write to her and let her know that Louisa is uneasy upon the subject, and has written to her I believe more than once.

I wish you would be so good as [to] see if you can procure me two dozen Bottles of Rose water and send by [Captain] Barnard who has saild for Boston.³

I propose to have Louisa inoculated for the small pox this Month. I have now nearly got through all the company, that we propose to dine this Session & I have not heard, that any of them were so near being drownd as to render it necessary to apply to the Humane Society. The Spirit of Rebellion is not yet quell'd in Massachusetts. The coals are blowing again and with a malice truly infernal. What will not dissaointed ambition stick at?

opposed the assumption of the state debts, and declared, moreover, that the domestic debt of the Union should be redeemed at its depreciated value. Hamilton's proposal prevailed, in the main: debts one and two were paid in full, and state debts were assumed to the extent of \$21,500,000. Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 145.

² "Cousin William" was one of the children of William Smith, the brother of Mrs. Adams. See footnote 4 to the letter of November 24, 1788.

³ Probably that Captain Moses Barnard, then in command of the *Lydia*, which was captured by the French in 1799. See the *Columbian Centinel*, November 9, 1799.

"O what a world is this, when what is comely
Envenoms him that bears it."

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not
escape calumny."⁴

Pray present my duty to my worthy Mother & a kind remembrance to
all inquiring Friends and be assured that I am, my dear Sister,

Most affectionately yours

A. ADAMS

P.S. I find the Author of the Libel (for such it is,) call'd the Dangerous vice,
is Ned Church,⁵ a dissappointed [office] seeker. But why his malice should

⁴ Lines 1 and 2: *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene 3, lines 14-5; the second quotation is from *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 1, lines 140-2.

⁵ Edward Church was the brother of the notorious Benjamin Church (1734-circa 1776), author, physician, poet, and traitor. There appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel* for Saturday, August 22, 1789, a letter signed "A Republican," which contained parts of a "manuscript Poem, (said to have been written by a gentleman formerly of Boston) in which, among other popular topicks, the subjects of TITLES was introduced." The lines which annoyed John Adams follow:

Be grateful then, YE CHOSEN! mod'rate wise,
Nor stretch your claims to such preposterous size,
Lest your too partial country—wiser grown—
Shou'd on your native dunghills set you down.
Ape not the fashions of the foreign great,
Nor make your betters at your levees wait—
Resign your awkward pomp, parade and pride,
And lay that useless *etiquette* aside;
Th' unthinking laugh, but all the thinking hate
Such vile, abortive mimicry of State;
Those idle lackeys, saunt'ring at your door,
But ill become *poor servants* of the POOR;
Retrench your board, for e'en the guests who dine,
Have cause to murmur at your floods of wine:
Think not to bribe the wise with their own gold,
Though fools by flimsy lures shou'd be cajol'd;
Places on places multiply to view,
Creation on creation, ever new;
Therefore in decent competence to live
Is all that you can ask, or *justice* give.

YE WOU'D BE TITLED! whom, in evil hour—
The rash, unthinking people cloth'd with pow'r,
Who, drunk, with pride, of foreign baubles dream,
And rave of a COLUMBIAN DIADEM—
Be prudent, modest, mod'rate, grateful, wise,
Nor on your Country's ruin strive to rise,
Lest great COLUMBIA's AWFUL GOD shou'd frown,
And to your native dunghills hurl you down.

thus vent itself against Mr. A[dams] I know not, unless he thought himself neglected by him. I remember he wrote a letter to Mr. A. when we were abroad soliciting the place of consul to Lisbon which Mr. A. never answerd. I have past him I recollect two or three times in coming from Town & I rember[sic] now that Mrs. Smith observed to me that he look'd so surly she hated to see him. It appears now that he offerd this peice to the Printers here who all refused to be concernd with it. He sent it [to] Boston & took himself off to Georgia. He never was the person that either visited or spoke a word to Mr. A. since he has been in N[ew] York. Mr. A. says, that one day at the Presidents Levee he was speaking to the President & Church bowed to him. He could not whilst addressing the President return his bow with Propriety. His intention was to have gone & spoken to him afterwards, but the Room being full he did not see him afterwards. This I suppose Church construed into Pride and contempt, & being dissappointed in obtaining a place from the President, he vented all his malice upon the vice [President], & conceiving the Topick he took to be a popular one he has discoverd a temper as fit for Rebellion, Murder, Treason as his unfortunate Brother. I could wish that the Author might be fully known to the publick with regard to the subject of a proper title for the President. Mr. A. never has or will disguise his opinion, because he thinks that the stability of the Government will in a great measure rest upon it. Yet the subject here is scarcely mentiond & the Boston News papers have rung more changes upon it, than all the News papers in the United States besides. I think in holding up Church to view, it would not be amiss to state his conduct with regard to the Spanish vessel.

Ye faithful guardians of your Country's weal,
 Whose honest breasts still glow with patriot zeal!
 The lawless lust of POW'R in embryo quell,
 The germ of mischief, the first spawn of hell;
 Resist the VICE—and that contagious pride
 To that o'erweening VICE—so near ally'd.
 Within your sacred walls let Virtue reign,
 And greedy MAMMON spread his snares in vain.
 With unlick'd Lordlings sully not your fame,
 Nor daub our PATRIOT with a LACKER'D name.
 O WASHINGTON! thy Country's hope and trust!
 Alas! perhaps her last, as thou wert first;
 Successors we can find—but tell us where
 Of ALL thy virtues we shall find THE HEIR?

A letter of protest against this effusion, signed "Togatus," appeared in the *Centinel* of August 26, 1789.

It was a relief to my mind to find the Author Church. I was really apprehensive that a Female pen had been dipt in full in consequence of dissappointed views. A Brute to attack me who never in thought word or deed offended him, or have ever been in this Country to Ball's, plays, or Routes.⁶ But malice was his motive & Revenge his object. The Vice Pressident ten times to one goes to Senate in a one Horse chaise, and Levee's we have had none. The Pressident only, has his powdered Lackies waiting at the door. So that under a Hipocritical mask he attacks one & hold [*sic*] the other impiously up & stiles him a Saviour & God. How inconsistant, railing at Titles & giving those which belong to the Deity.

How must a wretch feel who can harbour such a temper?

But adieu my dear Sister. Thus it is to be seated high. I pray Heaven to give me a conscience void of offence, and then the curse causeless shall not come.⁷

Your[s] affectionatly

A. A[DAMS]

Richmond Hill, October 4th, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote you a Letter last week, but as it did not get to the Post office, I have detain'd it with an intention of sending you one of a later date. I believe I have received all your Letters. Your last was dated Sepbr 8th. I have not written to any of my Friends so often as I ought to. You know very well that when a person is fix'd to any particular spot, that very few subjects worth communicating can occur. As I have not been to any publick amusement, I cannot say any thing upon that score, but I can tell you something which may well excite your surprize. It is that I have cause every Sunday to regret the loss of Parson Wibird,¹ and that I should realy think it an entertainment to hear a discourse from him. Do not however tell him so, but except three sermons which three New England Clergymen have preachd to us, I have been most misirably off. Dr. Rogers where we usually attend, has been unable to preach ever

⁶ "A fashionable gathering or assembly, a large evening party or reception, much in vogue in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." *Oxford English Dictionary*. See, also, letter of Abigail Adams to Mrs. Cranch, written from London, April 6, 1786, in *Letters of Mrs. Adams*, C. F. Adams, Editor, Boston, 1840, p. 332.

⁷ "As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come." *Proverbs*, XXVI, 2. See, also, the letter of June 6-8, 1797.

¹ Anthony Wibird (1728-1800), who was graduated from Harvard in 1747, was the minister at Quincy.

since I have been here and the pulpit has been supplied as they could procure *Labourers*—by Gentlemen who preach without Notes, all of whom are predestinarians and whose Noise & vehemence is to compensate for every other difficiency.² To go to meeting & set an hour & half to hear a discourse the principals of which are so totally different from my own sentiments, that I cannot possibly believe them, is really doing penance. I have sometimes gone to St. Pauls. There I find much more liberal discourses, but bred a desenter and approveing that mode of worship, I feel a reluctance at changing tho I would always go to church, if I resided where there was no other mode of worship. The Clergymen here I am told are so Rigid that their company is very little sought after. They never mix with their people as they do with us, and there is in there Air and countanances that solemn Phiz and gate which looks so like mummery that instead of Reverence they create disgust, and they address their Audience with so much self importance and Priestly despotism that I am really surprizd at their having any men of sense and abilities for their hearers. I have seen but one exception to this character & that in a Dr. Lynd³ who is really the best & most liberal of the whole sett. We have in Massachusetts a sett of clergy that are an honour to Religion, to Learning, & to our country, and for whom I feel an increased esteem & veneration since my Residence in New York. I do not however mean by my remarks that they are not Religious Moral Men here. I never heard a syllable to their injury, but they certainly are men of very mean capacities when compared to those of our State. There is no man of esteemed eminence amongst them even as a divine.

The adjournment of Congress leaves me a leisure which I most sincerely wish I could improve in visiting Braintree. If they had honestly

² John Rodgers (1727–1811), Presbyterian clergyman, was born in Boston. In 1728 his parents moved to Philadelphia, where, as a boy of twelve, Rodgers was dramatically converted by George Whitefield. In 1747 he was licensed as a preacher, and served in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. Having married Elizabeth Bayard, of Maryland, who died in 1763, Rodgers, in 1764, married Mary, the widow of William Grant, a rich Philadelphia merchant. In 1765 Rodgers began a pastorate of forty-five years in New York City, preaching to crowded congregations in the Presbyterian church which stood at the corner of Beekman and Nassau Streets. He was a distinguished patriot, and a friend of Washington. The New England Congregationalists regarded him as one of themselves, but they disliked the Calvinism of the Scotch Presbyterian pastors who served as his colleagues. For many years Rodgers was a punctilious and picturesque person as he walked the streets of New York.

³ Probably the Reverend Dr. William Linn (1753–1808), who was attached to the Dutch Reformed Church in New York City. He married a daughter of Dr. John Blair. Dr. Linn delivered a funeral eulogy on George Washington, on February 22, 1800. *Eulogies and Orations on the Life and Death of General George Washington*, Boston, 1800, pp. 159–175.

adjourn'd to April, I say honestly for many of the southern members will not get here till then, I should not have hesitated in coming on immediately & spending the winter with my dear Friends in B[raintree]. But it has been my Lot to be fetter'd one way or an other. The liberality of Congress oblig'd me to remove most of my furniture so as to make it quite inconvenient for us to pass a part of our Time at our own Home, without being at a considerable expence, and the prospect of a return in December very much discourages me in my project. Mr. Adams's close & unremitting attention to Buisness during six months, has made a journey quite necessary for him, yet he will not go unless it is to his own Home. My son J. Q. A. proposes returning this week to Boston & Brisler leaves me tomorrow. How the Machine will get on without him I know not. I have offer'd him what I esteem very liberal wages, & double what I can get others for, who would perform the mechanical part of Buisness as well perhaps as he but I know not where to find Honour, Honesty, integrity & attachment. He pleads the state of his family which I know it would be difficult to remove, but 200 dollars pr year are not so easily earned in Massachusetts; and are really more than we can afford. He has it at his option to return if he cannot succeed at home. I do not wish my offer to be known, and I think he will find it difficult to support his Family when he once comes to stand upon his own legs for them, which he has never yet done. From six years trial of him I can give him the best of characters, and I never expect to find an other so particularly calculated for me and my Family. His errors are those of Judgment or rather the want of judgment and upon that Rock I am fearfull he will split, when he comes to act for himself.—The Letter you mention for Mr. Bond was sent directly to his Lodgings upon our receiving it.⁴

I hope the appointments in the judicial Line will give satisfaction, notwithstanding some dissapointments. If I may judge by the News papers, there is no state in the union where there are so many grumblers as in our own. It has been my Lot in Life to spend a large portion of it in publick Life, but I can truly say the pleasentest part of it was spent at the foot of Pens Hill in that Humble Cottage when my good Gentleman was a Practitioner at the Bar, earnt his money, during the week, & at the end of it pour'd it all into my Lap to use or what could be spaired to lay by. Nobody then grudgd us our living, & 25 years such practise would have given us a very different property from what we now possess. It

⁴ Probably the father of William Cranch Bond (1789-1859), the astronomer. William C. Bond's mother was Hannah Cranch. See the letter of August 9, 1789.

might not have given us the 2nd Rank in the United States, nor the satisfaction of reflecting by what means & whose exertions these states have arrived at that degree of Liberty safety & independance which they now enjoy. If the United States had chosen to the Vice P's Chair a man wavering in his opinions, or one who sought the popular applause of the multitude, this very constitution would have had its death wound during this first six months of its existance. On several of the most trying occasions it has fallen to this dangerous *vice*, to give the casting vote for its Life.⁵ There are several Members of the House & some of the S[enat]e who are, to say no worse, wild as—Bedlammites but hush—I am speaking treason. Do not you betray me.

Remember me kindly to all inquiring Friends, and believe me, my dear Sister,

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, October 11, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

Mr. Adams sets of tomorrow Morning on a visit to Braintree. I would gladly have accompanied him, but so many difficulties arose in the way, that I gave up the Idea. If I had come we must have gone to house-keeping, & by that Time I had got things any way convenient, I must have returnd, & that at a season of the year when it would have been cold & unpleasent travelling. I find myself attackd with my Rhumatick complaints upon the setting in of cold weather, and am obliged to be very circumspect.

The constant application to buisness for six months has made it necessary to Mr. Adams to take a journey and he promises me that he will go to Haverhill and visit his Friends, but you are like to have an other visiter. The President sets out this week for a like excursion. He proposes to go as far as Portsmouth. He would have had Mr. Adams accept a seat in his in[sic] coach but he excused himself from motives of delicacy. We yesterday had a very pleasent party together. The whole family of us dinned with the President on Thursday, and he then proposed an excursion to long Island by water to visit Princes Gardens, but as Mrs. Washington does not Love the water we agreed that the Gentlemen should go by water and the Ladies should meet them at a half way House and dine together, and yesterday we had a most Beautifull day

* See footnote 5 to the letter of September 1, 1789.

for the purpose. The President, [the] V.P., Col. S[mith], Major Jackson,¹ Mr. Izard² &c went on Board the Barge at 8 o'clock. At Eleven the Ladies, namely Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Smith, Miss Custos [Custis]³ set out in Mrs. Washingtons coach & six & met the Gentlemen at Harlem where we all dinned together & returnd in the same manner. We live upon terms of much Friendship & visit each other often. Whilst the Gentlemen are absent we propose seeing one an other on terms of much sociability. Mrs. Washington is a most friendly, good Lady, always pleasent and easy, doatingly fond of her Grandchildren, to whom she is quite the Grandmamma.

Louisa & John A[dams] [Smith] are both innoculated for the small pox on fryday last. I hope my son J. Q. A. arrived safe (as well as Brisler). I suppose he led you to think that I should visit you as he was very urgent for me to come. I think it not unlikely that there will be a summer recess next year & then I hope to see you all. I wish you would be so good as to get some Brown thread for me of Mrs. Field, three skains of different sizes. Mr. A[dams] will pay you for her, & for the Rose water, which you have procured. Ruthe Ludden, who lives with Mrs. Field, promised me that she would come and live with me whenever she was out of her Time.⁴ If she holds of the same mind I will send for her in the spring either by Barnard or the stage. I wish you had Polly Tailor. To live alone she is a very excellent Girl, but she was never made for society, and Power was never worse used than in her Hands. I tell her sometimes that if I had taken Mrs. Brislers advice I never should have brought her. Of all things I hate to hear people for ever complaining of servants but I never had so much occasion as since I came here. One good servant attached to you is invaluable. The one who attends Mr. Adams is good for nothing that I know of but to look after his Horses. He has servd us as a coachman ever since I have been here. I hope Brisler will return, but I would not urge it too much, as the best people may take advantage of their own consequence and importance.

¹ Major William Jackson (1759-1828), who fought in the Revolution and was secretary to the convention which framed the Constitution in 1787. William Jackson served as one of the personal secretaries of George Washington from 1789 to 1791.

² Ralph Izard (1742-1804), Senator from South Carolina (1789-1795), and an ardent supporter of President Washington and the Federalists.

³ Probably the eldest of the four children of Colonel John Parke Custis (1753-1781), stepson of George Washington: that is, Eliza Parke Custis (1776-1832), subsequently (1796) Mrs. Thomas Law.

⁴ Ruth, daughter of Benjamin and Ruth Ludden, was born at Braintree in 1772. She did not become a servant of Mrs. Adams in New York.

How is Mrs. Norton? Does she begin to look stately? I shall want to see her. Lucy I hope is well. I pleas'd myself for a week with the Idea of spending three months with you, but it cannot be.

I will thank you to look over Mr. Adams things for him & see that they agree with the list which I will send as soon as I know what he takes. Love to Mr. Cranch. Remember me kindly to my Mother & all other Friends.

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, Novbr. 1, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

A strange phenomanan has happend in our Family. I believe I wrote you that Louisa and John were both innoculated for the small pox but neither of their arms shew'd any proofs after the 2d day. Louisa was soon seizd with the cold & Fever which has so universally prevaild here. Upon the 10 day John was very sick, apparantly the symptoms of the small pox, but they lasted only one day. On the 17 day the child had an inflammation in his Eyes, a fever in his Head, was sick and oppressd at his stomach, but not the least redness upon the arm. We had no apprehension that it was the small pox. On the 19 day he began to have a small eruption upon his face, his symptoms went of & he has had the small pox finely, about a hundred which have filled. Louisa has been innoculated from him, and from the appearence of the arm we think it has taken. I hope she will have it as favourable as the child. He could not have taken it in any other way as he was not out of the House, but why he should take it, & Louisa not, cannot be accounted for in any other way, than that two disorders would not operate at the same time.

I yesterday received a Letter from Cousin Lucy of Ochr 25, one from Tommy & one from Sister Shaw, and Last week yours October 12 came to hand. I put into Mr. Adams's trunk the cushion I promis'd you. I should have sent it sooner, but hoped to have brought it. All the things on the Top belong to J. Q. A., as you will see. I wish you would send them to him, or let him know that you have them. When Brisler leaves the House I should be glad to have the things left inventoried, not that I fear loosing by the Family who are now there, but for my own satisfaction. There was one thing which I forgot to mention. I have papers in the Escritore which I lent Mrs. Bass.¹ The key is on the Bunch with

¹ Mrs. Bass, of Braintree, was an occasional servant of Mrs. Adams. See the letter of July 19, 1797.

Mrs. Brisler. I wish Cousin Lucy to go & takè them away. Put them in a draw or Trunk at the other House. I hope to come to Braintree in the course of an other year, and see all my dear Friends. I wish the Dr. much happiness with his *Young wife*.² Is she not young for him? Mrs. Norton must have much satisfaction in the event, if she proves as I hope & doubt not she will a kind Aunt and an agreeable companion. I hope my dear sister has recoverd her sprits. None of us live without our anxieties, tho some are of a much more painfull kind than others.

How is our worthy uncle Quincy?³ Mr. Adams I dare say will visit him as often as he can. I hope you will see our worthy President. He is much a favorite of mine, I do assure you. Tell Mr. Adams that Mrs. Washington says she has a present for him when he returns. It is true she says it is of no great value, but she will not tell me what it is, nor let me see it till he returns. I told her I would be jealous but it did not provoke her to shew it me. We are at present all very well, Louisa inoculated the 2 time on thursday last. I hope Mr. Adams will not put of his return so late as he talked of when he set out. The weather will be soon very cold and uncomfortable. Remember me kindly to all my Friends. I am very bad about writing; not half as good as when I was in England. The reason is I have few subjects, few new objects. The Men & Women here are like the Men & Women elsewhere, & if I was to meet a curious Character I should not venture to be free with it.

I wish to have our winter Apples, pears, Butter, some cheese, Bacon, Tongue &c all from our own state & what I cannot get from the Farm I would get put up in Boston, such as Hams & Tongues. I mentiond all these things to Mr. Adams, but do not know that he will be attentive about them. Any Letters which may be taken out of the post office adrest to the Vice Pressident of the United States, you may venture to open the covers of whether Mr. Adams is with you or not, for you may be sure that they come from Richmond Hill.

Adieu, my dear Sister, and believe me

Most affectionatly yours,

A. ADAMS

Mrs. Smith & Master William Magpye as I call him send duty.

² See footnote 11 to the letter of June 28, 1789.

³ Norton Quincy (1716-1801), a brother of the mother of Abigail Adams, was graduated from Harvard in 1736.

Richmond Hill, Novbr. 3, 1789

MY DEAR SISTER:

I did not receive your Letter dated 25 untill Sunday Evening which made it too late to write by the last post in replie to it. I do not know any thing that I wisht more for than to have past the winter at my own House. For a summer situation this place is delightfull & the House convenient, and except its being Bleak and perhaps difficult of access in some parts of a severe winter, it is more to my mind than any place I ever lived in. In point of oconomy it would be very advantageous to be able to live at Home part of the year and the winter in particular, wood being the most expensive article here. Nut wood, what we call Walnut is 7 dollars pr cord and oak cost me five brought to our door between 40 & 50 cords of which we shall consume in a year, as we are obliged to keep six fires constantly, & occasionally more. The hire of servants is an other very heavy article part of which we might spair at Braintree. Our House we must keep & pay for, but I should wish if a recess of any length should take place again to spend it with my Friends at Braintree. My constant family is 18, ten of which make my own Family. Both Mrs. Smith & I am [*sic*] disposed to accommodate as much as possible, but difficulties will arise with the best servants sometimes, & we can neither of us boast that all ours are of the best kind.

I have a pretty good Housekeeper, a tolerable footman, a midling cook, an indifferent steward and a vixen of a House maid, but she has done much better laterly, since she finds that the housekeeper will be mistress below stairs. I wish Polly was in Braintree, and meant to have taken her with me if I had come, but I do not know what to say with regard to her suiting you. She is very far from being a Girl that will turn off work quick. Her constitution has been ruined by former hardships, and she is very often laid up. She has not method or regularity with her buisness. All her buisness here is to make 4 or 5 beds, & clean round Rooms which are almost coverd with carpets. All the Brass is cleaned by the footman. She helps wash & Iron, but I have been obliged to hire when I have wanted more cleaning than that done in a day, and every days work to pay 3 shilling a day for. I suppose I must keep her till spring, unless she should become more than usually quærelsome. With regard to drink I meet with no difficulty with her on that account, and she has an attention to my interest more than any servant I have besides, when Mr. Brisler is absent. She keeps no company, and is fond of the children, so that she has her good Qualities, for which I am ready to credit her.¹

¹ For Polly Tailor, see footnote 7 to the letter of June 19, 1789.

I have written to Mr. Adams respecting the coachman, who certainly is not to be trusted with Keys of a cellar. He always slept in the stable & was never in the House but at meal times, or as a porter at the door when we had company to dine. He is a good coachman and that I believe is all. I hope Mr. Adams will return sooner than he talks of, for I am sure when Brisler goes he cannot be well accommodated in his own House, and the Roads will every day be proving worse. 200wt cheese, all the Butter from Mothers, my half from Pratts is what I should like sent. I should like a good Hog or two, but Pratts pork is not worth having, and I shall have some of my own here.

I think Brisler much in the right, both for me and himself. He will be better of than his master & may lay up more money, but what could he do at home to earn 200 Hard dollars. I think his Family may live very well upon one hundred. I have engaged 2 good Rooms for him for 32 dollars & a half. His wood I suppose will cost him 25 dollars, but suppose he only lays by 50 a year, tis more than he could do & mantain himself & family where he is.

I wrote to him by the last post. Let him know if his Family can come on without him & Mr. Adams wishes him to stay with him, that they shall come here till he & his Things arrive—but he must be here by the Time that Barnard is to look after his things.

I wish Mr. Adams would return with the President, as I know he will be invited to, & let Tommy² take his sulky & come on with that.

My Love to Mrs. Norton, to Cousin Lucy and all inquiring Friends. My most affectionate Regards to Mr. Cranch. Remember me to Mrs. Palmers Family.

Yours most affectionatly

A. ADAMS

[Richmond Hill], Janry. 5th, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I begin my Letter with the congratulations of the season, to you and all my other Friends & for many happy returns in succeeding years. The New Years day in this state, & particularly in this city is celebrated with every mark of pleasure and satisfaction. The shops and publick offices are shut. There is not any market upon this day, but every person laying aside Buisness devote[s] the day to the social purpose of visiting & receiving visits. The churches are open & divine service performed begining

² Thomas Boylston Adams (1772-1832).

the year in a very proper manner by giving Thanks to the great Governour of the universe for past mercies, & imploring his future Benidictions. There is a kind of cake in fashion upon this day call'd New Years Cooky. This & Cherry Bounce as it is call'd is the old Dutch custom of treating their Friends upon the return of every New Year. The common people, who are very ready to abuse Liberty, on this day are apt to take rather too freely of the good things of this Life, and finding two of my servants not all together qualified for Buisness, I remonstrated to them, but they excused it by saying it was New Year, & every body was joyous then. The V. P. visited the President & then return'd home to receive His Friends. In the Evening I attended the drawing Room, it being Mrs. W[ashington]'s publick day. It was as much crowded as a Birth Night at St. James, and with company as Briliantly drest, diamonds & great hoops excepted. My station is always at the right hand of Mrs. W.; through want of knowing what is right I find it sometimes occupied, but on such an occasion the President never fails of seeing that it is relinquished for me, and having removed Ladies several times, they have now learnt to rise & give it me, but this between our selves, as *all distinction* you know is unpopular. Yet this same P[resident] has so happy a faculty of appearing to accommodate & yet carrying his point, that if he was not really one of the best intention'd men in the world he might be a very dangerous one. He is polite with dignity, affable without familiarity, distant without Haughtyness, Grave without Austerity, Modest, wise & Good. These are traits in his Character which peculiarly fit him for the exalted station he holds, and God Grant that he may Hold it with the same applause & universal satisfaction for many many years, as it is my firm opinion that no other man could rule over this great peopl & consolidate them into one mighty Empire but He who is set over us.

I thank you my dear Sister for several kind Letters. The reason why I have not written to you has been that the post office would not permit Franks even to the V. P. and I did not think my Letters worth paying for. I wrote you a long Letter a little before Mr. Adams's return, but being under cover to him, I had the mortification to receive it back again. I am perfectly satisfied with what you did for son Thomas, and thank you for all your kind care of him. It has saved me much trouble, but I do not think his Health good. He is very thin, pale & sallow. I have given him a puke, & think he is the better for it. Charls is quite fat. He is very steady and studious. There is no fault to be found with his conduct. He has no company or companions but known & approved ones, nor

does he appear to wish for any other. I sometimes think his application too intence, but better so, than too remis.

I was really surprizd to learn that Sister Shaw was likely to increase her Family. I wish her comfortably through, but shall feel anxious for her feeble constitution. As to my Neice Mrs. Norton¹ I doubt not she will find her Health mended by becoming a Mother, and you will soon be as fond of your Grandchildren as ever you was of your own. I hope however she will not follow her cousins example, and be like always to have one, before the other is weaned. John does not go alone yet. William becomes every day more & more interesting. He is a very pleasant temperd Boy, but the other will require the whole house to manage him.² With Regard to the cellars I know if very cold weather should come we shall lose our red wine & porter, but as to the key, tis a point I do not chuse to meddle with tho all the Liquors should suffer by it. I did not leave it where it is, nor do I hold myself answerable for the consequences of neglect. The fruit which came here was like refuse, rotton & Bruised, a specimin of what I expected. But you know there are cases where silence is prudence, and I think without flattering myself I have attaind to some share of that virtue. We live in a world where having Eyes we must not see, and Ears we must not hear.

10 Janry.

I desigd to have written much more to you and some other Friends, but publick days, dinning parties &c have occupied me so much for this fortnight, that I must close my Letter now or lose the conveyance.

Remember me affectionatly to all Friends. Living two miles from meeting obliges me to hasten or lose the afternoon service. Adieu.

Yours

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, Febry. 20, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I yesterday received a Letter from Dr. Tufts and an other from Thomas informing me of the death of Mrs. Palmer. The good old Lady is gone to rest, happily for her, I doubt not, but what will become of her daughters Heaven only knows, Polly in particular.¹ I feel very unhappy

¹ Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, wife of the Reverend Jacob Norton.

² William Steuben Smith (1787) and John Adams Smith (1788), sons of Abigail (Adams) Smith (1765-1813), previously referred to. See footnote 1 to the letter of November 24, 1788.

¹ Polly Palmer, daughter of the widow of General Joseph Palmer (died in 1788). See footnote 7 to the letter of July 12, 1789.

for them, and you I am sure must be still more so. I suppose you was too heavily loaded with care, and affliction to write me by the last post. They may continue in the House untill we want it, if it would any way serve them, but I presume there cannot be any thing for their support after their Mothers disease. I am sure you cannot help looking back for 20 years and exclaiming, what a change! But such are the visitudes of Life and the Transitory fleeting state of all sublinary things; of all pride that which persons discover from Riches is the weakest. If we look over our acquaintance, how many do we find who were a few years ago in affluence, now reduced to real want, but there is no Family amongst them all whose schemes have proved so visionary, and so abortive as the unhappy one we are now commiserating. Better is a little with contentment than great Treasure; and trouble therewith. It would be some consolation to the Sisters if they had a Brother in whom they could take comfort. If ever convents are usefull, it would be for persons thus circumstanced.

I did not write to you by Thomas as I thought he could give you every information you wish'd for respecting us. He writes that he got home well, but appears in some anxiety about the Measles. I would not wish him to avoid them, but only to be watchfull when he takes them and to be particularly attentive to himself during the period. This care I know you will have of him, if he should get them, and if he does not take them, he will always have an anxiety upon his mind increasing too as he advances in Life, every time he is liable to be exposed to them.

From all the Debates in Congress upon the subject of a discrimination, I presume the vote will be that there shall be none, but that some one or other of the plans proposed by the Secretary of the Treasury will be adopted.² It is thought that tomorrow will be the desisive day with respect to the question, as the vote will be calld for. On this occasion I am going for the first Time to the House with Mrs. Dalton,³ Mrs. Jay & Mrs. Cushing to hear the debate. If you read the papers you will find some very judicious debates. Mr. Smith⁴ of S[outh] C[arolina] who married a daughter of Mr. Izard, is one of the first from that state, & I

² Hamilton's proposal for funding the debt of the United States. See footnote 1 to the letter of September 1, 1789.

³ Wife of Tristram Dalton (1738-1817), of Newburyport, who was graduated from Harvard in 1755. He was Senator from Massachusetts (1789-1791), and was defeated for reelection in 1790. See, also, the letter of March 20, 1792.

⁴ William Loughton Smith (1758-1812), of Charleston, South Carolina, who was elected as a Federalist to the first five Congresses; and appointed United States minister to Portugal and Spain on July 10, 1797.

might add, from the Southern States. Mr. Ames⁵ from our state & Mr. Sedgwick⁶ and Mr. Gerry are all right upon this Question & make a conspicuous figure in the debates. I hope some method will be adopted speedily for the relief of those who have so long been the sufferers by the instability of Government. The next question I presume that will occupy Congress will be the Assumption of the State debts, and here I apprehend warm work, and much opposition, but I firmly believe it will terminate for the General Good.

What a disgrace upon the Legislature of our state that they should permit such a Madman as Gardner⁷ to occupy their time, to vilify Characters, to propogate grose falshoods to the world under their sanction. I should feel more trust for [*sic*] them if I did not foresee that good would come out of it in time, if the Bar possess that Honour which I presume they Have, they will combine to defeat Gardner and his Abettors and establish such Rules & Regulations as will tend to restore

⁵ Fisher Ames (1758-1808), of Dedham, Massachusetts, one of the most gifted and persuasive, if anxious, of the New England Federalists. Ames's speech on Jay's Treaty (April 28, 1796) was "one of the greatest speeches ever made in Congress." Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4 (1917), p. 145.

⁶ Theodore Sedgwick (1746-1813), of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, graduated from Yale in 1765, member of the House of Representatives in the first four Congresses, Senator (1796-1799), and Speaker of the House (1799-1801). Despite (or because of) his extremely humble origin, Sedgwick was overbearing to the common people, and habitually spoke of them as Jacobins and *sans culottes*.

⁷ John Gardiner (1737-1793), lawyer and reformer, was the son of Silvester Gardiner (1708-1786), physician, land owner, and Loyalist, and the father of John Sylvester John Gardiner (1765-1830), Episcopal clergyman, who was rector of Trinity Church, Boston (1805-1830). John Gardiner was born in Boston and educated in Great Britain, where he was graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1755. As an ardent Whig, living in London, he became the friend of, and acted as counsel for, John Wilkes. In 1783, Gardiner returned to Boston, and in 1786 removed to Pownalboro, in the District of Maine, from which he was elected to the Massachusetts General Court in 1789. He was instrumental in abolishing entails and primogeniture in Massachusetts, and organized a mass meeting to agitate for the repeal of the law against theatres, but without success. As a vestryman of King's Chapel, Boston, Gardiner manipulated the shady deal by which that church, the property of the Episcopalians, eventually passed into the possession of the Unitarians. His tumultuous career was cut short when he was drowned off Cape Ann in the loss of the *Londoner*, October 17, 1793, while he was on his way to Boston to attend a meeting of the legislature. For a reproduction of his portrait by Copley, see H. W. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, vol. 2, Boston, 1896, p. 357.

John Gardiner's father cut him off with one guinea; his son, in his discourse, "A Preservative against Unitarianism," June 8, 1811, observed: "The candor of an Unitarian resembles the humanity of a revolutionary Frenchman." Gardiner often attended services at Trinity Church, where he would disturb the congregation by refusing to read responses from the Book of Common Prayer, using, instead, a special prayer book which he himself had compiled.

their profession to the same Reputation which they held before the Revolution. You and I feel peculiarly interested in this matter as we have children rising into Life educated to the Law, without a competent knowledge of which no Man is fit for a Legislator or a Statesman. Let us look into our National Legislature. Scarcly a man there makes any figure in debate, who has not been Bred to the Law.

Pray give my Love to my worthy Brother Cranch & tell him that I sympathize with him in his affliction.⁸ Remember me affectionatly to my Neices & Nephew and believe that your happiness is very near the Heart of your

Ever affectionat

A. ADAMS

New York, Feb'ry 28, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

On the 17 of this Month Cousin William¹ wrote his uncle, that he had carried his Cousin Tom² Home to Braintree with the symptoms of the Measles upon him; you will easily suppose that I waited for the next post with great anxiety but how was I dissappointed last Evening when Mr. Adams returnd from Town, and the Roads being very bad the post had not arrived. I could not content myself without sending into Town again before I went to Bed, but the servant returnd with two Newspapers only. Am the more anxious because I know that Thomas was not well during the whole time that he was with us. I gave him a puke, after which he appeard better. He appeard to me to have lost his appetite his flesh and his coulour, & I am fearfull he was in a poor state to take the measles. I know that he will have every care & attention under your Roof that he could have, if I was with him, and this is a great relief to my mind; but to hear that he was sick, and to be ten days in suspence, & how much longer I know not, has made me very unhappy. If you have occasion for wine as no doubt you will, pray send for the key and get it; and let Pratt bring you wood. The trouble you must necessarily be in upon the death of Mrs. Palmer, and the distrest situation of the Family, anxiety which I know you feel for Mrs. Norton, and now the Sickness of Thomas I fear will prove too much for your Health. I wrote to you by the last post and to Thomas, but tis a long time since I had a Letter from

⁸ The death of his sister, Mrs. Palmer. See the letter of July 12, 1789.

¹ William Cranch (1769-1855).

² Thomas Boylston Adams (1772-1832).

you. I think the House had better be shut up than permitt any Body that I can think of, to go into it especially as I think it probable we shall spend a large part of the year there. I wish however that the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] might be consulted with regard to the safety of the House; pray write to me and relieve my mind as soon as possible.

I have never heard how Brother³ got home with his charge.⁴ Is Polly married?⁵ I did not mention it to him while he was here, but Mr. A[dams] did. I knew it to be so much against his inclination that I thought it best to be silent. Our family is all well. Mrs. Cushing and Mrs. Rogers⁶ spent the day with me yesterday. The judg and his Lady appear very happy, and well pleasd with their situation & reception at New York. I am very well pleasd to find that Gardner⁷ is returning to his former insignificance. Strange that he should be attended to, or have any weight with sensible Men.

My Love to Cousin Lucy whom with the rest of my Friends I long to see. Believe me dear Sister most

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, March 15, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I last Evening received Your Letter of 28th of Febry which relieved my mind from a great weight of anxiety. I do not think that I have been so long a period, without Letters from some, or other of my Friends since I first came to New York, or else the anxiety I have been under for several weeks appeard to prolong the Time.

I have written to you 3 weeks successively but you do not mention having received my Letters. Last week I wrote to the Dr.¹ and not to you; in some of my Letters I proposed the Miss Palmers tarrying in the House as long as they could. I never expected any thing more from them, than a care of the House & furniture. I requested the Dr. to order them some wood which I presume he has done. I will mention to Gen'll

³ William Smith (b. 1746). See footnote 4 to the letter of November 24, 1788.

⁴ Betsy Crosby. See the letter of January 24, 1789.

⁵ Probably Mary (Polly) Palmer, daughter of Mrs. Palmer, the recently deceased occupant of the old Adams house, and a niece of Mr. Cranch.

⁶ See footnote 2 to the letter of October 4, 1789. Mary, widow of William Grant and second wife of John Rodgers, died in 1812.

⁷ See the preceding letter.

¹ Dr. Cotton Tufts, who acted as steward for John Adams in Quincy. See footnote 11, to the letter of June 28, 1789.

Knox Mr. Cranchs request. Mr. Adams deliverd the Letter and talked with the Gen'll about him at the same time. The Genll mentiond him as a good workman & an honest Man. I will inquire of him when I see him if any thing can be done for Him. A Thought has just struck my mind. If we should not return to Braintree this summer, is Mr. Cranch Farmer enough to take that place to the Halves, provided he can do no better? I have not said any thing about it, for it this moment came into my mind. You may think upon it & give me your opinion without letting it go any further. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to be able to assist two worthy people. I shall wish to hear from Mrs. Norton as soon as she gets to Bed.² I think you told me that she expected this month and Sister Shaw too. It is really a foolish Buisness to begin after so many years, a second crop. I expect to hear next that our good friend the Dr. is like to increase his Family. Mine is like to be very prolifick if Mrs. Smith continues as she has set out. She has been gone a week on a visit to Long Island. Louisa grows tall, is the same diffident modest Girll she always was. I am sending her now to dancing. It is rather late for her to begin, but she learns the faster I believe. She has been only six weeks, & carried down a country dance in publick last week very well.

I hope my dear Sister you will make Thomas very carefull of himself & not let him go to Cambridge till he gets well of his Cough. The March winds are cold and piercing, and the Measles never mends the constitution, the Lungs being so much affected. Poor Mr. Otis I am grieved for him.³ He told me to day on comeing out of meeting that he [never *cancelled*] did not expected [*sic*] to hear that his daughter was alive; for his last intelligence was that she was very near her end. This is a distress that neither you or I have yet experienced, at least not an age, when the loss is so very greivous, and Heavy. Yet can I most feelingly sympathize with those who have. It appears to me that more young ladies die of consumptions in Boston than in any other place. I cannot but think that there is some cause, arising from their manner of living, the two sudden change of air, from cold to Heat, & heat to cold, or a want of proper attention to their cloathing. I think it ought to be a subject of investigation by the Medical Society. My affectionate Regards to all Friends. Do not let it be so long again before I hear from you. I thank you for all your kind care of my son during his sickness. You have some times talkd of obligations, but sure I am you ought to be satisfied upon that Head, as

² Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, wife of the Reverend Jacob Norton. See the letter of April 3, 1790.

³ Samuel Allyne Otis. See the letter of June 28, 1789.

you so much oftner have the power of conferring them, than I have of returning them to you, but you know that the will is good of

Your ever affectionate Sister

ABIGAIL ADAMS

N[ew] York, March 21, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I was in hopes of hearing from you by last Nights post, as I am solicitous to learn how Mrs. Norton does. I had Letters from Thomas and find that he is returnd to Cambridge very well he says, and he gives me the agreeable News of his Aunt Shaws¹ having got well to Bed with a daughter added to her Family.² I have been anxious for her; as her Health is so slender, and I know how to feel for you too the anxiety of a parent.

Mr. Adams has spoken to Genl Knox upon the subject of your Letter; and has received a promise from him; that he will do something for Mr. Cranch within a fortnight [*sic*]; I wish it may put him upon such a footing as to enable him to marry. Betsy will make him an excellent wife.³ I wish their prospects were better. Present my Regards to her, and tell her that I shall always be happy to promote her interest, and wish it was more in my power.

Pray what is the dismal story we hear of Mrs. Danfords jumping out of a 3 story window? Has she been long delirious? What was the matter with Mrs. Jones? She lookt as like to live last fall when she was here as any persn of her age. How is Lucy Jones? I heard last fall a very allarming account of her Health. Our Good Aunt I hope makes the Dr. very happy. Is Mrs. Tufts like to increase her Family? I mean Young Mrs. Tufts. I hope nothing of the kind will take place with the other. I think it would be like to distroy the Harmony between the two Families.⁴ I want to know all about the good folks in whose happiness I feel interested. I am sorry for what you write me respecting the one lately married, but I expected it. Do you remember the story of the Parissian Girl who insisted upon being hanged because her Father and her

¹ Elizabeth (Smith) Shaw (1750-1815), wife of the Reverend John Shaw, and subsequently Mrs. Stephen Peabody.

² Abigail Adams Shaw, who subsequently married Joseph Barlow Felt (1789-1869), the famous antiquarian of Salem and Boston.

³ Joseph Cranch, son of the Reverend John Cranch, who died in Devonshire in 1746, married, May 2, 1790, Elizabeth Palmer, youngest daughter of General Joseph Palmer, and Mary Cranch, sister of Richard Cranch (1726-1811), husband of Mary, the sister of Abigail Adams.

⁴ See footnote 11 to the letter of June 28, 1789.

Grand Father were hanged? It is a sad misfortune when example can be plead to satisfy scruples—but there never was any delicacy of sentiment about her. I am sorry for her Grandmother, who I know it must Hurt.⁵

Mrs. Smith & children are gone on a visit to Jamaica [Long Island]. The House seems deserted. I expect their return soon, but not their continuance with me, as they are going to live in the city, and the Col[onel]'s Mother and Family are coming into Town to live soon. My Family has been so large for this year past, that we shall not make both ends meet, as they say. The expenses of Removing a Family, Furniture &c was a heavy burden, and the wages of servants is very high here, especially for such misrables as one is obliged to put up with—but I hate to complain. No one is without their difficulties, whether in High, or low Life, & every person knows best where their own shoe pinches. My Love to Mrs. Norton. Tell her to keep up a good Heart but be sure you do not let Lucy be with her. I know her make so well that she could not stand the trial.

I have had a Nervious Headache for this week past, which has quite unfitted me for any thing, and obliges me to make my Letter shorter than I designd.

Remember me kindly to all inquiring Friends and be assured of the affectionate Regards of

Your Sister

A. ADAMS

Mrs. Brisler Lucy & children are well.

MY DEAR SISTER:

N[ew] York, April 3d, 1790

I congratulate you and my dear Neice upon the late happy event in your Family.¹ Can you really believe that you are a Grandmamma? Does not the little fellow feel as if he was really your own? If he does not now, by that time you have lived a year with him, or near you, I question if you will be able to feel a difference. Have you been so much occupied by these New cares as not to be able to write me a line upon the subject? It was from a Letter of Cousin William's² to Charles that I learnt the

⁵ This letter from Mrs. Mary (Smith) Cranch is probably in the Adams Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society. The story of the Parisian girl has not been found.

¹ The birth of a son to Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, wife of the Reverend Jacob Norton, in March, 1790.

² William Smith, son of the brother of Abigail Adams. See footnote 2 to the letter of September 1, 1789.

agreeable news, at which I most sincerely rejoice. I doubt not as my amiable Neice has fulfilled all the Relative duties in which she has been called to act with honour to herself and satisfaction to her Friends, she will not fail to discharge the New one which has fallen to her share with equal ability. I wish my dear Sister I could go with you to visit her, as we used to do, and that I could personally tell her how much her safety and happiness is dear to me. I should receive more real satisfaction, in one hour, than in months of the uninteresting visits which my situation obliges me both to receive and pay. My old Friend Mrs. Rogers³ has past the winter in N[ew] York and we have lived in our former intimacy. I shall regret her leaving it. Mrs. Smith and her Family the chief of them have been for three weeks at Jamaica [*sic*] upon a visit. The House really felt so lonely after Master William went, that I sent for him back yesterday. John and he are both very fine children, but as yet my attachment to William is much the strongest. His temper is sweet and his disposition docile.

This place begins to reassume all its Beauty. I wish you could come and see it. For situation and prospect I know no equal. We have been gardening for more than a week. I always forgot to inquire of my Neices if the flower seeds succeeded last year. I fear my prospect of visiting Braintree will be cut of, by the short recess of Congress. The buisness before them is so important, and takes so much time to discuss it, that they talk now of only adjourning through the Hot Months, and the breaking up a Family for a few months, the expense attending the journey with those domesticks which we must bring on, will out run the sum allotted by our generous Country, so that I see no prospect of visiting my Friends. I must therefore content my self with hearing from them as often as I can.

I wrote you a fortnight since that Genll Knox had given his word to Mr. A[dams] that he would do something for Mr. J[oseph] Cranch.⁴ I presume he will not forget him. I shall dine there on Tuesday next, and as the Genll is always very civil polite and social with me, I will drop a word to him if opportunity offers. Mr. Jefferson is here, and adds much to the social circle.⁵

I wish to have some seed Beans of scarlet and of the white kind, the

³ See the letter of November 24, 1788, and footnote 6 to the letter of February 28, 1790.

⁴ For Joseph Cranch, see footnote 3 to the letter of March 21, 1790.

⁵ Thomas Jefferson sailed from France in October, 1789, and arrived at "Monticello" on December 23. He proceeded to New York, where, on March 22, 1790, he became the first Secretary of State under the Constitution: 1790-1794.

pod of which is so tender. I forget the Name, but believe you will know. They grow in joints and are very fruitfull. Adieu. Tis time to go to meeting. O that it was to hear good Dr. Price,⁶ or Mr. Clark⁷ or Thacher,⁸ or any body whose sentiments were more conformable to mine.

Ever yours
A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, April 21, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your two kind Letters of April 1 & 5. I am extremely sorry to hear that Mrs. Norton is afflicted in the way that you write me she is, but tell her to keep up a good Heart. I can sympathize in her sufferings. A Bath of Hot Herbs was the most salutary means made use for me. A poultice of Camomile flowers is also very good, but I hope she is relieved before this time. Painfull experience would teach me upon the very first chill, to apply a white Bread poultice because those cold fits are always succeeded by a fever and complaints of the Breast always follow. I am glad to hear that my great Nephew [is] such a fine child.

When I wrote you last, you may remember that I told you I would speak to Genll. Knox in behalf of Mr. Cranch. I thought I had best do it before I said any thing to Mr. A[dams] about the place as the arrangements which the Genll. might make would prove more advantageous to him and require his attention upon the spot. I talkd with him and he engaged to send me a letter for him which is now inclosed to you. He told me that at West Point he would find a dwelling House work shop &c and two years employ if he would go there immediatly, that, he believed there was yet Buisness to be compleated at Springfield. There are many applicants so that Mr. Cranch should not be dilatory as there may be now a good opening for him. He will not fail of writing directly to Genll. Knox and giving him the information he requests. The Miss Palmers may continue in the House untill Mr. Cranch can accommodate them better. I wish my dear Sister that I could come to Braintree, but I do not see how it can be effected to any good purpose. Pray can you tell me where I could get a Boy of a dozen years. I would have him come round

⁶ See footnote 4 to the letter of August 9, 1789.

⁷ John Clarke (1755-1798), nephew of Timothy Pickering, and pastor of the First Church in Boston. For Clarke's sudden death, see the letter of June 27, 1798.

⁸ Probably Peter Thacher (1752-1802), who was born in Milton, preached in Boston, and died in Savannah, Georgia.

in [Captain] Barnard if any one is to be had. Such a wretched crew as N[ew] York produces are scarcely to be found in any city in Europe. I am so much discouraged by every Body here that I dare not attempt to take one. I wish you would inquire of Ruthe Ludden whether she would be willing to come in Barnard & let me know.¹ Mr. Smiths Petter had a likely Boy that he askd me to take before I came here.² If he is not put out, and he will send him to me by captain Barnard I will take him. Let me hear from you soon. Mrs. Smith is going to House keeping in N[ew] York the 1 of May, the day when every Body removes as they tell me here. I shall feel lost. The children amuse & divert me much but they will be here half there time. William is down on his knees searching the pictures in Milton, whilst I write. Gammar, he says look here, the Man with a great sword going to cut them are Men all to peices. He is a lovely child with a temper as mild & sweet as one would wish. Adieu my dear Sister. I must quit to dress, as Mrs. Washington, Lady Temple, Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. King & several other Ladies drink Tea with me this afternoon.³

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

Wednesday Noon—Mr. Brisler desires me to ask if Mr. Cranch has got the Remainder of his money from Mr. Baxter⁴ and prays he would see Mr. Baxter & let him know that he wants it.

Richmond Hill, April 28, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I designd to have written to you by the Monday post, but I was so very ill on Sunday that I could not set up. I have had the severest attack of the Rhumatism attended with a voilent fever which I have experienced for several years. I have not yet left my chamber, tho I am much relieved. The weather has been uncommonly wet and cold. Snow we have had in the course of this fortnight more than through the whole winter. Our House has been a mere Hospital ever since Saturday last. I have been confined in one chamber, Col. Smith in an other with a Billious attack, Charl[e]s in an other with a fever, my Housekeeper

¹ See the following letter.

² Mrs. Adams refers to the son of Peter, a servant of her brother, William Smith, merchant of Boston.

³ For Lady Temple and Mrs. Dalton, see the letter of February 20, 1790. Mrs. King was the wife of Rufus King, Senator from New York (1789-1795).

⁴ Father of Polly Baxter, a maid of Mrs. Adams.

confind to her chamber with Saint Antonys fire,¹ and a servant of Col. Smiths laid up with a voilent seizure of the Breast & Lungs, but thanks to a kind Providence we are all upon the Recovery. I was in hopes to have heard from you by last weeks post, & to have learnt how Mrs. Norton was, for whom I am much concernd. I am anxious for her from more disinterested motives than Swifts Friend, tho perhaps I can more feelingly sympathize with her for having "felt a pain just in the place where she complains."²

My last letter to you was accompanied by one for Mr. J[oseph] Cranch which I hope came safe to Hand. I wrote you something respecting Ruthe Ludden, but I wish now to be very particular, if her time is out with her Aunt as I think it was in March, and she is inclined to come. [Captain] Barnard will return here sometime in May. Her Passage by him will be six dollars which I shall pay. There is a Mrs. Laffen with whom Mr. Brisler is acquainted who went from here to Boston in Barnard and means to return again with him, so that she would not have to come alone. My terms to her will be three dollars a Month, and to give her the small pox. I wish to have an immediate answer because if she does not like to come, Mr. Brisler has a sister Betsy in Boston, who would be very glad to come and I shall write to her to come immediatly. I do not wish to send Polly home till I get somebody in her Room, but send her Home I must, or I shall never have a quiet family. This I must say of her, that I have never found her otherways than stricktly honest and I have not had the least difficulty with her on account of drink. In short it is next to imposible here to get a servant from the highest to the lowest grade that does not drink, male or Female. I have at last found a footman who appears sober, but he was Born in Boston, has lived a very short time in the city & has very few acquaintance there. You would be surprizd if I was to tell you that tho I have been long trying to get a Boy here I cannot find one that any Body will Recommend, and I should be very glad to get one from Boston, I mean Peters son. My Housekeeper who on many accounts has been the most Respectable Female I have had in the Family, is so sick and infirm that

¹ Any of certain inflammations or gangrenous conditions of the skin, especially erysipelas and ergotism, which in the Middle Ages were popularly supposed to be cured by the intercession of St. Anthony.

² See *The Poems of Jonathon Swift*, Harold Williams, Editor, Oxford, 1937, vol. 2, p. 557: "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift" (1731), lines 135-6:

Yet shou'd some Neighbour feel a Pain,
Just in the Parts, where I complain;

she is obliged to leave me, partly I know because she will not live with Polly. If I could find any middle aged woman of a Reputable Character who understands Pastry &c in Boston I would send for her. I give 5 dollars a month to my Housekeeper. My kitchen and offices are all below stairs, and where there are a Number of servants there must be one respectable Head amongst them to oversee & take care that they do not run headlong as well as to overlook the cooking & to make Tea for me upon my publick Evenings, to make my pastry to assist in the Ironing &c. This is the Buisness which falls to her share. Ruthe I want for a house maid. She will have no concern with cooking at all, as I keep a woman solely for that purpose. I wish you would be upon the inquiry for me. If I had not Brisler with me I should be tempted to give up publick Life. The chief of the servants here who are good for any thing are Negroes who are slaves. The white ones are all Foreigners & chiefly vagabonds. I really know now more than ever how to Prize my English servants but I think when the cat is once gone I shall do much better. Do you remember the Fable of the Cat the Sow & the Eagle?³ Scarcly a day passes that I do not think of it. Yet I have a real value for Polly. She has a great many good qualities, and alone in a small Family would answer very well, but Authority she can not bear to have the least. It is only by keeping her Humble that she is any way to be bourn with. In many things as Mr. Nothorp observed, she seems as necessary to me as my daily food, and but for that temper, I would not part with her. With that I could deal, but the eternal mischief between others, keeps the whole House in disorder, and gives a bad Name to the whole Family. Thus having detaild my whole Family grievences to you I bid you adieu. With Love to all Friends from your

Ever affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, May 30, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTER:

Your kind Letter of various dates came safe to Hand. I was allarmed at not hearing from you, & feard that you were all sick. The disorder

³ See *Aesop's Fables*, "The Eagle, the Cat and the Sow." An eagle built her nest in the top of an old oak tree; a sow scooped out a home in its roots; and a wildcat lived in a hole half way between them. The wildcat persuaded the eagle to fear the sow, and the sow to fear the eagle, with the result that each starved to death, and the wildcat devoured the nest of eaglets and the litter of pigs—a warning against tale-bearing trouble-makers. La Fontaine, *Fables*, Book 3, Fable 6.

term'd the Influenza¹ has prevail'd with much voilence, & in many places been very mortal, particularly upon Long Island. Not a Creature has escaped in our Family except its Head, and I compounded to have a double share myself rather than he should have it at all. Heitherto he has escaped, not so the President. He has been in a most dangerous state, and for two or three days [I] assure you I was most unhappy. I dreaded his death from a cause that few persons, and only those who know me best, would believe. It appears to me that the union of the states, and concequently the permanancy of the Government depend under Providence upon his Life. At this early day when neither our Finances are arranged nor our Government sufficiently cemented to promise duration, His death would I fear have had most disasterous concequences. I feard a thousand things which I pray I never may be call'd to experience. Most assuredly I do not wish for the highest Post. I never before realiz'd what I might be call'd to, and the apprehension of it only for a few days greatly distress't me, but thanks to Providence he is again restored. Congress will set till July it is thought, and I fear ad-journ to Philadelphia. I say I fear, for it would be a sad buisness to have to Remove. Besides I am sure there is not a spot in the United States so Beautifull as this upon which I live, for a summer residence. But personal inconveniency out of the question I do not see any publick utility to be derived from it, and I wish the Idea might subside untill time should make it proper to fix a permanant seat. I fear I must relinquish the Idea of visiting my Friends. I want to see you all and my Young Nephew whom you describe with all the fondness of a Grandmamma. Mrs. Norton will find her Health improved by Nursing I dare say. My Love to her and to Cousin Lucy. How I long to have you come and see me.

I am affraid my dear Sister I shall have to trouble you with the care of a commencement for Thomas,² like that which you so kindly made for his Brother, but I shall know more about his inclinations when I hear from him. I am unhappy at the account you give of Mrs. Turner. Poor Girl. She is going after her Mother at an early period of Life. You did not say if the child was living, but I presume it is.

I do not know what to do with our House if the Ladies remove.³ I

¹ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "influenza" first appeared in print in English in 1743, in the *London Magazine*: "News from Rome of a contagious Dis-temper raging there, call'd the *Influenza*."

² Thomas Boylston Adams was graduated from Harvard in June, 1790.

³ The daughters of the late Mrs. Palmer, who were living in the old Adams house. See footnote 7 to the letter of July 12, 1789.

sometimes wish it was all in cash again. Do you know of any Body trusty enough to leave it with?

You will be so good as to have all Thomas things brought home and a glass which still remains at Mr. Sewalls. My best regards to Mr. Cranch & all other Friends.

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

[Richmond Hill, June 9th, 1790]

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote to you ten days ago and informd you that my Family were very sick. I did not then conceive it to be, what I have since found it the Influenza. I have got better, but my cough & some other complaints still hang about me. Polly Taylor is so bad with it, that if she is not soon relieved the concequences threaten to be fatal to her. Louisa is very sick confind to her chamber. I keep a Bottle of Tarter Emetick and administer it as soon as they complain. Mr. Adams has kept clear of it yet, and he is the only one who has not been attack'd in a greater or less degree. Mrs. Smith has had a slight attack. The children appear to have it comeing and almost every Body throughout the whole city are [*sic*] labouring under it. This afternoon I heard that my Friend Mrs. Rogers lies dangerously sick. This distresses me greatly because it is not in my power to render her any assistance. I last Evening heard from Thomas, and that your Family were well, but he does not mention Mrs. Norton, by which I would fain hope that she is better. Mrs. Smith Removed last week, and this makes it necessary for me to request a few articles from my House in Braintree. I must request the favour of my good Brother Cranch to get me a case made for my large looking glass, and to be so good as to pack it for me & send it by [Captain] Barnard, with a note of the expence which I will pay to Barnard, my kitchen clock & press which stands in the kitchen, and two Glass Lanthorn which are in the chamber closset & the stone Roller for the Garden. I should be glad to have all these things by Barnard. The Glass I do not know how to do without. The Top I have here. I cannot afford to Buy. Besides I have enough for the Braintree House, & should I purchase here, must sell them again at a loss. This House is much better calculated for the Glasses, having all the Rooms Eleven foot high. I have not heard from you since I wrote you respecting Ruthe Ludden. Mrs. Brisler has this disorder tho not Bad. I am impatient to hear from you. Pray let it be soon.

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, June 13, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter of May 16, and was very happy to find that you were all upon the recovery. We have daily mercies to be thankfull for, tho no state is exempt from trouble and vexation. The one which at present Torments me is the apprehension of a Removal from a very delightfull situation, to I know not where, and I am too short sighted, or too much blinded, to see any real advantage from a Removal unless a Permanent seat was fixed. The fatigue and expence are objects not very pleasing in contemplation, and the Removal to a more southern state what I do not like, especially to Baltimore, where I am told we cannot in any respect be half so well accomodated. If I could see that the publick good required it, I should submit with more satisfaction, but to be every session disputing upon this subject, & sowerd as the members are, is a very unpleasent thing.¹ If we must move I must relinquish every Idea of visiting my Friends, and I had a latent hope that I should come for a few weeks merely on a visit, after Mrs. Smith gets to Bed, which I presume will be in July. I wish to hear from my Mother & Brothers Family. I know not what to do with the House. I must request you to have an Eye to it, and if any trusty Body could be thought of to go into the kitchen part I could wish they might, but I own I do not know of any Body. All the interest we have must go to destruction, and we can barely live here upon the publick allowence. Your Romancing Neighbours may amuse themselves, but their storys will never gain credit. There is a gentleman here, several indeed of whom I could inquire, but I am ashamed to ask, and indeed I do not recollect enough of the first part of the story to inquire properly about it, and I have every reason to think it all fabulous. They are all together the strangest Family I ever heard of. I last week accompanied Mrs. Washington to the Jersies to visit the falls of Pasaick. We were absent three days and had a very agreeable Tour.

I wish to have the articles I wrote for, sent by Captain Barnard. We have a fine growing season. Is it so with you? I wish to hear from you with respect to commenctment. What will be necessary and how can it be

¹ For the intrigue and log-rolling which led to the choice of the site of Washington as the national capital in 1790, see Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 74-9. In essence, the deal was a trade between Virginia and New England: Jefferson and Virginia supported Hamilton's plan for the federal assumption of state debts, and Hamilton rounded up enough New England votes in the Congress to put the capital on the Potomac. Until 1790, the seat of the government was New York, and, for the next ten years, Philadelphia. John Adams was the first President to live in the White House, which was ready for occupancy late in 1800. See footnote 4 to the letter of July 27, 1790.

managed? I fear it will give you a great deal of trouble especially as you are not very well accomodated with help, as it will be impossible for us to be at Home. I have thought that it might be dispenced with, yet as Thomas has conducted himself so well I could wish that he might be gratified if it is his desire.

Be so good as to let Mr. Smith know that Prince² is very well and quite contented. We are all well & Polly is better, than she was. Adieu. Write to me as soon as you can. Remember me affectionately to all Friends.

Yours most tenderly

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, June 27th, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have been expecting to hear from you every post, but I have not had a line from you since that dated May 10th. I wrote you once, I believe twice since I wish to know what has been determined upon respecting commencement as it is near at hand. I long more than ever to come Home especiall[y] since I am under some apprehensions of going further off. I am anxious to know what to do with our House. It is very hard that Mankind are so little trust worthy, that I cannot think of a single Family which might be placed there, who would not injure the House, furniture, & plunder me besides. Many through ignorance would not take proper care. I am sure that it will go to Ruin if it is not frequently lookd to. I have been thinking that when J. Q. A. has taken the Law Books to Town the remainder of the Books might be put into the small chamber next the garden or into the China closset above stairs. I fear they will receive injury from the weather in the office. I know not a word respecting the place any more than if it lay in the east Indies, and indeed it has proved of little more advantage to us than if it lay in the Moon. I look upon the Money expended there as lost. What has Woodard done with his place. Did he sell it? And to whom?

Mrs. Brisler wants much to hear from her sister. How are all our Friends? Mrs. Norton is getting Health & strength I hope fast. I pray she may not have children as fast as Mrs. Smith. It is enough to wear out an Iron constitution. I think she has lost much of her coulour and does not seem to be well at all; I feel very anxious for her, especially as she is like to have a very hot season to be confined in. She says not till

² A new servant of Mrs. Adams. See the letters of October 3, 1790, and March 12, 1791.

August, but I think she will not go so long as she looks very large. I have one or other of the children with me constantly. How is Uncle Quincy?¹ You say nothing about him. Dr. Tufts I find is married.² I dont hear half as often from him as formerly. Pray present my duty to him and tell him the Hams he procurd for me are fine and that I should be glad of a keg of Tongues.

Company call me of. Adieu.

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, July 4th, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

A Memorable day in our calender. A Church belonging [*sic*] to the Dutch congregation is this day to be opened and an oration deliverd. This Church was the scene of Misiry & horrou, the Prison where our poor Countrymen were confined, crowded & starved during the war, & which the British afterwards destroyed. It has lately been rebuilt and this day is the first time that they have met in it.¹ They have done us the favour of setting apart a pew for us. The Clergyman is Dr. Lynn² one of the Chapling to congress and I think a better preacher than most that I have heard to day. An oration is [to] be deliverd by Dr. Livingstone³ the other Minister belonging to this Church, but as to an orater, the oratory of a Clergyman here consists in foaming, loud speaking, working themselves up in such an enthusia[s]m as to cry, but which has no other effect upon me than to raise my pittty. O when when shall I hear the Candour & liberal good sense of a Price⁴ again, animated with true piety without enthusiasm, devotion without grimace and Religion upon a Rational system.

¹ Norton Quincy (1716-1801). See footnote 3 to the letter of November 1, 1789.

² See the letter of June 28, 1789.

¹ The Reformed Dutch Church in Nassau Street, New York City, also called the Middle Collegiate, or the Rip Van Dam Church, which was rededicated and reopened on July 4, 1790, the British having used it as a prison and a riding-school during the Revolution. The church became the Post Office in 1845, and was demolished in 1882. Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, vol. 1, plate 28, and description, p. 261; vol. 3, plate 105B, and description, pp. 725-6; and vol. 5, p. 1269.

² See footnote 3 to the letter of October 4, 1789.

³ John Henry Livingston (1746-1825) was graduated from Yale in 1762 and began the study of law at Poughkeepsie. Livingston studied theology in Holland (1766-1770), where he took the degree of Doctor of Theology at the University of Utrecht. In 1783 he became a minister in New York City, where he preached chiefly in English, but occasionally in Dutch. He united all the Dutch churches in the country in 1772.

⁴ See footnote 4 to the letter of August 9, 1789.

My worthy Friend Mrs. Rogers is returning to Boston. She has engaged to convey this to you with a Magazine which has for a Frontispeice a view of this House,⁵ but the great Beauty could not be taken upon so small a scale, which is the Noble Hudson, as far distant from the House as the bottom of the Boston Mall is from the Governours House. If you see Mrs. Rogers, as it is probable you will at commencement, she will tell you how delightfull this spot is, and how I regret the thoughts of quitting it. I shall miss her more than half N[ew] York besides. We are very well, but impatient to hear from you and Family. I wish Congress would so far compleat their buisness as not to have an other session till the spring. I really think I would then come home and pass the winter with you. Mr. Adams wants some exercise. Ever since the 4th of Janry he has not mist one hour from attendance at Congress. He goes from Home at ten and seldom gets back till four, and 5 hours constant sitting in a day for six months together, (for He cannot leave his Chair) is pretty tight service. Reading long Bill [*sic*], hearing debates, and not always those the most consonant to his mind and opinions, putting questions, stating them, constant attention to them that in putting questions they may not be misled, is no easy task whatever Grumblers may think, but Grumblers there always was & always will be.

Adieu my dear Sister. Remember me affectionatly to all Friends.

Yours

A. ADAMS

Richmond Hill, July 27, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of July 4th. The articles sent by Captain Barnard all arrived in good order, and I have to acknowledg Mr. Cranchs kind care in attending to them.

You have got through commencement and I hope have not been made sick with the trouble and fatigue. We had a pleasent day here, not over Hot and I pleasd myself with the hope that it was so with you. We got Thursdays paper, but had very little account of commencement. I know you must have been too much fatigued, and too buisily occupied to be able to write.

I do not know what to do with the House. I wish with all my Heart that Mears¹ would go in. I did not once think of her, but I do not know

⁵ See the *New-York Magazine* (June, 1790), or Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, vol. 1, plate 55A, and pp. 416-7; also footnote 1 to the letter of January 24, 1789.

¹ Mr. Mears was married to the sister of Mrs. Briesler, wife of the major-domo of John Adams.

any person I would so soon commit the care to. Mr. Brisler is anxious about the wine Casks. He says that there are only two Iron hoops on each and he fears the other will Rot off. If you have not the keys, pray get them and let me request you to have the things lookd to. The Rats he says may undermine the Bottled wine which is packd in sand. He is very anxious about it, and I am not less so. I beg you my dear Sister to accept of a dozen of the wine and present half a dozen bottles to my Mother.² If it is not drawn of let Thomas go, and do it, and send him for the keys. If the casks look like to give way, I must request that it may be New hooped or otherways taken care of. I do not know when I shall see you. I think it would be a cordial to me, and Mr. Adams pines for relaxation, tho if one was to Credit the Clamours of the Boston papers we should imagine that there was nothing going forward but dissipation, instead of which, there is nothing which wears the least appearance of it, unless they term the Pressidents Levee of a tuesday and Mrs. Washingtons drawing of a fryday such. One last[s] two & the other perhaps three hours. She gives Tea, Coffe, Cake, Lemonade & Ice Creams³ in summer. All other Ladies who have publick Evenings give Tea, Coffe & Lemonade, but one only who introduces cards, and she is frequently put to difficulty to make up one table at whist. Pray is not this better than resorting to Taverns, or even having supper partys? Some amusement from the Buisness of the day is necessary and can there be a more Innocent one than that of meeting at Gentlemens Houses and conversing together? But faction and Antifederilism may turn every Innocent action to evil.⁴

We are all well. You see my pens are bad beyond description, and dinner calls. Love to all Friends from

Your ever affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

² Mother-in-law: Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall. See footnote 4 to the letter of December 15-18, 1788.

³ See footnote 1 to the letter of August 9, 1789.

⁴ The session of the Congress during the summer of 1790 was made acrimonious by wrangling over two bills, the first of which fixed the national capital after 1800 on the Potomac; and the second of which provided for a limited assumption of state debts. The settlement was, in effect, a bargain between Jefferson and Hamilton. By the act of July 16, 1790, Philadelphia was to be the capital until 1800, by which time the Federal City was to be founded in a National District on the Potomac. By the act of August 4, 1790, \$21,500,000 of state debts were to be taken over by the federal government. Massachusetts and South Carolina, each with four millions, and Virginia with three and one-half million, got more than half of the total sum. Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 154-6.

New York, 8 August, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have the pleasure to inform you that last Night Mrs. Smith got to Bed with an other fine Boy.¹ We could have all wisht it had been a Girl, but rest satisfied with the sex as it [is] a very fine large handsome Boy and both Mother and child are well. She spent the day with me on fryday, and I urged her as I had several times before, to accept a Room here, and lie in here, as the house in which she is is Small and Hot. She told me she would come out, and the next day intended to get her things ready for the purpose, but found herself so unwell on Saturday, yesterday that she could not effect it. I have been very unwell myself for a fortnight, so that she did not let me know she was ill, untill I had the agreeable intelligence of her being safe abed. I shall get her here as soon as possible. I have both the children with me. I have not heard a word from you since commenctment, and I expect all my intelligence from you. Congress rise on twesday. I wish and long to come to Braintree, but fear I shall not effect it. How does Mrs. Norton stand the Hot weather? Your Grandson grows a fine Boy I dare say. I should be quite charmd to see him & my dear Cousin Lucy. When is she to be married to that said Gentleman? Pray give my Love to her and tell her she need not have been so sly about it. I had a few lines from Thomas [Boylston Adams] just before he set out for Haverhill. I expect him on here daily, and think he had best send his things Round by Barnard. I have nothing new to entertain you with unless it is my Neighbours the Creek savages who visit us daily. They are lodgd at an Inn at a little distance from us. They are very fond of visiting us as we entertain them kindly, and they behave with much civility. Yesterday they signd the Treaty, and last Night they had a great Bondfire dancing round it like so many spirits hooping, singing, yelling, and expressing their pleasure and satisfaction in the true savage stile. These are the first savages I ever saw. Mico Maco, one of their kings dinned here yesterday and after dinner he confered a Name upon me, the meaning of which I do not know: Mammea. He took me by the Hand, bowd his Head and bent his knee, calling me Mammea, Mammea. They are very fine looking Men, placid countenances & fine shape. Mr. Trumble² says, they are many of them per-

¹ Thomas Hollis Smith (b. 1790), died in infancy. See footnote 1 to the letter of November 24, 1788.

² John Trumbull (1756-1843), famous American painter, whose best-known work is the "Signing of the Declaration of Independence," which occupied eight years. After six years in London and Paris, Trumbull turned up in New York City in December, 1789, in order to obtain portraits for his popular historical composition. Washington sat for him several times.

fect models. MacGillvery dresses in our own fashion speaks English like a Native, & I should never suspect him to be of that Nation, as he is not very dark.³ He is grave and solid, intelligent and much of a Gentleman, but in very bad Health. They return in a few days.

Adieu my dear Sister. Remember me affectionatly to all Friends. I see Miss Nancy Quincy⁴ is married. I wish her much happiness.

Yours

A. ADAMS

Sunday eve, N[ew] York, August 29, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I last Night received your Letter which I have long expected, dated 9th of August, and thank you for your account of commencement, as well as your care. I have written to you a number of times and wondered much at not hearing from you. By Dr. Jeffries¹ I wrote you an account of Mrs. Smiths getting well to Bed. She is very cleverly and has been once out to see me tho only three weeks last Night since she got to Bed, but the weather being so warm she has got the Air very soon or rather never shut it out. She was going to dine below stairs to day, and said if she was not asshamed she would go with me to take leave of Mrs. Washington, who sets out tomorrow for Mount Vernon. I am [going] into Town for that purpose, and shall part with her, tho I hope, only for a short time, with much Regret. No Lady can be more deservedly beloved & esteemed than she is, and we have lived in habits of intimacy and Friendship. In short the Removal of the principal connections I have

³ Alexander McGillivray (c. 1759-1793), a Creek Chief belonging to the Wind Clan of the Upper Creek Indians, a Loyalist during the Revolution. From 1784 to his death in 1793, McGillivray, courted by merchants, speculators, filibusters, and by the governments of Georgia, the United States, and Spain, enjoyed a career of international significance. His chief interests were diplomacy, trade, planting, and drink. At one time he owned three plantations and about sixty slaves. For a lively account of the state visit of McGillivray to New York in July, 1790, see Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 171-2.

⁴ Nancy Quincy (born 1763), daughter of Josiah and Ann Quincy, married on July 27, 1790, the Reverend Asa Packard, of Marlborough, Harvard, 1783, who died in 1843.

¹ John Jeffries (1745-1819), physician and scientist of Boston, Loyalist in the Revolution. Repairing to England, Jeffries made several famous balloon ascensions with the French aeronaut, François Blanchard (1753-1809)—one over London in 1784, and another crossing the English Channel on January 7, 1785, as the result of which Jeffries was complimented by Louis XVI and dined with Benjamin Franklin at Passy. Jeffries returned to Boston about 1790, where he established a large and profitable practice. For a description of this balloon fight, see Roof, *Colonel William Smith and Lady*, p. 72.

here serves to render the place, delightfull as it is, much less pleasant than it has been.

I have been almost upon the point of visiting Braintree. I even made several arrangements for that purpose in my own mind, but had it all overthrown by an arrangement for a Removal to Philadelphia this fall. Mr. Adams talks now of going there to look out a House, as he begins to think he shall be very miserable at Lodgings, but I will hope that I may come next summer, and be a Border with you for some Months if we should let our House. If the people you mention are reasonable and worthy people I should have no objection to letting it to them with the furniture, the best carpet & china & glass tho not much, excepted—I know more injury may be done to furniture in one year than a House can easily sustain in several. A Hundred dollars goes but a little way in good furniture. Perhaps they may run away with a fancy that as the house is unoccupied we would readily let it for [a] trifle. The House I should rather let at a low Rent than it should stand empty, but not the furniture. 200 dollars a year or not much less I should expect to have for it including the Garden, Stables, &c. There are three Beds, two very good, and three carpets besides the best. At Philadelphia we must give four hundred for an empty house and that out of the City, but I shall [have] opportunity to write you more fully if they should have any fancy for taking it and I would consult the Dr.² about it.

We are anxious to get Thomas here and wonder that he does not come on. Pray hasten him as Mr. Adams is very desirous [*sic*] to have him here. My dear Sister I [will] never take the ten guineys so pray say no more about them. I am under obligations to you for the care and attention to my children which nothing pecuniary can repay. It hurts me that I have it not in my power to do as I wish—I hope our young folks will get into Buisness. I am glad Mr. Cranch will be like to get something for his hard Labour. I hope the remaining part of the debt will be provided for in less than ten years. Our publick affairs look very auspicious notwithstanding the grumblings. I have many more things to say to you but am obliged to close to go into Town, but will write to you soon again. We are all well. You may write by the post. They have not charged us postage yet and I presume will not as the New act if it had past excepts the President and vice President, and as it is known to be the intention

² Cotton Tufts. See footnote 11 to the letter of June 28, 1789.

of congress, I suppose they will not tax us with postage under the present act.³ Love to all Friends

Ever yours

A. ADAMS

New York, October 3d, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTER:

Do you not pity me my dear Sister to be so soon all in a Bustle, and weary of removing again, as much Boxing and casing as if we were removing to Europe? Our furniture may well be stiled *movables*. The expence attending the various removals would very handsomely furnish one House.¹ I feel low spirited and Heartless. I am going amongst an other new set of company, to form new acquaintances, to make and receive a hundred ceremonious visits, not one of ten from which I shall derive any pleasure or satisfaction, obliged to leave Mrs. Smith behind, and the Children to whom I am much attached, and many other things I have upon my mind and spirits which I cannot communicate by Letter. I live however upon the Hope that I shall come and see you next summer: I hope congress will not set [sit] out the Month of April.

I have wrote to the Dr. respecting the widow Owen and Rebecca Field I had rather they should be in the House than have it left empty through the winter. They must always remember that they must remove when ever we come to want the House, and that without giving us any trouble.

You wrote me about Rose water. If you have an opportunity to send me a dozen Bottles I should like to have it. I forgot to write to you sooner, but you may have it put up and adrest to Col. Smith New York when Barnard comes again. We expect to get our furniture on Board by the 20th of the Month. Charles is going to Board with his sister, and Thomas will go into an office in Philadelphia. I wish he could have gone into merchandize as I am sure he has more of a Turn for active Life.

³ While Adams was presiding over the Senate in New York during the summer of 1790, his *Discourses on Davila*, a series of letters written as a running commentary upon an Italian's history of France, appeared in Fenno's *Gazette* at Philadelphia, and were copied by other Federalist papers. Adams seemed to be trying "to direct American sentiment against the new idea of complete equality and rights of man. . . . Adams himself, in later life, admitted that *Davila* largely helped to destroy his popularity, and wondered that he could ever have written that 'dull heavy volume.'" Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 192-3. For *Discourses on Davila*, see Adams, *Works*, vol. 6, pp. 223-339.

Enrico Caterino Davila (1576-1631) was born near Padua and murdered near Verona. Going to France to serve as a page of Catherine de Medici, Davila fought in the French civil wars until 1589. His chief work is *Storia della guerre civili di Francia* (1630).

¹ Congress convened in Philadelphia in December, 1790, and sat there for ten years, meeting in Washington for the first time on November 17, 1800.

How is Mrs. Norton & her Boy? We have got one with a Red Head. I do not know what part of the family he lays claim to. I forget whether I wrote you that they had Named him Thomas Hollis.²

Let Mrs. Field know that Lucy and Mr. Brislers children have the small pox. It has turnd and they have it very lightly. Lucy not more than 20 pock, Nabby not a dozen. Betsy is pretty full but has a good sort and is very cleverly. I had Prince inoculated at the same time. He has about a dozen, but has not been confined at all, nor sick, a little headache excepted. Be so good as to send his Father word if you have an opportunity.

Mrs. Smith is here to day and desires to be rememberd to all her Friends. When did you hear from Sister Shaw? I think I used to get Letters and write oftner when I was abroad than I do now.

Let me hear from you soon, and believe me

Most affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

Love to Mr. Cranch & Duty to Mother [mother-in-law]. I hope I shall see her again, good old Lady.

N[ew] York, October 10th, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote to you last Sunday, and on Wednesday received your kind Letter. We have begun to pack up our furniture, and expect to get it on Board by the 20th. Perhaps we may make it later, but I hope not as the weather will every day become more & more uncomfortable. The Idea of going so much further from you is painfull to me, and would be more so if I did not hope to spend the next summer with you. At present you have your Family with and near you, but it is my destiny to have mine scatered, and scarcely to keep one with us. My seperation from Mrs. Smith is painfull to me on many accounts. There is at present no prospect of their going with us, and if their prospects here were as fair as they ought to be, I should be less sollicitious for them. With Regard to our House, I should have no objection to a carefull person living in the kitchin to take care of it, but as to letting it I cannot consent unless any person offers to take House and furniture all together. There is the other part of the House in which Bass lives that might be let, but then I should

² See the letter of August 8, 1790.

be loth that a shoe makers shop should be made of either of the Rooms. In short I do not know of any persons property so unproductive as ours is. I do not believe that it yealds us one pr cent pr Annum. I have the vanity however to think that if Dr. Tufts and my Ladyship had been left to the sole management of our affairs, they would have been upon a more profitable footing. In the first place I never desired so much Land unless we could have lived upon it. The money paid for useless land I would have purchase[d] publick securities with. The interest of which, poorly as it is funded, would have been less troublesome to take charge of then Land and much more productive. But in these Ideas I have always been so unfortunate as to differ from my partner, who thinks he never saved any thing but what he vested in Land. I am really however very uneasy with Pratt as a Farmer. He has got a great swarm of helpless children round him, labours hard but has no skill, and the place with the addition of Veseys¹ very little more than pays the taxes. I wish Mr. Beals could be induced to go upon it. The other place I know no more about than if it lay in the Moon. I have written to request that the Saint Germain pears and the best Russet Apples may be sent to me. The communication between Boston and Philadelphia is so frequent that I should suppose their could be no difficulty in it.

I had the pleasure of assembling yesterday Mr. & Mrs. Storer,² Mr. & Mrs. Atkinson, Mr. Charles, George & Mary Storer, Col. & Mrs. Smith and Miss Peggy Smith, who all dined with me and I felt more like Home than I have ever done since I left Braintree. Mr. Adams mourns that he could not make a visit Northward this fall. We are well. Brislers family all got through the small pox with only a day or two illness. Present me affectionatly to all Friends. I fear Mr. Cranch does not put on his flannel soon enough. I grow more and more in favour of the use of it and advise you to wear it next your skin. Make little waistcoats & put them on with the first comeing of cold weather, & I had as much spair Room in my stays as you have I would not be without them.

Poor Mr. Thaxter I am grieved for him, but who is without their troubles. I thank God that a larger portion has not fallen to the Lot of your ever

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

¹ Mrs. Vesey was an aunt of John Adams. See *Letters of John Adams, Addressed to His Wife*, Edited by C. F. Adams, Boston, 1841, vol. 4, p. 249.

² See the letter of June 19, 1789.

N[ew] York, Sunday, October 17 [1790]¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

I arrived here last Night. My first inquiry was for a Letter from you, which I was happy enough to find, and great relief did it afford to my anxious mind. I sent to the post office to see if I could get any further intelligence last evening but was dissatisfied. I am ready however to attribute it more to your not getting an opportunity of conveyance than to any unfavourable circumstance, and I was much encouraged yesterday by seeing Mrs. Judge Cushing, who told me of a cure performed upon Mrs. Hyslops leg after a mortification had really taken place. She made great use of Bark² and wine. I am sure my dear Sister neither Mr. Adams or I can ever think our wine used to a better purpose than in aiding the recovery of so dear & valuable a Friend, and we request you to get more from our cellar when that is expended. Can there be a greater pleasure in Life than rendering kindness to those we love and esteem and who we know are every way worthy of our regard. How many of my anxious & painfull hours did you in the summer past alleviate by your sisterly kindness. How much too am I indebted to my dear Lucy for her goodness. I am anxious for her Health, and full of the mind that a free use of the Bark would relieve her Nervious Headaches. Katy who is with me was relieved only in that way after a slow Nervious fever. I had a pleasant journey in point of weather. Mr. Adams found himself very weak and feeble when we came to travell. His Nerves were more affected than I was aware of before I left home. He has not had any return of his fever, but if I had not gone through all & more than he has sufferd I should be much more distrest. He gains strength by his journey, but what I fear is the buisness & company which he cannot avoid and which are very

¹ It is difficult to place this letter with certainty. Mrs. Adams plainly wrote, "N York, Sunday, October 17." The date "1790" was added in another hand, probably that of Mrs. Cranch, and the letter is endorsed: "Letter from Mrs. A. Adams (N[ew] York) Octr 17. 1790." Between the years 1787 and 1802, only in the year 1790 did October 17 fall on Sunday. Yet, in the following letter, of October 25, 1790, Mrs. Adams implies that she had not written to her sister since October 10, 1790, and the serious illness to which she refers makes it improbable that she did so. Beginning with the end of August, John Adams was absent from New York for about two weeks, looking for a residence in Philadelphia—the house at Bush Hill, to which he removed in November, 1790. He wrote to George Washington from New York on August 29, 1790, and to Samuel Adams from New York on September 12, 1790. Although her illness makes it seem unlikely, apparently Mrs. John Adams left "Richmond Hill" for New York City on October 16—if this letter is dated accurately.

² Jesuits' or Peruvian bark: the bark of various species of the cinchona tree, from which quinine is procured.

unfit for a person recovering from such a disorder. Thomas & Louisa are well. Mrs. Smith & Family I found well, but I cannot learn a word from Philadelphia.³ Remember us all kindly to Mr. Cranch with our most sincere wishes for his perfect restoration to Health. I am my dear Sister,

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, October 25, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

After I had closed my Letter to you this day fortnight, I retired to my chamber, and was taken with a shaking fit which held me 2 Hours and was succeeded by a fever which lasted till near morning, attended with severe pain in my Head, Back, &c. The next morning I took an Emetick which operated very kindly and proved to me the necessity of it. On Tuesday I felt better and went below stairs, but was again seized with an other shaking fit which was succeeded as the former by the most violent fever I ever felt. It quite made me delirious. No rest for 5 Nights & days. It settled into a Regular intermitting Fever. The Dr. after having repeatedly puked me, gave me James's powders,¹ but with very little effect. I began upon the Bark the 10th day which I have taken in large Quantities and it has appeared to have put an end to my fever, but I am very low and weak. I rode out yesterday and found no inconveniency from it. I shall repeat my ride to day. I have great cause to be thankfull for so speedy a restoration, but I have a journey before me which appears like a mountain & three Ferries to cross. Very fortunate for me the winds have kept back the vessel from returning from Philadelphia which was to have been here the 20th to have taken our furniture. Mrs. Smith has been with me till yesterday. Her Baby is inoculated for the small pox, and she expects him to break out this week. But here endeth not all my troubles, for the day before yesterday Mrs. Brisler was taken sick of a Plurisy fever. She has been 3 times Bled & is Blisterd, and lies very

³ This refers apparently to the news which Mrs. Adams was awaiting as to whether or not the house at Bush Hill was to be rented to her husband. John Adams was back in New York again by October 18, when he wrote to Samuel Adams.

¹ A febrifuge, very popular during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth; prepared by Dr. Robert James (1705-1776), who was graduated from Oxford in 1726, and in medicine from Cambridge in 1728. Dr. James compiled a *Medical Dictionary* (1743), to which his friend Samuel Johnson contributed. He patented his powder and pill in 1746. Oliver Goldsmith and George III were both addicted to the use of Dr. James's medicine, and each brought on serious illnesses from self-administered overdoses of it, Goldsmith dying as a consequence.

ill tho I hope not dangerous. I received your Letter by Mr. Cranch. He landed I believe only a few Hours. He went to Mr. Laurences² office, to Charles, and deliverd the two casks sent by Brother. The Ladies did not come on shore as the wind was then fair for them, and they had been out ten days, & much of the weather very stormy & Boisterous. He told Charl[e]s that they had been very sick. I am sure it would have given me great pleasure to have received & entertaind them or to have supplied them with any thing in my power.

I received a few days since by Mr. Durant³ your kind Letter of October 11th, which I thank you for. Remember me affectionatly to Mrs. Eunice Paine.⁴ Would a few Bottles of wine or Porter be acceptable to her? If they would will you take the trouble of getting it from our cellar for her. The Dr. has just left me and says he thinks Mrs. Brisler much relieved, and that she will be better in a few days. My Head I find as week as my body. You will therefore excuse my writing more at present than to assure you that I am as ever

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Mr. Brisler would be glad the money may be sent by Mr. [Fisher] Ames when he comes to Philadelphia.

N[ew] York, Novbr. 7, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I will not leave N[ew] York without writing you a few lines. I have not written a single letter since that which I adress to you untill this day I attempted one to my son J. Q. A. I left my own House & I may say chamber, on tuesday last, for I had not been able to stay below stairs, till I came to Town. I have been with Mrs. Smith ever since, and tho my fever still hangs about me I hope to set out tomorrow & make small stages. The Dr. think[s] the journey may be of service to me. The

² John Laurance (1750-1810), soldier of the Revolution, judge, United States Senator, who was born near Falmouth, England, and settled in New York City in 1767. He prepared and conducted the case against Major John André, in 1780. He was a leading Federalist in the first and second Congresses in 1789 to 1793, and served in the Senate from 1797 to 1800.

³ Possibly John Waldo Durant of Philadelphia, father of Thomas Jefferson Durant (1817-1882), lawyer and politician.

⁴ Probably Miss Eunice Paine (1733-1803) of Braintree, a sister of Robert Treat Paine. "Mrs." would be in this case a title of respect for an elderly lady; or possibly Eunice (Treat) Paine, wife of the Reverend Thomas Paine and the mother of Robert Treat Paine (1731-1814) and Miss Eunice Paine.

fatigue of removing has been doubly troublesome to me. I will write as soon as I can to you, and on the Road if I feel able.

Mrs. Smiths Baby has been very sick, and very near dying with the Small Pox. It would not come out. They were obliged to have it Bled & put into a warm Bath which relieved it. It is upon the Recovery. Mrs. Brisler is recoverd and I shall take her in the Carriage with me and her youngest child. Lucy & the eldest are gone with a maid of mine to Philadelphia. Our vessel saild on Thursday. I hope it will get there before me. All Friends here desire to be kindly rememberd to you. I wrote you to ask Mr. Cranch to send Mr. Brislers money by Mrs. Ames, but upon further consideration, Mr. Cranch will be so good as to pay it to J. Q. A. and I will repay it to Mr. Brisler. Adieu, my dear Sister.

Yours

A. A[DAMS]

[Bush Hill,] Philadelphia, Decbr. 12, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have received your two kind Letters one dated in October the 30 day I think & the 14 of Novbr. As the last came by a private Hand it did not reach me till last Evening. You will suppose that I might have written to you long e'er this, but as my letters would only have been a detail of grivences and troubles I was reluctant at taking my pen, and put it of from day to day. I reachd this city after 5 days journey. I was so weak as to be able to travel only 20 miles a day, but I gaind strength daily and was much better when I got here than when I set out. My Furniture arrived the day before me. I came up to the House expecting to have found every thing in readiness to put up the furniture agreeable to promise but how was I dissapointed to find the painters with their Brushes and some of the most necessary matters untouch'd. The House had not been inhabited for four years & being Brick you may judge of the state of it. We had fires made in every part. The furniture must come in, and we must inhabit it unfit as it was, for to go with 14 or 16, for Brislers family were all with me, to Lod[g]ings was much beyond my Revenue: I expected to suffer: We got in on fryday. On the Monday following Louisa was taken sick. I gave her a puke & set her up again, but on the thursday following Polly Tailor was taken sick with a voilent Plurisy fever, confined to her Bed, bled 3 times, puked & Blisterd, and tho it is a month, she has got no further down stairs than to my chamber, for after the fever left her the old Ague took her in her Head and face. She

is however upon the mending order. But this is not the worst of all my troubles. Thomas has been 18 days totally deprived of the use of his Limbs by the acute Rhumatism, attended with great inflammation and fever. The fever has abated. After having been 9 times Bled, puked and many other applications, he is yet unable to help himself. He is carried from his Bed to the Settee & fed like an infant. I have not left his Chamber excepting a nights and meal times for the whole time. The disorder seazd his Breast as well as his Limbs and produced all the complaints of Gravel by affecting his kidneys. I never knew him half so sick in my Life. I will not lay either of the disorders to this place tho I believe they were hastned & renderd worse by the dampness of the House. Polly has had 2 Fevers of the same kind since she has been with me, & Thomas Rhumatism has been comeing on for some time, yet they were peculiarly unfortunate to attack them at the time of Removal. Dr. Rush has attended them and I have found him a kind Friend as well as Physician.¹ I will not detail to you that in the midst of all this, the Gentlemen and Ladies solicitious to manifest their respect were visiting us every day from 12 to 3 o'clock in the midst of Rooms heepd up with Boxes, trunks, cases &c. Thanks to a kind Providence I have got through the worst, I hope, of my difficulties and am in tolerable Health tho much fallen away in flesh. I have a source of anxiety added to my portion on my dear daughters account, Col. Smith having saild last week for England. His going was sudden and unexpected to us, but some private family debts which were due in England to his Fathers estate was one motive, and some prospects of assisting his Family by his voyage was a still further motive. I do not know what has really been the cause why he has been so poorly provided for in the distribution of offices. The P[resident] has always said that he was sensible to his Merrit & meant to Provide for him, but has not yet seen the way open to do it; She, poor Girl, is calld to quite a different trial from any she has before experienced, for tho the Col. was once before absent, she was in her Fathers House. Now she writes that she feels as if unprotected, as if alone in the wide world. One of his Brothers & Sisters remain with her during the Cols. absence. I have Johnny here with me, and would gladly send for her,

¹ Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), of Philadelphia, physician and patriot, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Rush completed his medical education at the University of Edinburgh, visited Paris, and returned to settle in Philadelphia in 1769. He was one of the early advocates of temperance, and was widely interested in politics and reform. John Adams appointed him Treasurer of the United States Mint, where he served from 1797 to 1813.

to pass the winter with me, but a young Baby and some other obstacles prevent. Pray my dear Sister, write to her and comfort her. No station in Life was ever design'd by Providence to be free from trouble and anxiety. The portion I believe is much more equally distributed than we imagine. Guilt of conscience is the work of our own Hands and not to be classed with the inevitable evils of Humane Life.

Decbr. 14: I wrote thus far on Sunday. Thomas is very little better. Charles got here on Saturday and is a great assistance to me. I want my dear sisters & cousins. Notwithstanding I have been such a Mover, I feel in every New place more & more the want of my own near & dear connexions. I hope to see you all next spring. Pray let my son J. Q. A. know that his Brother is sick, that we should be glad to have him come here in Janry. or this Month if more convenient to him, but that I cannot write to him till the Next post. Adieu. I have only Time to say yours as the Post is going.

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Janry. 9th, 1791

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of December 12th with one from my Nephew inclosing 4 Portraits. I instantly recognized my worthy Brother Cranch and my dear Sister together with our venerable Uncle Quincy. The other not one of us have skill enough to find out, by which I judge it is not a likeness. The three first are admirably executed and I have to request that the same hand would take my Mother[-in-law] and send it without letting Mr. Adams know for whom it is design'd. You inquire how I like my situation.¹ I answer you the one I removed from, was in Burk[e]s stile, the sublime. This is the Beautifull. The House is better; that is the work within is superiour. The Architecture of the other House was Grand and the Avenue to it perfectly Romantick. The British Troops rob'd this place of its principal Glory by cutting down all the Trees in front of the House and leaving it wholly Naked. Behind the House is a fine Grove; through which is a gravell walk; which must in summer add greatly to the delight of the place. I am told for 8 months this place is delicious. In winter the Roads are bad and we are 2 miles & a half from the city. I have received every attention and politeness from the Gentlemen and Ladies which I could either expect or wish. Living

¹ Bush Hill was a suburb of Philadelphia, where Stephen Girard and Peter Helm assumed the direction of the new Lazaretto Hospital in September, 1793, during an epidemic of yellow fever. Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 255.

here is more expensive than in N[ew] York, Horse keeping in particular, which we sensibly feel, as we are obliged to keep four, for during the sitting of Congress they frequently go six times to the city in the course of the day. We cannot purchase any marketting but by going into the city. We have had very severe cold weather from the beginning of December till the week past, when the snow has chiefly left us. I am thinking seriously of making arrangements to come to Braintree [as] early in the spring as the Roads will permit, for it is generally believed that Congress will not sit after March. If so I hope to be with you by the last of April or begining of May, and as I must leave Brisler and his Family here, I would look out early for some person in his stead. Can you inform me where Nathan Tirril is, and whether he was last summer engaged? He is a good Hand in a Garden and on many other accounts usefull. There are some articles which I shall want in the kitchin way, but it will be time enough to think of these things some months hence.

I feel the loss of Mrs. Smith and Family and it pains me daily that I could not have her with me this winter. It is in vain to say what we ought to have been able to do. I feel what I cannot do. The Cols. Family are all very kind to Mrs. Smith and treat her like a child, but a Fathers House is still the most desirable place. I hear every week from her. I have John with me. A fine Boy he is and the enlivener of the whole Family. We are a scattered family, and I see no prospect of our ever being otherways. Mr. Durant was here last week and said he was going to Boston in order to sail from thence for St. Croix, the River here being frozen up. I thought the Letter you sent to the care of Thomas would go best & soonest by him, so we gave it to him. Thomas is much better tho he does not yet go out except to ride. I have had a succession of sickness in my Family. When we have been well ourselves, our servants have been laid up. When I come to this place again I am determined to bring a *decent woman* who understands plain cooking with me. Such a vile low tribe you never was tormented with & I hope never will be. I brought all my servants from N[ew] York, cook excepted, and thought I could not be worse of than I had been. I have had in the course of 18 months seven, and I firmly believe in the whole Number, not a virtuous woman amongst them all: the most of them drunkards. I recruited with a new one last Monday, who brought written recommendations with her, and who to all appearance is very capable of her buisness, but on thursday got so drunk that she was carried to Bed, and so indecent, that footman, Coachman & all were driven out of the House. Concequently she has turnd

herself out of doors. We know little of vileness in our state when compared to those cities who have such Numbers of Foreigners as N[ew] York and Philadelphia—I thank you my dear Sister for your kind care of your Nephew. He wanted it I believe. He mourns a want of employ, but all young men must have patience, especially in his profession. “There is a tide in the affairs of men.”² Our young folks must watch for it.

I would ask Dr. Rush about a certain affair if I had a short detail of Names, circumstances, and time. If Cousin Lucy thinks it worth her time to give me some account of the affair, I am upon such an intimate footing with the Dr. since his practise in our Family that I could easily ascertain all he knows about it, but the Story was so complicated that I am by no means mistress of the Subject.

My Love to Mrs. Norton & my young Nephew. I anticipate the pleasure of meeting you all. Pray heaven nothing may arise to prevent my realizing the satisfaction. Let me hear from you as often as you can and believe me at all times most

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

Bush Hill [Pennsylvania], March 12th, 1791

MY DEAR SISTER:

I was just going to set down to write to you, when I received your Letter of [*blank*]. I am sensible I was much in Arrears to you, as well as to some other of my Friends. Since the Recovery of Thomas we have had Health in our dwelling, for which I have great reason to be thankfull. I have been happy with my three sons round me, but a sigh of anxiety always hung about my Heart, for Mrs. Smith, who ought to be with me during the absence of the Col. If I had remaind in N[ew] York, we should not have lived separate this winter, but my removal here, and the expence of the removal of a Family for 5 or six Months, was an obstical in the way. As the Col. is expected back in May, if he arrives as I hope he will, he will come immediatly into an office, which will afford to him and his Family a very handsome support. It will be a very Arduous office in the State of N[ew] York, but he is of a very active disposition, and very well calculated for the discharge of it. A prospect of a Provision for

² There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Julius Caesar, Act IV, Scene III, lines 218-21.

himself and Family has relieved my mind from a very heavy burden. I hope nothing will arise to detain him abroad longer than we expect, and this provision for him at Home, is much more agreeable to us all than any employment abroad, which would have carried from me my only daughter. Charles is returned to his office in N[ew] York and Boards with Mrs. Smith. I suppose J. Q. A. will reach Boston by the time this Letter gets to you. He seems happy in the expectation of our passing the summer in Braintree, but he appears to have lost much of his sprightliness and vivacity. He says that the want of Buisness in his profession and the dismal prospect for the practitioners of the Law in Massachusetts, is the weight which depresses him, & that He should still be obliged at his age, to be dependant upon his parents for a support. Altho these feelings are proofs of a good mind, and a sensible Heart, I could wish that they did not oppress him so much. He wishes sometimes that he had been Bred a Farmer, a Merchant, or an, any thing by which he could earn his Bread, but we all preach Patience to him. Thomas follows his studies in the city with as much assiduity as his Health will permit, but he does not look well, and I think I cannot consent to leave him in this Hot climate during the summer. A journey may establish his Health, and prevent a return of that soar disorder the next fall, as his Blood retains yet much of the materials for making it. Every damp day warns him of the future, & reminds him of the past.

You wrote me in your Letter of Janry 25th of a Negro Man and woman whom you thought would answer for me this summer. If she is cleanly and only a tolerable cook I wish you would engage her for me. I had rather have black than white help, as they will be more like to agree with those I bring. I have a very clever black Boy of 15 who has lived with me a year and is bound to me till he is 21. My coachman will not allow that he is a Negro, but he will pass for one with us. Prince I believe I shall leave with Mr. Brisler. I shall bring Polly, and dismiss the rest of my servants. Tis probable we may hire the Black man part of the time as a Gardner, but I design to make those I bring with me work if I can. I will be obliged to you if you will go to the House, and look over the things and write me what you think I shall have absolutely need of towards keeping House. I have written to the Dr. to get Mr. Pratt to make me two kitchin tables and some other articles. There were some old Bed Steads in the House but none perfect. Will you ask Mr. Pratt if he can make me one that is movable like one which Polly says he made for Mrs. Apthorpe with a sacking bottom and doubles up to-

gether. I do not know any Name for them to distinguish them by; I had one made in N[ew] York which I found exceedingly usefull when Thomas was sick. I have no coars ware neither milk pan, or bowl or dish, Broom or Brush. I shall want some tow cloth, ten or a dozen yds at my first arrival. I do not know if the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] has any Money in his Hands, to procure me these articles, but if he has not, I will send you some for the purpose, as I cannot think of comeing there with a Family, and then haveing every thing to look out for afterwards. Besides I shall not have Brisler to manage for me. I shall take some spoons & what little plate I may have occasion for with me. Mrs. Brisler left some chairs which I shall take of her. I think I have as much table & bed linnen as I shall want. I wish the Roads were such that we could set out immediatly, but that cannot be. I hope however to be with you by the first of May, and I look forward to it with great pleasure I assure you. I shall send by the first vessel a Trunk with some cloaths &c, as we wish to travell with as little Bagage as possible. I dinned yesterday at the Presidents. It was a take leave dinner. The President sets of this week on a Tour to those parts of his Dominions which he has not yet visited, Georgia & North Carolina. Our publick affairs never looked more prosperous. The people feel the beneficial effects of the New Government by an increasing credit both at Home and abroad and a confidence in their Rulers. Some grumbling we must always expect, but we have as a people the greatest cause for Gratitude and thankfulness to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for our present happy and prosperous circumstances as a Nation.¹

Adieu, my dear Sister. Every blessing attend you and yours, is the sincere wish of your ever

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

My kind regards to Mr. Cranch, to Mr. & Mrs. Norton, to Cousin William & Lucy and a kiss for my young Richard.²

¹Hamilton's project for founding a national bank aroused intense opposition in and out of the Congress. Passing the Senate first, with the customary secrecy, the bill caused a long and bitter debate in the House. Washington asked both Jefferson and Hamilton for reports on the constitutionality of the bill as finally passed, and followed Hamilton's favorable report, of which the chief argument was the doctrine of "implied powers." The Bank of the United States got a charter for twenty years and was authorized to have a capital of ten million dollars, of which the United States was to subscribe two millions, and the public eight millions. For popular reaction to the setting up of the bank in the autumn of 1791, see Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 198.

²Reverend Jacob and Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, William Cranch (who married Anna Greenleaf), and Lucy Cranch (who married John Greenleaf). "Young Richard" is probably the son who was born to the Nortons in March, 1790.

Bush Hill, April 18, 1791

DEAR SISTER:

This day fortnight the 2 of May we propose to set out on our journey to Braintree. It will be the middle of May I presume before we arrive there if we meet with no accident, so that I will thank you to attend a little to my garden, have some sallid sown and what ever else you think proper. I wrote to you not long since requesting you to let me know what you thought I might want. You will not forget some Night Hawks.¹ Be so good as to get me a dozen yds of diaper for towels—I have not one there—and whatever else you think I stand in immediate want of. I cannot bear to go to a place unprovided, when a little forethought and care would save me much trouble, and I shall not have Brisler with me to provide for me. I have requested the Dr. to furnish you with the needfull. Vendues are so frequent in Boston that I may be provided with some things perhaps. I shall want a Tea kettle, dish kettle, chaffing dish, a set of Brushes, Brooms, pails, flat Irons, Tubs, Skillits, pots &c. I scarcely know what myself. I have not heard from you since I wrote to you respecting the Negro woman. I should like to have the House open, cleand, and aird and to have her there when I get there, but I will write to you again and will let you know on what day tis probable I shall arrive. Remember me affectionatly to all Friends. I anticipate much satisfaction & pleasure with you this summer. I am with sincere regard & affection

Yours sincerely

A. ADAMS

New York, May 6th, 1791

MY DEAR SISTER:

I arrived here the night before last and found Mrs. Smith and Family well. We propose to tarry with her till Monday the 10th and in ten days more to be with you. Last night by the post I received your kind Letter of April 29th. A thousand thanks for your sisterly care and attention. A little Providence before hand saves a world of fretting and teasing. I have found inconvenience enough and additional expence too, from going

¹ No suitable meaning for "night hawk" has been found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives two definitions only, the first a kind of bird, and the second a nocturnal bandit. The late Albert Matthews kindly suggested the following solution. In the *Dictionary of American English*, "nighthawk" is defined as "a dish of some kind." This definition is based on the *Massachusetts Centinel*, July 10, 1784, which contains an advertisement of a sale of dishes in Boston. Among porringers, bowls, cups and saucers, pots and pans, and candlesticks, are listed "6 nighthawks."

to places quite improvided. It is matter of comfort too to think I shall be like to find sober honest servants. I shall make much of all such. I think my dear Sister that as it is comeing Hot weather my oil cloth will do best for my parlour. I would wish to have it put down. What would be the expence of a New Tack. If ten or 12 dollors would put one up, tis so great a comfort that I should be glad to have one put up. Knives and forks I have put up, 1 dozen large spoons, 1 dozen & ½ Tea spoons. Suppose the Negro Man and woman have a bed and would not be against bringing it if I hire them both. A Matrass will do for the coach man & an other for the Boy. I hope Brother Adams¹ will not fail to procure us oats. We use 30 Bushels a month, and the coachman will have them, or other grain which is more costly & not so good for the Horses. Thomas is with us. Mr. Brislers Family moved in to our House the day I left it. I left to be put on Board Captain Cheeseman in the Brigg Ceares one Trunk of mine and one of Pollys, one Band Box & a small portmantua Trunk. If they should come before I get to Braintree I should be glad to have them brought up. I do not think of any other matter. I know you will be so provident for me that I am less anxious about any thing. I will write to you from some place on the Road so as to let you know with more certainty the day that I shall be with you. Let me find you at our House for I will be in before night. I shall avoid going through Boston. My Love to all my dear Friends. God send us a happy and joyfull meeting, prays your ever

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS.

Mrs. Smiths Love & Duty. Louisa would be glad if she knew how but she is one of the equal folks.

Philadelphia, October 30th, 1791.¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote to you upon my journey whilst I was at Brookfield [Massachusetts] the Sunday after I left you and was sorry to find by your Letter, that you had not received it. I wrote to you from N[ew] York but have been so engaged in moveing, & so embarressd with company in the midst of it, tho only a complimentary call, that I have had scarcely a moment that I could call my own. It was kind in you [to l]et Mr. Cranch to superscribe your Letter. I thank you for [the] precaution, because I open

¹ Peter Boylston Adams (1738-1823), only living brother of John Adams.

¹ Readers will notice that Mrs. Adams is now back in Philadelphia, after having spent the summer in Braintree, later (1792) Quincy.

every Letter from you with trembling and fear. I rejoice most sincerely with you in your prospect of a recovering Limb. If the Life of our dear Friend is spared, we cannot be sufficiently thankfull to a kind Providence, even tho the recovery should be long and Tedious. My Heart bled to leave you in such distress.

We have nearly got through the Bustle of Removal, but my House is no way to my mind. The Rooms so small and not able to lay two together, renders it very troublesome to see so much company as we must be obliged to. The weather is very pleasant and my Health better than for some months past. Thomas is less threatned with Rhumaticks than he was on our journey. Louisa as well as usual. Mr. Adams is much recovered to what he was, has been able to attend his duty in Senate, tho sometimes a good deal exhausted.

You mention in your Letter getting the House blockd up. I forgot to inform you that there was cider and potatoes to be put into the cellar and that Brother had engaged to see the cellar Bank'd up. But if it should not be done I would wish to have it secured before the Frost. For the Reasons above mentioned I directed Polly [Tailor] to leave the keys of the House with them, the keys of the cellar to bring to you. I wonder Mrs. Jeffry has not sent for Polly.² She appeard so solicitous to get her. I hope no one has done her an injury. Polly had qualifications peculiarly fitted for my Family, and might still have been in it, but for a little unruly Member. I like Katy very well and beleive I could not have been better suited. Mrs. Brisler is with me, feeble & sick, tho better than she was. I do not see but she must remain with me, unless Lucy returns to take care of her and her children. My things have not yet arrived from Boston. I fear I shall lose my Pears.

I am anxious for Billy Shaw³ least he should be a criple all his day's.

Let me hear from you often for I am still anxious. Remember me kindly to all inquiring Friends.

Yours affectionatly

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, December 18, 1791

MY DEAR SISTER:

I wrote to you on the 27 of Novbr. but company comeing in call'd me from my pen, and I have not since had leisure to reassume it. I have so

² Polly Tailor, formerly a servant of Mrs. Adams. See the letter of April 28, 1790.

³ William Smith Shaw (1778-1826), nephew of Mrs. John Adams.

little Time that I can call my own whilst here that I think when I return to Braintree I ought without suffering from any reflections to be able to live retired. On Monday Evenings our House is open to all who please to visit me. On Twesdays my domestick affairs call for me to arrange them & to labour pretty well too, for the Wednesdays dinners which we give every week to the amount of sixteen & 18 persons which are as many as we can accommodate at once in our Thousand Dollors House. On Thursday the replacing & restoring to order occupies my attention. The occasional intercourse of dinning abroad, returning visits &c leaves me very few hours to myself. I feel that day a happy one that I can say I have no engagemnt but to my Family. I have a cleaver, sober, honest & Neat black woman as my daily cook. In this respect I am happier than formerly. I always hire for company. The greatest trouble I have, is that Mrs. Brisler is chiefly confind to her Bed wholly unable to do the least thing for herself or Family. She was better after I came here, but a return of the intermitting fever together with her old weakness & complaints not only deprives her of her usefulness but is a great incumberance to me, and takes up much of the Time of my help. In short I know not how I get through, for I have no other help than those I brought with me except the cook. I have been very well myself, till about a fortnight since, I have labourd under complaints. [*One line at the top of the page has been cut off.*] I am still afflicted. Mr. Adams is recoverd from his complaints but labours under a great cold. Thomas has escaped better than I feard from the Rhumatism. It threatned him for several weeks. Louisa is very well. Cealia requests me to inquire after her child & prays you would write to me & inform her if it is well. Mrs. Otis¹ & Cousin Betsy are well. We live socible & Friendly together. In many respects I am much better off than when I lived out of Town. Expencc is not to be taken into consideration. That is almost beyond calculation. What a dreadfull blow this defeat of Sinclair & his Army?² My Heart bleads for the Relatives of as worthy officers as ever fought or fell but, the justice,

¹ Mary (Smith) [Gray], second wife of Samuel Allyne Otis (1740-1814). His first wife, Elizabeth Gray, daughter of Harrison Gray (1711-1794), died January 22, 1779.

² Arthur St. Clair (1736-1818) was born in Scotland and came to America in 1757 to serve with Amherst in Canada. He married Phoebe Bayard, of Boston, a niece of Governor James Bowdoin, from whom his wife inherited money. Having served in the Revolution, he was appointed Governor of the Northwest Territory in 1787. On November 4, 1791, he was surprised and overwhelmingly defeated by the Indians on a branch of the Wabash, not far from the present site of Fort Wayne. For a dramatic account of this defeat, and President Washington's reaction to the news of it, see Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 209-15.

the policy, the wisdom of this cruel enterprize lies with higher powers to investigate than mine.

Your kind Letters of Novbr 6th & 11th came safe to Hand and made me truly happy. So little hopes had I of the recovery of our dear and valuable Friend that I feard to hear from you; I could never have imagind that a Leg such as his was, & which appeard to be so far gone in a mortification, could possibly have been restored & that so soon, thanks to that all gracious Providence whose kindness has been so frequently displayd towards us. I heard last week from Mrs. Smith and her little ones. They were all well. You begin I suppose to feel anxious for Mrs. Norton. I hope to hear in due time that she has a daughter. I feel anxious about our House at Braintree. There was a place in the Roof that Leakd much. I sent for two Carpenters, but they could not find out the place. I wish it might be lookd too. I spoke with Brother about it, but fear he has not thought about it. I see by the paper that Mr. Jeffrie is gone to the Madaries for his Health. I want to know how Polly does & how she is likd. I often think of your Neighbours saying she was as necessary to him as his daily Bread. I miss her very much in things which it will be hard for any other person ever to make up to me, in that ready offerd service which prevented my wishes, and which is always so pleasing. Yet she balanced the account sometimes by the vexation which she occasiond me. I wish her well, and shall always value her good qualities, and freely credit her for them. Cealia is as good as I could expect, but would soon be led way if I did not strickly guard her. Katy has all the dispositions in the world [as] Sterne says, but wants experience, in a service which is quite New to her. She is faithfull in her duty, but poor Girl has her sister & two children to look after. In short I think sometimes it cost me as dearly for honesty & fidelity as it would for knavery and I seem to have got an entailment that follows me through the world, particularly a certain degree of sickness that I must take charge of. However it is I hope a part of the portion of good which I ought to do. If so I am in fault to complain. Remember me kindly to all Friends. Mrs. Payne I often think of. Give my Love to her & tell her I hope to see her early in the spring with my other Friends. Pray if I did not Mention the desk before give for it what you think it reasonably worth and ask the Dr. for the Money. Let me hear from you as often as you can and be assured of the sincere affection of

Your Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Febr'y. 5th, 1792

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of Decbr. and sincerely congratulate you and my Neice upon the Birth of a Son, tho I could have wishd it had been a daughter.¹ I have had the pleasure of having Mrs. Smith and William on a visit to me for 5 weeks. The Col. has been part of the Time here & Charles spent a fortnight with me. They expect to leave me in a week or ten days. This would be but a small matter to me as I should hope to see them again when I past through N[ew] York. But of that I have no prospect. The Col. has made a very advantagous contract with some Gentlemen which will carry him abroad and keep him [there] two years and accordingly he takes his Family with him and [they will] sail in the March Packet. This you may be sure is a heavy stroke to me, but I cannot wish them to decline it, as he goes upon a certain sure footing, and a probable great advantage. Mrs. Smith is in circumstances which will make me more anxious for her, but my Family are destined to be scatterd I think. I begin to long for the Time when I shall set out for Braintree. I fear it will not be earlier than the last year. My Health for six weeks has not been good. I still Labour under an Intermitting [fever] which I apprehend will increase with the warm weather. I am not confind, but am frequently obliged to decline going into company, of which this city is the General Resort during winter, and one continued scene of Parties upon Parties, Balls and entertainments equal to any European city. The Publick amusements tis True are few. No Theatre here this winter, an assembly once a fortnight, to which I have not been this season, but the more general Method for those who have Houses calculated for it, is to give Balls at their own Houses. The Indian War has been a distressing subject. Who & who have been in fault is not for me to say. Where a commander is to be found fit for the Buisness I believe will puzzel more wise Heads than one. The War is an [u]npopular one. If it is a necessary War as I presume it is, it is to be hoped that measures will be pressed to render it more successfull than it has yet been, but I believe those whose judgments are good have little expectation that it will be so.

What is become of Betty & her Husband? Cealia is very anxious about her child & very unhappy at the part her Mother has taken. I was glad to le[arn] that Polly was well & pleasd with her place. We have had

¹The second son born to the Reverend Jacob and Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton.

[*page torn*] weather here. The judge & Mrs. Lowell² have been a month here and by them I shall forward this to you. Mrs. Brisler is much better than she was. Her disorder proved to be an intermitting fever.

Let me hear from you and my Friends as often as you can. It will give great pleasure to your

Affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 20, 1792

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have obliged Louisa, much against her judgment, to give me a pen, Ink and paper, that I might make an effort however feeble to write a few lines to my dear sister. 'Tis now the sixth week since I have been out of the door of this Chamber, or moved in a larger circle than from my Bed to the chair. I was taken six weeks ago very ill with an Inflammatory Rhumatism and tho it did not totally deprive me of the use of my Limbs, it swelld and inflamed them to a high degree, and the distress I sufferd in my Head was almost intolerable. 3 Times was I let Blood, the state of which was like a person in a high Plurisy. I am now lame in my wrists from the 8th pr of Blisters which I have had. A week after the Rhumatism attackd me, the intermitting fever set in, and under that I am still Labouring. It was necessary to quell the inflamitory disease first, & Bark could not be administerd for that. I am now reduced low enough to drive away the Rhumatism, but the old Enemy yet keeps possession. The Dr. [Benjamin Rush] promisses me the Bark in a few days, but my dear Sister, you would scarcely know me reduced as I am. I have scarcely any flesh left in comparison of what I was, but blessed be God my Life is spaired and I am really mending, tho it must be slowly whilst this fever which daily visits me remains. In the midst of my Illness my dear Mrs. Smith was obliged to leave me. Distress enough poor Girl. She then expected to have saild in 8 days but they have since determind to go in a Merchant Ship which is to sail this week. But tho absent from you my dear Sister & deprived of the Tender care of my only daughter, I have not been without my comforts. Louisa has been a watchfull and attentive Nurse. Mrs. Brisler has happily recoverd her Health and has been a comfort to me. But I have found in my old Friend Mrs. Dalton¹ a

² John Lowell (1743-1802), of Newburyport, and later Boston. In 1789 he became a United States judge for the District of Massachusetts.

¹ See the letter of February 20, 1790.

Friend indeed, and in my good Mrs. Otis² & kind Cousin Betsy,³ all that I could wish or desire. One or other of them have been constantly with me, watching by Night & tending me by day as you my dear Sister would have done. I have experienced from all my acquaintance the kindest solisitude for me, & tho so long a sickness, have always had more watchers to offer than I have had occasion to accept. I have had a most tedious cough through my disorder which has not yet left me. My weak state call[s] upon me to quit the pen & lay me down. If well enough tomorrow I will take it up again.

Wednesday, [March] 21, [1792]

I am much to day as yesterday. Had a tolerable Night, find rather more agitation upon my Nerves. Received a Letter from Mrs. Smith who was to have saild this day, but is prevented by the Cols. being taken sick with his old Billious complaint so as to be obliged to be Bled and Blisterd. I am not a little anxious for him. How soon may our fairest prospects be leveld with the dust and shew us that Man in his best estate is but vanity and dust?

I am almost too weak to think of any arrangments for a journey, but as soon as I am able to travel I shall set out for Braintree. If congress are not up, Mr. Adams will ask leave of absence. As I have not yet been out of my chamber, the middle of April is as soon as I can expect if I mend ever so fast, but that will soon be here. There is a little painting I wish I could get done to the House before I come. I mean the stairs and the Entry below & the china closset & the kitchen floor. I wish you would consult the the [*sic*] Dr. [Cotton Tufts] & have it done if you can. Mrs. Black has her small Room painted as I should like the Entry and closset. I hope my wood is ready which I engaged to have got in the winter. If I had been well I should have written to the Dr. respecting several things, but I am little capable of Buisness & Mr. Adams's whole time is taken up with the publick Buisness. I wish you to ask the Dr. if he does not think I had better have a Barrel of Brown Sugar bought provided it can be had. Good Sugars will rise. Oats I suppose it will be time enough to think of, yet if they are reasonable I wish the Dr. to secure us a hundred Bushel. I thank you my dear Sister for all the kind care you have taken

² Mrs. Samuel Allyn Otis, step-mother of Harrison Gray Otis (1765-1848).

³ Elizabeth, daughter of William Smith, brother of Mrs. Adams. See the letter of April 20, 1792.

for me. I still continue to be troublesome to you. My Love to my Neices & all other Friends. I find myself too feeble to continue writing. Cealia is well, much concernd for her Child. Adieu. God grant us a happy meeting prays your ever

Affectionate Sister
A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, March 25th, 1792.

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of March eleventh yesterday. I wrote to you last week which was the first time I had been permitted to use my pen, or indeed was able too, for six weeks. I have not yet been out of my chamber. The Weather has been very unfavourable this Month. I was to have tried the carriage to day but the weather is against me. I am so feeble & faint, if I move that I do not think I could get down stairs without being carried. Yet I grow impatient of confinement, and long to be well enough to set out on my journey. I fear I shall not have strength for it so soon as I wish. I would leave here the middle of April if I could.

You was so good as to make provision for me last year by procuring me those things which you thought necessary such as Loaf & Brown Sugar, Tea, Coffe, Meal &c. As to Brown Sugar I hope the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] will procure me a Barrel. I shall not have so many articles to provide as when I went last year in the furniture way, yet I did not arrive at a frying pan or Grid Iron I think. I dont know whether I wrote the Dr. to procure me candles. If I did not you will speak to him.

March 29th, [1792]

Bad weather yet. No riding out for which I am impatient. I yesterday received a Letter from Mrs. Smith [dated the] 24th. She writes me that the Col. was better & that they expected to sail the first fair wind. I have not learnt that they are yet gone. Indeed my dear Sister it is very hard to part with my only daughter. It has depressd my spirits very much through my sickness, but we must all have our trials, some of one kind & some of an other. As to Politicks, they begin to grow pretty warm. There are Honesters in Congress as well as in Boston. There are Grumblers and antifeadelist [*sic*], but very few from the North. The old dominion is in a Rage, because they could not carry the point of getting

more than their share of Representation in the Government.¹ All the attacks upon the Secretary of the Treasury and upon the Government come from that Quarter, but I think whilst the people prosper, and feel themselves happy they cannot be blown up. I most sincerely wish a stop could be put to the Rage of speculation, yet I think it is an Evil that will cure itself in Time. 'Tis very curious, just before the News arrived of Sinclairs defeat, Mr. Gerry made a motion for an Equestrian Statue to be Erected to the President, agreeable to a former vote of congress—now the Coin is not permitted to wear the stamp of the President because it would savor too much of Royalty.² So inconsistent are Men—and the same Men,—But I feel that I must close. Presenting my affectionate Regards to you & yours I am most sincerely

Your affectionate Sister
A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, April 20th, 1792

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have just received your kind Letter as I was about to write to you to inform you that we proposed sitting out on our journey on Monday or Tuesday next. The weather has been so rainy that I have not been able to ride so often as I wishd in order to prepare myself for my journey, and how I shall stand it, I know not. This everlasting fever still hangs about me & prevents my intire recovery. A critical period of Life Augments my complaints. I am far from Health, tho much better than when I wrote you last. I see not any company but those who visit me in my chamber. Nor have I once been out of my carriage, but to see my Friend

¹ As a result of the first census (1790), the House of Representatives was reapportioned among the states in the spring of 1792. Three bills were introduced into Congress, resulting in a three-sided quarrel between House and Senate, Federalists and Republicans, and New England and Virginia. The first bill was lost in the House; the second was vetoed by Washington—the first exercise of the veto power in our history. The third bill, allowing one representative for every thirty-three thousand people, took care of the fractional parts of the population in New England. After March 3, 1793, the House consisted of one hundred and five members. Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 206-7.

² "A Federal proposition in the House to put the President's head upon the new United States coins was assailed with more effect as an unrepubli- can imitation of Caesar's image and superscription, and the device of Liberty was finally substituted instead. Though in this instance and another, where plans were being pressed for erecting an equestrian statue to Washington . . . the real animus of the opposition was directed against the Hamilton clique. . . ." Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 207.

Mrs. Dalton, who was sick before I got well, tho not till I was so much better as to do without her kind care. Cousin Betsy Smith¹ has been with me for the greatest part of the Time the last Month, and a good child she is, tender and affectionate as her good Mother was. I thank you for your care about my things. We have sent last week to Boston by the Brigg Isabella a number of Boxes & Barrels. They are address to the care of J. Q. A., but I wish you to ask the Dr. [Cotton Tufts] to be so kind as to see that a carefull Team brings them to Braintree, & that Hay or Straw is put into the cart, or the things will get Broken. The Bill of laiding was inclosed to Mr. Adams. I shall send by the Brig Maria my Trunk of cloaths &c. She is now here. I am glad to hear that spring is forward as I hope to find the Roads good in consequence of it, but I always fear for the fruit. If the things you mention could be accomplishd before we arrive, it would be a great relief to me. I am grieved for my dear Sister Shaw, tho I have not been able to write and tell her so, for I was seiz'd with an inflammation in one of my Eyes when I was first taken sick which has not yet left me. I could not bear a light in the Room, nor even the fire to Blaize. It is much better, but writing, reading or sewing are all painfull to me. Mr. Adams has not had any return of his Ague but lives in continual apprehension. Thomas is thin & pale but does not complain. We must leave him on account of his Studies. Yet it will be with apprehensions that I shall hear of his being sick—I do not particularly recollect any thing I want. You know as well as I & better for you provided for me before. If you go to Boston I should like to have a pr of Brass Andirons at about 8 dollars price, Tongues [*sic*] and Shovel proper for my best Room, but you need take no extra trouble for them. You will be so good as to have the Beds aird &c. If Betsy is in Braintree she may be engaged for to stay if you think best till Cealia gets Home. I shall send her by the vessel now here. I am not so perfectly easy on account of travelling Home as I should have been with Robert when he was sober, but he really got to such a pass that I have been obliged to part with him & have taken one who has not driven me more than once or twice, but I hope we shall reach Home safe. Terrible is the distress in N[ew] York, from the failure of many of the richest people there, and from the Spirit of Speculation which has prevaild & brought to Ruin many industerous Families who lent their Money in hopes of

¹ Daughter of William Smith, brother of Mrs. Adams and sister of Louisa Smith, who made her home with John and Abigail Adams. See footnote 4 to the letter of November 24, 1788.

Gain.² I was mortified to see our worthy Friend³ stand so low on the list of Senators who I had been accustomed to see stand foremost, but such is the Instability of the people. Popular Leaders catch their ear and they are credulous to their own injury. In the House of Representatives of the U[nited] States matters are not going better. The Southern members are determined if possible to Ruin the Secretary of the Treasury, distroy all his well built systems, if possible and give a Fatal Stab to the funding system. In Senate they have harmonized well, no unbecoming heats or animosity.⁴ The Members are however weary & long for a recess one after an other are dropping off, which gives weight to the opposite side. Many of the Southern Members have written long speeches & had them printed, which has had more influence than our Northern Friends are aware of who, depending upon the goodness of their cause, have been inattentive to such Methods to influence the populace. The V[ice] President, they have permitted to sleep in peace this winter, whilst the minister at War, & the Secretary of the Treasury have been their Game.⁵ The Secretary of State & even the President has not escaped. I firmly believe if I live Ten Years longer, I shall see a deviation of the Southern & Northern States, unless more candour & less intrigue, of which I have no hopes, should prevail. Should a war or any dire calamity assail us, then they would Hugg us. But politicks avaut. My dear Mrs. Smith has been a Month gone. It pains me to the Heart. But who of us can say, that we have not our troubles? Our portion of happiness is no doubt equal to our deserts.

² The collapse of what the press called "scripophobia," a period of feverish speculation when the banks "soared like soap bubbles," starting in the summer of 1791. By the spring of 1792 there were many failures, and for large amounts.

³ In 1792 the Senators from Massachusetts were Caleb Strong (1745-1819), of Northampton, and George Cabot (1752-1823), of Salem.

⁴ "But in the Senate Chamber all was dignity, courtesy, and moderation; the Senators, never more than thirty-two in number in Philadelphia, appeared well powdered and in rich dress, and if a loud whisper disturbed the member who had the floor Vice-President Adams would restore order by gently tapping with his silver pencil-case upon the little mahogany table which stood in front of him." Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 353.

⁵ Because Henry Knox, Secretary of War, usually sided with Hamilton, who often carried Edmund Randolph, the Attorney-General, over to his way of thinking in disputes in the Cabinet, the Anti-Federalists, or Republicans, seized on the disaster of St. Clair's Defeat to strike at Hamilton by accusing Knox of inefficiency. When the Cabinet divided, Washington was left in the middle; but too often Randolph, as Jefferson liked to say, would give the "shells" to him and the "oyster" to Hamilton. Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 275.

Adieu my dear Sister. I hope to see you in a few weeks. Remember me affectionately to all our Friends. And believe me

As ever yours

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, Sunday, April 29, 1792

MY DEAR SISTER:

I left Philadelphia on Tuesday Noon the 24 of April. My first stage was only twenty miles. I bore it better than I expected. The next day rode only 18. Rain came on & the Roads were miry indeed. We did not get to this place till Friday evening. Here I find a vacancy which cannot be supplied, tho all my Friends are good & kind. The first being who welcomed me to the House, and met me at the door, was Billys¹ little favorite dog who came skipping & hopping upon me. My feelings were awakened almost to Tears. Mrs. Smith I should have said moved into the Cols. House when he went away. N[ew] York is in great distress. Many of my particular acquaintance whose affluence was great & well founded when I lived here, and even when I passt through last winter, are now in Ruinous circumstances, thousands worse than nothing. Such is the wheel of fortune.

We propose setting out tomorrow but shall not reach Braintree (Quincy I beg your pardon)² till next week. I will endeavour to write you what day when we get into Massachussets, not perhaps till Wednesday week. My Health is better than when I set out, but the Weather is very Rainy, & I dare not travell in bad Weather. My best Regards to you all. Adieu.

Yours affectionately

A. ADAMS

N[ew] York, 25 June, 1795¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

I yesterday received your Letter giving me an account of the distressed situation of Sister Smith.² I fear her disorder will terminate in a settled

¹ William, the eldest son of Abigail (Adams) Smith (1765-1813).

² Quincy, formerly part of Braintree, was established as Quincy on February 22, 1792. *Historical Data Relating to Counties, Cities, and Towns in Massachusetts*: Division of Public Records, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Boston, 1920, p. 52.

¹ Readers will notice that more than three years have elapsed since the preceding letter. Jefferson was no longer Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph having succeeded him on January 2, 1794. Hamilton, also, had retired, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., having become Secretary of the Treasury on February 2, 1795. Timothy Pickering became Secretary of War on January 2, 1795. William Bradford was Attorney-General after January 29, 1794; Joseph Habersham became Postmaster-General on February 5, 1795.

² Apparently the second wife of William Smith, the brother of Abigail (Smith) Adams. Smith first married Catherine Louisa Salmon.

distracted. Burrell shall have the Room & bed Room for Mrs. Smith at 12 dollars a year, but he shall have them only for her. That is he shall not consider himself at Liberty to let them to any one else if she should not continue with him. I mention this because when I let him the House there was a misunderstanding between us. But if she goes there, care should be had that she should have a sufficiency of good & wholesome food. They are poor people and live pretty near. Indeed they are obliged to. Mrs. Smith's place is let at much too small a Rent as produce is.

I was in hopes to have been on my way home by this time, but the Senate are not yet up, and Mr. Adams does not give me much hopes of its rising till Saturday. The Fate of the Treaty is not yet known. It is however the general opinion that it will be ratified. I say the out door opinion, for the Senate are secret and silent. It has been discussed with much calmness, coolness and deliberation, and considered in all its various lights and operations.³ I hope the decision will be wise & judicious, satisfactory & beneficial to the Country. The Grumblers will growl however. Party will shew itself, and be bitter. I have had letters from my sons [as] late as 24 April. They were well & desire to be particularly remembered to all Friends at Quincy.

Mrs. Smith sends her duty & Love. She is well & so is Emelia,⁴ a lovely Girl I assure you tho she has got red Hair which mortifies her mother not a little. John has the Ague poor fellow.

I hear frequently of your son,⁵ & from every body the just praises which he merits. Mr. Greenleaf drank Tea here last week. He talks of

³ For the acrimony and intrigue which accompanied the negotiation and ratification of this treaty, see the standard work, S. F. Bemis, *Jay's Treaty*, New York, 1923. Jay's Treaty, signed November 19, 1794, was the subject of such secrecy that John Trumbull, the painter, had to commit it to memory in order to give the text of it to James Monroe in Paris in December, 1794. Just as Washington was on the point of allowing a publication of the authentic document, Bache's *Aurora* of June 29 came out with an abstract of the substance of it. Bache got his copy from Stevens Thomson Mason (1760-1803), United States Senator from Virginia; he printed the text of the treaty in full in a pamphlet on July 1, 1795. For the popular reaction to the text of the treaty, see Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 310-2. The Senate ratified it on June 24, 1795. The House finally voted money to carry it into effect on April 30, 1796.

⁴ Caroline Amelia Smith, who was born in 1795, married John Peter DeWindt.

⁵ William Cranch (1769-1855) went to Washington in 1794 as lawyer for the North American Land Company, of which his brother-in-law, James Greenleaf, was one of the chief promoters. See James Edward Greenleaf, *Genealogy of the Greenleaf Family*, Boston, 1896, pp. 217-8, and the following note.

returning to Holland soon. The Girls here, I believe, wish his wife dead.⁶ He is sufficiently a favorite where ever he goes; & seems too much of an American not to have all his affections, *all* centerd in this country. His manners are more like Nancys⁷ than any of the rest of the Family. He looks like her. I asked how Polly [Tailor] was liked. He told me very much & Julia he said was well. I wishd him to go on to Boston that he [might] enjoy the happiness of his Brother⁸ to which he had so much contributed. He said he must rejoice in it at a distance as his buisness would not allow him that pleasure.

Remember me affectionatly to all our Friends. Tell Brisler the week after next he may look for us.

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

Springfield [Massachusetts], April 30, 1797¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

I know you will rejoice to hear that we are so far on our journey without meeting any accident. My Quincy Friends and Neighbours who accompanied us as far as Westown could tell you that they parted with us in as good spirits; as the peculiar circumstances which preceeded our

⁶This remarkable man was James Greenleaf (1765-1843) of Boston, notorious speculator in land, the associate of Robert Morris (1734-1806) and John Nicholson (died in 1800) of Pennsylvania, in the North American Land Company. Greenleaf was American Consul-General in Amsterdam, and had a Dutch wife, through whose connections in Holland he planned to obtain investors in American land. The wars of the French Revolution diverted Dutch money to France, and emigrants who might have crossed the ocean died on the battlefields of Europe. The North American Land Company collapsed because of its ambitious scheme to promote and develop the new city of Washington. Greenleaf, Morris, and Nicholson went to jail. See the account of Greenleaf and his company in Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, pp. 107-13; also, Schouler, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 381.

⁷Nancy (Greenleaf) Cranch (1772-1843), sister of James Greenleaf (1765-1843), married William Cranch in 1795.

⁸John Greenleaf (1763-1848), who married his cousin, Lucy Cranch (1767-1846), daughter of Richard and Mary (Smith) Cranch.

¹Readers will notice that almost two years have elapsed since the preceding letter. Mrs. John Adams, now the wife of the President, is on her way from Quincy to Philadelphia, where John Adams had been inaugurated on March 4, 1797. For his inaugural speech, see Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 105-11. President and Mrs. John Adams left their suburban home at Bush Hill and moved into the city of Philadelphia in 1791. In 1797 they occupied what was formerly the Robert Morris mansion, next door to the new Morris mansion at the southeast corner of Sixth and Market Streets. Washington resided there from 1790 to 1797. This dwelling was demolished in 1832. Pennsylvania built an Executive Mansion at Ninth and Market Streets, but neither Washington nor Adams lived in it.

leaving home would admit. We reachd Williams's and lodgd there.² It was fortunate that Mr. Brisler was with his wife, for in the Night she was taken with one of her sick turns, and was ill all night and part of the next day. Worry and fatigue had brought on what would have taken place without it as soon as the Hot weather commenced. Having effectually clear'd her stomack, I hope she will proceed without any further inconvenience. The next day we reachd Worcester to dine, and Brookfield³ to lodge. How we got to Springfield to night, is not worth your while to inquire. The Attorney General⁴ will not present us I presume, as we caught him on the Road, returning from Northhampton Court. But with a Family of thirteen persons it behoves us to get on as fast as we can, particularly when I consider my detention, and how necessary to the *Wheels* of the Presidents Family Brisler is. My Thoughts are continually like Noahs Dove, returning to the Ark I have left.

Whether like that I shall return no more, must be left with that Being, in whose hands my Breath is. I consider myself following where duty leads and trust the Event.

Is Heav'n tremendous in its frowns? Most sure;
And in its favours formidable too:
Its favours here are trials, not rewards;
A call to duty, not discharge from care;
And should alarm us, full as much as woes;
Awake us to their cause, and concequence;
O'er our scann'd conduct give a jealous eye;
And make us tremble.⁵

Such appears to me the situation in which I am placed, enviable no doubt in the Eyes of some, but never envy'd or coveted by me. That I

² Weston, the west precinct of Watertown, was established in 1713. In 1754 part of it was included in the new town of Lincoln. Boundaries between Weston and Waltham were established in 1766. *Counties, Cities, and Towns in Massachusetts*, p. 47. Williams's Inn was at Marlborough, Abraham Williams having erected a tavern there in 1665, which was still known by his name as late as 1907. Mary C. Crawford, *Little Pilgrimages Among Old New England Inns*, Boston, 1907, p. 160.

³ Brookfield, now in Worcester County, was incorporated as a town in 1718. *Counties, Cities, and Towns in Massachusetts*, pp. 63-4.

⁴ James Sullivan (1744-1808) was Attorney-General of Massachusetts from 1790 to 1807, and Governor, 1807-1808.

⁵ Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*: "First Night: on Life, Death, and Immortality," lines 328-35. John Kieran of the *New York Sun* and "Information Please" deserves the credit for the placing of this quotation.

may discharge my part with honour, and give satisfaction is my most earnest wish.

My kindest regards await my Friends, particularly to Brother Cranch. Love to my dear Eliza. I hope she will not let her spirits faint or sink under her bereavement. How consolatory the reflection, that whom the Lord loveth, he chastneth.

You have the consolation of knowing that no part of your duty was omitted. All that the tenderest Love and kindest affection could do or perform was done by you, for the dear Girl whose loss we mourn. This with her dying Breath she bore witness too [*sic*]. [*At this point half a page is cut out.*]⁶

Let Mrs. Howard know that Betsy stands her journey pretty well. The other Girls are very well. I forgot to mention to Mr. Porter to attend to the first catipillar webb and take them of as soon as they appear. Pray send him word. I see they are beginning upon the Road.

[A. ADAMS]

East Chester, [New York], May 5, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

We reachd here yesterday being thursday the 7th day from leaving home. We had very bad Roads, the Rains having washd all the stones bare, and the ruts were very deep. I was much fatigued. Brisler and Family went on to N[ew] York, Mrs. Brisler much mended in her Health by her journey. I hope when we get over our fatigue we shall all be able to say so. Betsy does not seem the worse for it, tho I think I have run a risk in taking so feeble a Being, but I hope it may be a means of restoring a Good Girl to Health. I found Mrs. Smith and her Children in good Health. Mrs. Smith grows very fleshy, as much so I think as before she first went abroad, tho being older and more moulded into the form of woman, she does not look so burden'd. The Col[onel] has been gone a journey for a fortnight up to his New Lands. Tomorrow I go into New York and on Monday proceed for Philadelphia. I think it a very fortunate circumstance that Mr. Smith accompanied us. It has renderd the journey much pleasenter, and he has taken a good deal of care and

⁶The mother of John Adams, Susanna (Boylston) [Adams] Hall (1709-1797), died on April 21, 1797, at the age of eighty-eight. "Died at Quincy, 22 April, 1797, Mary Smith, daughter of the late Captain Smith, in the 22nd year of her age." *Columbian Centinel*, April 26, 1797. This Mary Smith was a niece of Mrs. John Adams. See *Letters of Mrs. Adams*, Boston, 1840, vol. 2, p. 237.

anxiety from my mind, which I should have felt if he had not been with me.

I want to hear how you all are; and how my Farming buisness goes on. I would wish you to go & look at them sometimes. My Love to all Friends and Neighbours. Mrs. Smith joins me in a kind remembrance.

Your affectionate Sister

A. A[DAMS]

Philadelphia, May 16, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

Most cordially welcome to me was your kind Letter of May the 4th, yet I have not found time since my arrival to thank you for it, or even to write a Line to any Friend. My Journey was as pleasant as my thoughts upon what was past, and my anticipations of what was to come would permit it to be. We reachd East Chester on thursday noon [May 4] and found Mrs. Smith and Children well. My reflections upon prospects there, took from me all appetite to food, and depresst my spirits, before too low. The Col[onel] gone a journey, I knew not where, I could not converse with her. I saw her Heart too full. Such is the folly and madness of speculation and extravagance. To her no blame is due. Educated in different Habits, she never enjoyd a life of dissipation. The Boys are fine Lads. I wish they were at Hingham under your care. I tarried one day & a half, and then went into N[ew] York. Charles lives prettily but frugally. He has a Lovely Babe and a discreet woman I think for his wife, quite different from many of the Family.¹ A Number of Ladies and Gentlemen visited me there. On Monday, the 8 of May, we left N[ew] York to persue our journey. On Wednesday morning about 25 miles from Town, I was met by my Friend who clameing his own, I quitted my own carriage, and took my seat by his side. We rode on to Bristol,² where I had previously engaged a dinner, and there upon the Banks of the Deleware, we spent the day, getting into the city at sun set. I found my Family of domesticks had arrived on Saturday without meeting any accident, which was very fortunate, for 40 miles through the Jersies was the worst Roads I ever travelld. The soil is all clay. The

¹ In 1798 Charles Adams (1770-1800) was living in Beaver Street, New York City. Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, index, p. 288. His wife was Sarah Smith (1769-1828); his two daughters, Susanna Boylston (1796-1846), and Abigail Louisa (1798-1838). Mrs. Charles Adams was a sister of Colonel William Stephens Smith.

² Bristol, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

heavy rains & the constant run of six stages daily, had so cut them up, that the whole was like a ploughd feild, in furroughs of 2 feet in depth, and was very dangeróus. To me you may well suppose such roads were more peculiarly distressing. They were so much so, as to confine me to my Room & Bed the greater part of Two days. By some applications I have in a great Measure recoverd, tho I am still a sufferer.

Yesterday being Monday, from 12 to half past two I received visits, 32 Ladies and near as many Gentlemen. I shall have the same ceremony to pass through to day, and the rest part of the week. As I am not prepaired with furniture for a Regular drawing Room, I shall not commence one I believe, as the Summer is to near at hand, and my Health very precarious. At the Winter Sessions I shall begin. Mrs. [Cotton] Tufts once stiled my situation, splendid misery. She was not far from Truth. To day the President meets both Houses at 12 to deliver His speech.³ I will inclose it to you. I should like to learn the comments upon it, with a veiw to discover the Temper and Sentiments of the publick mind. We are indeed as Milton expresses it, "Thrown on perilius Times."

We have Letters from the Minister at the Hague⁴ as late as 23 Feb'ry. I will send you in my next some extracts from them. They are in the same strain of information and intelligence with the former. The decission as it respected the Election here, was well assertaind in France & England & Holland, and it had its influence upon all those powers.

I pray you to Remember me affectionatly to all my Friends & Neighbours. I rejoyce in your unanimity as it respect [*sic*] Mr. Whitney,⁵ who you know is the Man of my choice, without any prejudice or dissafection to Mr. Flint.⁶ The union was however unexpected but not the less agreable. The hour approaches to dress for the morning. My Love to Cousin Betsy. I wish she could run in as formerly. I do not however despair of seeing her Here some future day.

I can say nothing to you of future prospects of returning to my own

³ The first session of the Fifth Congress extended from May 15 to July 10, 1797. Adams read his message on relations with France on May 16, 1797.

⁴ John Quincy Adams (1767-1848), who was commissioned by George Washington as minister to the Netherlands on May 30, 1794. For incomplete versions of seventeen letters which J. Q. Adams wrote to his mother, February 8, 1797, to April 14, 1801, from Holland and Prussia, see the second volume of *Writings of John Quincy Adams, 1779-1823*, W. C. Ford, Editor, New York, 1913-17.

⁵ Peter Whitney (1770-1843), Harvard, 1791, became assistant to Anthony Wibird, minister in Quincy.

⁶ Jacob Flint, of Reading, Harvard, 1794. He died in 1835. See the letter of November 15, 1797.

dear Home. That must be governd by circumstances. My pens are so bad I know not whether you can read. I am most affec'ly

Your Sister

A. ADAMS

Evening 8 oclock

The day is past, and a fatiguing one it has been. The Ladies of Foreign Ministers and the Ministers, with our own Secretaries & Ladies have visited me to day, and add to them, the whole Levee to day of senate & house. Strangers &c making near one Hundred asked permission to visit me, so that from half past 12 till near 4, I was rising up & sitting down. Mr. A[dams] will never be too big to have his Friends.

Philadelphia, May 24, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I keep up my old Habit of rising at an early hour. If I did not I should have little command of my Time. At 5 I rise. From that time till 8 I have a few leisure hours. At 8 I breakfast, after which untill Eleven I attend to my Family arrangements. At that hour I dress for the day. From 12 until two I receive company, sometimes untill 3. We dine at that hour unless on company days which are tuesdays & thursdays. After dinner I usually ride out untill seven. I begin to feel a little more at Home, and less anxiety about the ceremonious part of my duty, tho by not having a drawing Room for the summer I am obliged every day, to devote two Hours for the purpose of seeing company. Tomorrow we are to dine the Secretaries of State &c with the whole Senate.¹ The Male [part of the *cancelled*] domesticks I leave wholly to Brisler to hire and to dismiss; the Female I have none but those I brought with me, except a Negro woman who is wholly with the Cook in the kitchin, and I am happy in not having any occasion for any others, for a very sad set of creatures they are. I believe this city is become as vile and debauched as the city of London, nay more so, for in the lower classes, much more respect is had to Character there. Speculation in Property, in politicks and in Religion have gone very far in depraving the morals of the higher classes of the people of our Country.

You will see by the Chronical, I presume, that the Tone of the Jacobins is turnd, and that the president has committed with them the unpardon-

¹ In 1797 the Cabinet consisted of five men, and there were thirty-two Senators. If we count Vice-President Jefferson, John and Abigail Adams must have invited at least thirty-eight guests to dinner.

able sin "by saying, that he was convinced that the conduct of the Government had been just and impartial to foreign Nations." Bache² open his batterys of abuse and scurility the very next day, and has in every paper continued them, extracts of which I dout [*sic*] not the Faithfull Chronical will detail. The answer of the Senate³ you will find equally firm and decided as the Speech. I call it a supporting answer. The House cannot yet get theres [*sic*] through. The Antis. want to qualify. They dare not openly countenance the conduct of France, but they want to court and coax her.⁴ With Barra's [*sic*]⁵ insolent speech before their Eyes and Pincknys⁶ dispatches, which fully prove the unbecomeing and indignant conduct of France toward the United States, these degraded Beings would still have their Countrymen "lick the Hand just raisd to shed their Blood." Amongst that number is Freeman⁷ of our state, who yesterday appeard a full blood Jacobin in his speech in the House. Landgon [*sic*]⁸ in the Senate is more bitter than even Mason⁹ or any Virginian. Mr. Otis¹⁰ I am told appeard to great advantage, and was much admired in a speech of considerable Length.

I want to hear from you again. You must write to me once a week. How does Mr. & Mrs. Porter succeed? I will thank you to get from the

² Benjamin Franklin Bache (1769-1798), nicknamed "Lightning-Rod Junior," was a grandson of Benjamin Franklin. In 1790 he founded, in Philadelphia, the *General Advertiser*, better known later under the name *Aurora*, an Anti-Federalist, or Republican paper.

³ To the address of John Adams, May 16, 1797, dealing with the strained relations with France. See Adams, *Works*, vol. 9, pp. 111-20.

⁴ France and Great Britain had gone to war on February 1, 1793. The French government was offended with the negotiation and ratification of Jay's Treaty by the United States (1794-1795).

⁵ Paul François Jean Nicolas Barras (1755-1829), member of the Directory (1795), appointed Bonaparte to the command in Italy, having, at the height of his power, arranged his marriage with Josephine de Beauharnais (1763-1814) in 1796.

⁶ Charles Cotesworth Pinckney (1746-1825), of Charleston, South Carolina, appointed minister to France by Washington in 1796. When he arrived in Paris (December, 1796) the Directory declined to recognize his official status. For the four Pinckneys, see the genealogical note in Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 4, p. 210.

⁷ Nathaniel Freeman, Jr., (1766-1800), of Sandwich, member of the House of Representatives for Massachusetts (1795-1799).

⁸ John Langdon (1741-1819), of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was United States Senator (1789-1801).

⁹ Stevens Thomson Mason (1760-1803), United States Senator from Virginia. See footnote 3 to the letter of June 25, 1795.

¹⁰ Harrison Gray Otis (1765-1848), of Boston, son of Samuel Allyne Otis, Secretary of the United States Senate. Elected to succeed Fisher Ames, young Otis served in the House of Representatives (1797-1801). For his character and career, see S. E. Morison, *Harrison Gray Otis: Federalist*, Boston and New York, 1913.

table draw [*sic*] in the parlour some Annetts¹¹ and give it to Mrs. Burrel, and tell her to make her cheese a little salter this year. I sent some of her cheese to N[ew] York to Mrs. Smith and to Mr. Adams which was greatly admired and I design to have her Cheese brought here. When she has used up that other pray Dr. [Cotton] Tufts to supply her with some more, and I wish Mrs. French to do the same to part of her cheese, as I had some very good cheese of hers last year. In my best chamber closet I left a white Bonnet. Be so kind as to take it and give it for me to Mrs. Norton. In a small wooden Box is a new crape cap which I designd to have sent here, but omitted it untill my other things were gone. Will you get it & fasten it down to the Box by making a small hole or two and then putting a thread through the cap & Box. In my Bathing machine you will find a peice of canvass which will cover the Box. You will have it addrest & give it into Mr. Smiths care, who will send it to me. I have Bacon in Boston which I should be glad to have sent. Mr. Belcher knows about it. Dr. [Cotton] Tufts will pay the expence when requested.

My Respects to Brother Cranch & to Mrs. Welch. Love to Cousin Betsy from your

Ever affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, June the 3, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

The weather was so cold yesterday that we had fires in our Rooms. I suppose you have weather of a similar kind. We have had frequent showers and yesterday a fine rain. The House have at length got through the answer to the speech, 3 weeks debating whether, they should use the term indignation, or sensibility. The answer as reported and as finally agreed to, is a very handsome one, as well as a firm and decided one. It was carried 60 to 40. The Yeas & Nays were taken. Amongst the Nays will be found three of [the] Massachusetts delegation, Freeman,¹ who is a devoted ——, Varnum,² well known, and Skinner,³ of whom better hopes were entertaind.

¹¹ Annet, an obsolete variant of anet—that is, anetseed—the seed of anet, or dill. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

¹ See footnote 7 to the letter of May 24, 1797.

² Joseph Bradley Varnum (1750–1821), of Dracut, Massachusetts, member of the House of Representatives (1795–1811), and Senator of the United States (1811–1817).

³ Thomson Joseph Skinner (1752–1809), member of the House of Representatives (1797–1804).

The appointments of Envoys extraordinary, like every other measure of Government, will be censured by those who make a point of abusing every thing.⁴ Mr. Marshall of Virginia is said to be a very fair and Honorable man, and truly American, a Lawyer by profession, against whom no objection is offered, but that he is not Frenchman enough for those who would have sent Jefferson or Madison, Giles⁵ or even Jarvis.⁶ Judge Dana is known to be a decided Character, but not a party Man, nor any other than a true American. Yet Bache has undertaken to abuse the appointment, and the Chronical will not fail to retail it, that has more low Billingsgate than even Bache. But I can read them all with a true Phylosiphical contempt, and I could tell them what the President says, that their praise for a few weeks mortified him, much more, than all their impudent abuse does.

There is no terror, *Cassius*, in your threats;
For I am arm'd so strong in honesty
That they pass by me as the Idle wind,
Which I respect not.⁷

This day the House in a Body come at 12 to present their answer. The whole Hundred come.

I hope they will proceed to buisness with some dispatch. I see by the Chronical that you only have one side of the Question. I think Russel⁸ ought to give the debates on the other side. We have Men from our state

⁴ The famous "XYZ Mission." In the spring of 1797 John Adams chose C. C. Pinckney, of South Carolina, John Marshall (1755-1835), of Virginia, and Francis Dana (1743-1811), of Massachusetts, as envoys extraordinary to France. Dana declined to serve because of ill health; so Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814) was appointed in his place (June 20, 1797). Gerry was unalterably opposed to war with France because he feared an American alliance with England.

⁵ William Branch Giles (1762-1830).

⁶ Dr. Charles Jarvis (1748-1807), Harvard 1766, who, together with Benjamin Austin, was the leader of the Jeffersonians in Boston. In the Boston town meeting of April 25, 1796, Dr. Jarvis opened the debate in favor of a resolution which would have instructed members of the House of Representatives to veto Jay's Treaty, by refusing to vote for appropriations to carry the treaty into effect. H. G. Otis overwhelmed him and Austin by a vote of 2400 to 100. Jefferson appointed his son, William Jarvis (1770-1859), consul to Lisbon, where he served from 1802 to 1811.

⁷ *Julius Caesar*, Act IV, Scene 3, lines 66-9. For some strange reason Mrs. Adams wrote "Jack cuss" instead of "Cassius."

⁸ Benjamin Russell (1761-1845), journalist of Boston, founded the *Massachusetts Centinel and Republican Journal* in 1784, later the *Massachusetts Centinel*, and, in 1790, the *Columbian Centinel*. Russell was a thorough-going Federalist, but welcomed President Monroe to Boston in 1817, and coined the phrase "era of good feelings." He was among those who have been credited with the invention of the word "gerrymander."

who do great honour to it. Mr. Sewall⁹ & Otis¹⁰ are the principle Speakers. I must retract, however, what I have written as it respects Freeman & Skinner. They are on the question of agreeing to the address upon the *yea* side, but on most questions they vote with the *antis*. A Virginian who being *right* and a *new* member was misrepresented by Peter Porcupine¹¹ in his paper. Some Gentleman expresst his regret at it, upon which Mr. Evans¹² who was the Member, observed that Peter knew he was a Virginian, and so took it for granted that he must be wrong.

I inclose you a newspaper. It has in it a Letter of Thomas [Boylston Adams] to Mr. J. Quincy.¹³ Tis said to be from Paris, merly as a cover, for you see the spirit of envy and Jealousy opperating and the misrepresentations respecting only the Change of Missions to *Berlin* instead of Lisbon.¹⁴ At Portugal this present time, it was the opinion of the President & his ministers, that J. Q. A. could not be equally useful to his Country as at the Prussian court. A Treaty was to be renewd with that court, and various other reasons opperated which it would not be so proper to disclose. The appointment was made thus early to prevent his proceeding to Lisbon, where he would go on the arrival of his successor. But Malevelence is unbounded. The inclosed extract is from Bach's paper. Make the Chronical insert it.

Mr. Brisler has accomplisd the buisness for Mr. Cranch and I inclose the Bill. I have had but one Letter from you since I came here. We are all in pretty good Health. John Brisler has had the small pox & that very light. Remember me affectionatly to all Friends and Neighbours. I am,
my dear Sister,

Affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

⁹ Samuel Sewall (1757-1814), of Marblehead, Massachusetts, member of the House of Representatives (1796-1800).

¹⁰ See footnote 10 to the letter of May 24, 1797.

¹¹ "Peter Porcupine," the pen-name of the journalist William Cobbett (1763-1835), who was born in England, and died there. From 1792 to 1800 and 1817 to 1819 he lived as a political refugee in the United States, residing in Philadelphia during the last period. On March 4, 1797, he launched *Porcupine's Gazette & Daily Advertiser* to advocate alliance with England, war against France, and perdition for Republicans. The savage, sarcastic humor of the paper surpassed that of Philip Freneau and Benjamin Franklin Bache.

¹² Thomas Evans, member of the House of Representatives from Virginia (1797-1801).

¹³ Probably Josiah Quincy (1772-1864), of Boston, member of the House of Representatives (1805-1813). On January 14, 1811, he first proposed the doctrine of secession in the Congress in a speech opposing the admission of Louisiana as a state.

¹⁴ In 1797 President Adams first named his son, who was minister to the Netherlands, minister to Portugal, but his destination was suddenly changed to Berlin, where he negotiated a new treaty with Prussia.

Philadelphia, June 6, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter by this days post. I began to be anxious to hear from my Friends at Quincy. I cannot but say that I was astonishd at some of its contents. I could not believe that any Gentleman would have had so little delicacy or so small a sense of propriety as to have written a mere vague opinion, and that of a Lady too, to be read in a publick assembly as an authority. The Man must have lost his senses. I cannot say that I did not utter the expression, because it has always been my opinion that the people would not be willing to support two ministers, but little did I think of having my Name quoted on any occasion in Town meeting. If he had respected my publick Character only, he would have had some scruples upon that Head, I should have supposed. I shall always consider it as a want of delicacy in him, and a real breach of confidence to make use of my Name on the occasion. I am mortified to find a Gentleman of whom I had formed so favourable an opinion guilty of such a want of decorum. It will however serve as a lesson to me, to be upon my guard, & to be very close mouthed. I have not any remembrance of saying so, tho I think it very probable that I did. By your account of the whole transaction, he has not behaved like a Gentleman. I hope however we shall not be losers in the end.¹

I rejoice to hear our Farm looks well. The President is very desirous of seeing it. A journey some where will be absolutely necessary for him. Such close application for so long a period without any relaxation but a ride of a few miles, is too much for him & I see daily by a langour of his countenance that he wants rest. I fear he will not sustain himself unless congress rise so that we may quit this city during the Hot season.

I long for my rose Bush, my clover Field, and the retirement of Quincy, and the conversation of my dear Sister and Friends.

June 8th, [1797]

To day is post day to Quincy, and yesterday we had the Chronical. I think impudent as Bache is the Chronical has more of the true spirit of Satan, for he not only collects the Billingsgate of all the Jacobin papers but he add[s] to it the Lies, falshoods, calimny and bitterness of his own. For what other purpose could he design that paragraph,

¹ The use of the name of Mrs. Adams in the town meeting at Quincy had to do with the current discussion over finding an assistant to the Reverend Anthony Wibird. The letter from Mrs. Cranch, the contents of which "astonished" Mrs. John Adams, is probably in the Adams Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

that the President was to receive one hundred & 14 thousand dollars for four years? The salary every one knows is the same Nominal sum granted to President Washington without half its value. The 14 thousand dollars is no more the Presidents than the money voted to Rigg one of the Frigates building. Every dollar of it, is laid out for the use of the United States, and accurate Book accounts kept & vouchers taken, all of which will be regularly rendered in at our quitting the House. The son too, of 23 [*sic*] years old receiving this salary of ten thousand dollars pr year.² These salaries are all settled by Law. A Minister Resident has 4 thousand 500 dollars pr year, a Minister plenipotentiary Nine thousand. He is not pickd out to receive more than any other, but his fault is being the son of the President. This wretched party are sinking very fast; but the mischief of these publications arises from their circulating amongst persons and in places where no inquiry is made into facts. Bache will publish [*sic*] on both sides. I wish Mr. Cranch³ would make a true statement and see if the wretch would publish it. We give for this very House a thousand pounds a year. President Washington never gave more than 500. And every thing else in the same proportion, nay more than double—. But enough of this. I expected to be vilified and abused, with my whole Family when I came into this situation. Strickly to adhere to our duty, and keep ourselves unprejudiced, is the path before us and the curse causeless shall not come.⁴ I feel most sincerely for Mrs. Greenleaf and her situation. I know it will do no good to look back but you well know how anxious I was when it might have been of use to her. Mr. James Greenleaf it is said, is absconded.⁵ Mr. Morris is confined to his House.⁶ Each Party criminate the other, as you have no doubt seen by the Washington paper. I regret that there should exist any occasion for it, but know not the state of Facts, to judge between the parties. As soon as it is in my power I will endeavour to

² In June, 1797, John Quincy Adams was almost thirty, not twenty-three, as the Boston *Independent Chronicle & Universal Advertiser* alleged.

³ Richard Cranch (1726-1811), and brother-in-law of Abigail Adams.

⁴ See footnote 7 to the letter of September 1, 1789.

⁵ With the failure of the North American Land Company in the panic of 1797, James Greenleaf of Boston sought refuge in the poor debtors' prison in Prune Street, Philadelphia. He obtained a discharge from prosecution by his creditors in 1798, under one of the earliest bankruptcy laws in the United States—that of Maryland. Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 5, p. 193.

⁶ Robert Morris retired to a country house and fortified himself there, holding out for months against creditors, collectors, and constables. He was subsequently lodged in jail. In 1800 Congress passed a federal bankruptcy act, by virtue of which he obtained his freedom in August, 1801. Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 5, p. 193.

render Cousin William some assistance to enable him to purchase some Books. Say nothing about it. I will not forget him.

The time for the post to go out prevents my adding more. Tell Mrs. Howard that I think Betsy is getting better. She begins to look more like flesh and Blood. Nabby has been sick from some imprudence of her own, but is about again, Becky well, but I have a Lad who has been sick a week, and that from eating Ice creeme⁷ when he was making it & hot. He brought on such a cramp in His stomach that his Life has been in danger ever since.

Remember me affectionately to all Friends particularly to Dr. [Cotton] Tufts to whom I mean soon to write. My conscience accuses me that I have not.

Your affectionate sister,
ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, June 23, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter of June 13th and thank you for it. The account you give me respecting my House and the Farm are very pleasing. I like your proposal of going to it and taking tea with my good Neighbours very much. I am very sorry to hear that Mrs. Beal is so unwell. I have feared that she would fall into a decline, for she has appeared to me, to look very unwell for many Months. She was a good Neighbour, and would be a very heavy loss to her Family.

I do flatter myself with the prospect of coming to Quincy to pass the Months of August and Sepbr. I know it will be a tedious Journey, but I fear it will be more tedious here, and the President really suffers for want of a journey, or rather for want of some Relaxation. To day will be the 5th great dinner I have had, about 36 Gentlemen to day, as many more next week, and I shall have got through the whole of Congress, with their apendages. Then comes the 4 July which is a still more tedious day, as we must then have not only all Congress, but all the Gentlemen of the city, the Governour and officers and companies, all of whom the late President used to treat with cake, punch and wine. What the House would not hold used to be placed at long tables in the yard. As we are here we cannot avoid the trouble nor the expence. I have been informd the day used to cost the late President 500 dollors. More than 200 wt of cake used to be expended, and 2 quarter casks of wine besides

⁷ See letter of August 9, 1789.

spirit. You will not wonder that I dread it, or think President Washington to blame for introducing the custom, if he could have avoided it. Congress never were present here before on the day, so that I shall have a Hundred & 50 of them in addition to the other company. Long tables are sit in the House with similar entertainment. I hope the day will not be Hot. I am like to be favoured with a cool one to day at which I rejoice, for it is no small task to be sit [*sic*] at table with 30 Gentlemen.

Judge Dana declines his appointment. I feard he would as the state of his Health has been infirm. The President has now nominated Mr. Gerry.¹ This I know will be cavilled at by some, and he will be blamed for it, but the responsibility rest [*sic*] with him, and he must bear it. He would not have nominated him if he had not thought him an honest Man and a Friend to his Country, who will neither be deceived nor warped. I hope he will not refuse.

The task of the President is very arduous, very perplexing and very hazardous. I do not wonder Washington wishd to retire from it, or rejoiced at seeing an old oak in his place. He has manifested his intire approbation of the measures persued by the Executive.

I thank you for your care of my things. Let Mrs. Hunt know that Nabby is well and I believe contented and that I shall want Betsy if I come as I expect, and I shall stand in need of some more female help, particularly a cook. I might here [*sic*] of some black woman in Boston perhaps who would undertake for two Months. I wish you would inquire.

I want to have the House white washed. I will thank you to see a little about it. It will be well to have the Garden attended to.

I inclose you a Ribbon I met with the other day, and I sent Cousin Betsy a short Gown to show her the fashion, by Mrs. Douse who was to send it to Boston to Mr. Smiths. I hope it will fit her. Adieu my dear Sister.

I am most affectionatly yours

A. ADAMS

I have not seen a speech more to the point than Genl Shepards,² but old men do not take so much pains to circulate their Fame as young ones. I enclose it for Mr. Cranch. Let me know if you get Fennos

¹ See footnote 4 to the letter of June 3, 1797.

² William Shepard (1737-1817), of Westfield, Massachusetts; Major-General of the Massachusetts militia in 1786 during Shays's Rebellion; member of the House of Representatives (1797-1803).

papers³ now. If you do not I will send them to you. Love to all Friends. Tell Polly Baxter, that I shall miss her very much when I come to Quincy, particularly in cooking. Betsy Howard I think is better, tho not [*sic*] able to go through but little.

Philadelphia, July 6th, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I got through the 4 July with much more ease than I expected. It was a fine cool day, and my fatigue arose chiefly from being drest at an early hour, and receiving the very numerous sets of company who were so polite as to pay their compliments to me in succession in my drawing Room after visiting the President below, and partaking of cake, wine & punch with him. To my company were added the Ladies of foreign Ministers & Home Secretaries with a few others. The parade lasted from 12 till four oclock. Fenno has saved me further occasion of detailing the events of the day. He has given them with accuracy. I inclose his account of it.

You will see an intimation in his paper of some malpractices by a Senator. I inclose to you the Letter this day made publick. When shall we cease to have Judases? Here is a diabolical plot disclosed. When the Message was sent to the Senate with the original Letter Mr. Malcomb the Presidents Secretary met Mr. Blount¹ coming out, who stopd and askd him what message he had got, upon which Mr. Malcomb replied it was a Secret and confidential one. Mr. Blount did not return untill after the Letter was read which threw the whole Senate into a consternation. Upon his coming in, the Letter was again read. He turnd very pale, said he did write a Letter at that time to a Mr. Cary, but desired a cobby of it, and untill the next day to make his defence. It was granted, but Mr. Blount has not since been seen. Search was made after him yesterday and a vessel found which he had Chartered to go off in. Poor

³ John Fenno (1751-1798), was born in Boston. Fenno's *Gazette of the United States* was founded in New York in 1789, but was published in Philadelphia beginning April 14, 1790. The *Gazette* had the aid of prominent Federalists, among them Alexander Hamilton.

¹ William Blount (1749-1800), of North Carolina and Tennessee, elected to the United States Senate and served from August 2, 1796, until he was found guilty "of a high misdemeanour, entirely inconsistent with his public trust and duty as a Senator," and was expelled on July 8, 1797. President John Adams was active in revealing Blount's plan to incite the Creeks and Cherokees to aid the British in conquering the Spanish territory of West Florida. Impeachment proceedings were instituted, but dismissed when it was decided that Blount, as a Senator from Tennessee, was not an officer of the federal government. Blount's letter to Cary, an interpreter in the Cherokee Nation, came into the hands of President Adams, who sent it to the Senate on July 3, 1797. The private secretary of John Adams during part of his presidential term was Samuel B. Malcom.

Pensilvanna [*sic*] keeps no Gallows, as Porcupine says. The Senate will expell him, & it belongs to the House of Reps. to impeach, but they have not yet reported. It does not appear that his offerd Service was accepted by the British, tho it is a glorious kettle for the Jacobines to swim in. How they rejoice. Corruption is corruption from whatever source it originates. This same Tenesse [*sic*] Senator was arrested for debt four different times on his return home last fall, and but for his Priviledge as Senator which screens him 20 days, he would have been lodged in Jail, which he no doubt richly deserves. He has a Brother in the House² who lately took fire at the *mention of French Faction* & challenged Mr. Thatcher [Thacher]³ in consequence of it. This Buisness tho communicated last tuesday to both Houses, is but just transpiring. The House have ordered all the papers to be published. I will send them as soon as they are publick.

I thank you for your kind Letter of 27 June. I derive much pleasure from your account of the Garden and rose Bush. I wish I could en hale the one & taste the other, but I fear not. I past an hour or two with Mrs. Wolcot last Evening, the Lady of the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Wolcot⁴ seemd anxious at the Idea of the Presidents going so far from the Seat of Government at so critical a period. I know he will not leave here for any time if the Ministers think his presence necessary. We may truly say, we know not what a day will bring forth. From every side we are in Danger. We are in perils by Land, and we are in perils by sea, and in perils from false Breathern. Dr. Blair gave us an excelent discourse a Sunday or two ago. "Trust in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength."⁵ If it was not for that trust and con-

² Thomas Blount (1759-1812), of North Carolina, member of the House of Representatives (1793-1799; 1805-1809; and 1811-1812).

³ George Thacher (1754-1824), of Yarmouth, Massachusetts, Federalist member of the House of Representatives (1789-1801). Thacher removed to Maine, where he was judge of the Supreme Court (1820-1824), and died at Biddeford.

⁴ Oliver Wolcott (1760-1833), of Litchfield, Connecticut, son of the signer (1726-1797), was a confederate of Alexander Hamilton, and his successor as Secretary of the Treasury (February 2, 1795). Throughout the years 1797 to 1800 he enjoyed the confidence of President John Adams, but secretly served Hamilton by conspiring with his fellow Cabinet members, Timothy Pickering and James McHenry. Adams foolishly failed to dismiss Wolcott in 1800, when he finally got rid of Pickering.

⁵ Samuel Blair (1741-1818), the son of Samuel Blair (1712-1751), also a Presbyterian clergyman, one of whose pupils, the Reverend John Rodgers, was a colleague of the younger Blair, in New York City. This younger Samuel Blair, Princeton, 1760, Harvard, 1767, was minister at the Old South Church, Boston, 1766-1769; chaplain to the Continental Congress; and died at Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Blair's text will be found in *Isaiah*, XXVI, 4: "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

fidence our Hearts would often fail us. I inclose with this a part of a Letter written a day or two since, one part of which I thought proper to cut of, and am too laizy to cobby the remainder.

Congress expect to rise this week. I will write you again, as soon as I can determine what will be the result of our deliberations.

My Love to all inquiring Friends. Present me respectfully to Mrs. Welch and be assured I am, my dear Sister,

Most affectionatly your[s]

A. ADAMS

Let the Friends of my domesticks know that they are all well.

[Philadelphia, July 4, 1797?]

. . . Salute drank the Presidents Health gave 3 cheers and marchd off with perfect decorum & decency, next in order came the House of Rep's in a Body, and after them the Senate—Foreign ministers Secretaries and Ladies of those Gentlemen I should. . . .¹

I have just this morning closed a long letter to your son. I congratulate you upon the Birth of an other Grandson. He wrote me a Letter last week upon a subject which it is like he will, or has communicated to you. I have I have [*sic*] given him the same advice I would a son of my own, so far as I was able to Judge, and have offerd to procure Law Books for him here to the amount of 200 dollors if he should judge it Eligible to persue the practise of the Law. I saw this week a Mr. Scott,² one of the commissioners from Washington, a very decent well informd Man. He dinned with us. I made particular inquiries respecting Mr. Cranch. He assured me he was very much respected and esteemed. Then I asked if he thought he would succeed in the practise of the Law there. He replied he did not doubt it. He must have patience & perseverance, but with the qualities Mr. Cranch possessd he had never known a person fail.³

¹ This letter was enclosed with the preceding. Most of the first page was cut off by Mrs. Adams.

² Gustavus Scott, a Scotsman, appointed a commissioner of the District of Columbia, August 23, 1794, died December 25, 1800. W. B. Bryan, *The History of the National Capital*, New York, 1914-16, vol. I, p. 413n.

³ After the failure of the North American Land Company and the collapse of real estate in Washington, William Cranch was appointed trustee in bankruptcy for James Greenleaf. The complicated affairs of Morris, Nicholson, and Greenleaf gave Cranch the legal experience which Mrs. Adams desired for her nephew, and must have taught him the patience which she felt he needed. In December, 1800, President Adams appointed this nephew by marriage to the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, in succession to Gustavus Scott; two months later he put him on the federal bench, where he remained until 1855.

I cannot but think it will be better for him to remain there, than attempt a removal at an uncertainty and I have written him so.

I hope Mr. Gerry will not refuse to accept the mission to which he is appointed.⁴ He has not given a decisive answer yet. I know he will not rashly decide, but he must know when a House is ready to burst into Flames. He deserves well of his country who will assist in putting it out. I cannot begin upon publick affairs. I am not certain but I lye exposed for having written some thing or other. A Letter to Mrs. Smith has not been received tho written 8th of June. It contained a post Note and I believe was taken from the office in N[ew] York.

[Philadelphia], July 11th, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have only time this morning by Mrs. H. G. Otis¹ to write you a Line and to tell you that we are as well as the Hot weather will permit. Congress having risen, I hope we shall go some where out of this city as the sickly season approaches.

I send you a handkerchief of the Mul mul kind which when well done up will look clear.² Pray accept it. The President says you must write, how the Barley has turnd out, how the corn grows, how it is in the meddow below the House—every thing you can find out about the Farm at all the places as he fears. That will be all he shall know about it this season. The key you mentiond is on the bunch, but the lock is bad and does not move easy. I send Mrs. Greenleaf a peice of muslin to make her some baby caps. I fear I should not have so good an opportunity if I kept it to make. I have not seen any lace to put on them, but I shall look out. My Love to her and Mrs. Norton. Tho so long a journey, I am dissappointed at not coming to Quincy.

Adieu my dear Sister. Write me as often as you can. Give my Love and a kind remembrance to all Friends from

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

⁴ See footnote 4 to the letter of June 3, 1797.

¹ Harrison Gray Otis, on May 31, 1790, married Sally Foster (1770-1836), the daughter of a Boston merchant.

² Mulmull, often shortened to "mull," a thin variety of plain muslin. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives 1676 as the earliest date of the appearance of this word in print. "Mull" first appears in Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1798). See, also, the *Gazette of the United States*, January 16, 1798, in footnote 1 to the first letter of May 13, 1798.

P.S. I wrote to Sister Peabody³ by Judge Livermore.⁴ When you write let me know how Uncle Quincy does, Mr. Wibird,⁵ and dont forget poor old Pheby. If she wants a Bushel corn, desire Mr. Porter to let her have it.

Philadelphia, July 19, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

If the Compass by which my course is directed does not vary again through unavoidable necessity I shall sit out for Quincy next week. We shall probably be 12 days in comeing. I shall want some preparation at Home. I will write to you from N[ew] York. Betsy wrote to her Mother to know if her Sister Nancy was at home & that I should want her during my stay at Quincy.

The Hot weather of July has weakend us all. Complaints of the Bowels are very frequent and troublesome. I received your Letter of 13 yesterday. I have suspected unfair dealings in the post office for some time, tho I cannot say where the fault is. As to the girls Letters I believe they were foolish enough to send them without any Frank. I received a Letter yesterday from your son who was well, and expected, to come to Philadelphia soon on buisness. I fear I shall be away, but I shall write him to come & put up at the House the same as if we were here.

Let Mrs. Porter¹ know that I should be glad she would have Mrs. Bass to clean up the House. I hope it will be white washd first. The post will be gone if I do not close.

Yours affectionately

A. A[DAMS]

[Philadelphia, July 21, 1797]

MY DEAR SISTER:

The weather is Hot as we can bear. The whole city is like a Bake House. We have a House with large and airy Rooms, or I could not sustain it. I do bear it surprisingly well however, tho I long for a sea Breaze. I hope to leave here on Monday, and get on to Bristol [Pennsylvania] 18 miles the first night. I shall want several things put in order

³ Elizabeth (Smith) [Shaw] Peabody (1750-1815).

⁴ Samuel Livermore (1732-1803), of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, member of the House of Representatives (1789-1793), Senator of the United States (1793-1801).

⁵ See footnote 1 to the letter of October 4, 1789.

¹ Wife of the gardener mentioned at the end of the letter of April 30, 1797.

at home for our reception. When I once get on my journey, I shall write to you so that you will learn our progress.

I heard from your son this week, and I wrote him yesterday. We are becoming very intimate. I inclose to you the two last papers from thence. I have just read a peice, under the signature C.¹ I am at no loss for the writer, nor will you be when you read it. It does honour to the pen of the writer and proves him, no superficial observer. I expect to bring on with me William Smith to place him either at Hingham, or Atkinson.² I too, my dear Sister, have my troubles and anxieties.

When we get together, we may say to each other what would not be proper to write.

Louisa is better, but had an allarming turn of Numbness, so that she made no opposition to bleeding, which with some powerfull medicine has restored her, but the side seazd was nearly useless for a day or two. Two years ago she had a number of these affections, but never one equal to this. She was, as well as I, pretty well allarmd. I hope she will be induced to be more active.

We are all so-so, none very sick. Mrs. Brisler has her turns. Little John³ has had the Cholera Morbis. I thought him dead for ten minuts. Nabby & Becky are well. Betsy returns with me, and if she does not fail on the journey will do credit to Philadelphia, by looking like flesh instead of clay. Adieu, my dear Sister

Most affectionatly your[s]

A. A[DAMS]

East Chester, July 29th, 1797, Monday Evening¹

MY DEAR SISTER:

We left Philadelphia on Wednesday last [July 19]. The day preceeding was very Hot. A partial Rain had waterd the Roads for 15 or 20 miles so as to render the first part of our journey pleasent. We were overtaken

¹ Apparently William Cranch (1769-1855).

² William Steuben Smith, eldest son of William Stephens and Abigail (Adams) Smith. See footnote 1 to the letter of November 24, 1788. William was ultimately placed as a boarder with Mrs. Adams's sister, Mrs. Stephen Peabody, at Atkinson, a town northwest of Haverhill, just across the border in New Hampshire.

³ John Adams Smith (born in 1788), younger brother of William, mentioned above.

¹ This letter was written from East Chester, near the present site of New Rochelle, Westchester County, New York, where Colonel William Stephens Smith had a summer home. "Monday, July 29," however, is a date not possible for the year 1797. This letter was written on Monday, July 24, 1797. See the following letter.

by showers, and detain'd by them, but on thursday we found clouds of dust for want of Rain. Troops and calvacades [*sic*] did not lessen it, and the Heat was intolerably oppressive, so much so as to nearly kill all our Horses, and oppress me to such a degree as to oblige me to stop twice in a few hours, and intirely undress myself & lie down on the Bed. At night we could not get rest. Small Rooms, bad Beds & *some company* obliged me to stretch my wearied Limbs upon the floor upon a Bed not larger than one of my Bolsters. From tuesday untill the afternoon of this day, we have not had any respite from panting beneath the dog star. I never sufferd so much in travelling before. The Rain I hope will cool the Air & enable us to proceed, but I fear we shall not reach Quincy this week. Mrs. Smith & little Caroline will be of our party.²

It is a long time since I had a Line from you—near a fortnight before I left home. I had a Letter from your son since I left Home. He writes me that he is well, and that his family are so. I wrote you inclosing to you a Hundred Dollars which I hope you duly received, as I found it necessary to give you some trouble to procure me several articles.

If I can get time on the Road I shall write you as I progress onward. Mrs. Smith desires to be kindly rememberd to you. So does your affectionate Sister

A. A[DAMS]

Saturday mor[nin]g
East Chester, 29 July, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

We leave this place this morning & hope to reach Home on fryday of the next week. I have written to Mr. Smith¹ to procure sundry articles for me in Boston which will require a Team to bring them to Quincy, & bags for oats. Will you be so good as to consult with Mr. Porter, and if Mr. Belcher can go to Town for them so as to get them up before we arrive, I should be very glad. Will you be so kind as to have some coffe burnt and ground, some Bread and cake made for me, and to be at our House on fryday when we hope to reach Quincy, and if you should hear of any intention of company meeting us on the road, to accompany us

²Mrs. Abigail (Adams) Smith and Caroline Amelia, her daughter, the granddaughter of Mrs. John Adams.

¹"Mr. Smith's store in Boston." See postscript to the letter of November 24, 1788. William Smith, the brother of Mrs. Adams, kept a store in Boston. See the *Columbian Centinel*, April 28, 1798.

to Quincy, I must beg of you to make such arrangements of punch & wine as may be necessary. I have written to Mr. Smith on the subject and he will inform you. Wine you can draw from the casks in the cellar. Punch must be made by Gallons. You will procure spirit for the purpose, and in a Box in the North cellar which is nailed up is some Jamaca spirit, that with some Brandy will answer.

I believe it would be best to get Mrs. Baxter to go to the House and assist in making Beds as she knows where my things are better than any one else. The Mattresses should be put on the Feather Beds, & two Beds put up in the new out Chamber for the Men servants. I have my two Grandson [*sic*] with me, but they can be provided for by some of my Friends if we cannot lodge them at first. We met at N[ew] York with so many unexpected things which we were not provided for, that I wish to have some arrangements made now previous to our getting home, particularly if we should meet company. You will find glasses & enough. You will be so good as to have a table set in the dinning parlour, and every thing ready, to receive your truly affectionate

Sister & Friend

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Woster, [Massachusetts, Thursday,] October 5th, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

The day we left you, we proceeded to Flagg's to dinner. The weather very warm. We left there at half after 3 o'clock and got to Williams's at half after six. Very much fatigued I was.¹ It is 35 miles from Quincy. Went to Bed at 8, slept but poorly. At 12 it began to rain & Thunder, continued showery all Night. In the morning cloudy & lowering. Sat out at 8, rode 8 miles to Sutbury. Stopped at Pease's during a heavy Shower, then proceeded, but had not rode more than a mile before another heavy shower overtook us.² We rode in the rain to this place,

¹ Mrs. Adams is writing from Worcester on her way back to Philadelphia from Quincy, where she spent the summer. John Flagg kept an inn at Weston at this time, and there, apparently, Mrs. Adams took her dinner on her first day out of Quincy. The Williams inn was at Marlborough, Abraham Williams having erected a tavern there in 1665, which was still known by his name as late as 1907. George Washington stopped at Flagg's and at Williams's in 1789. Mary C. Crawford, *Little Pilgrimages among Old New England Inns*, Boston, 1907, p. 160.

² Captain Levi Pease established a regular stage between Boston and Hartford as early as 1786. *Worcester Gazette*, January 5, 1786. Pease was born in Enfield, Connecticut, in 1740, but removed to Massachusetts, where Farrar's Tavern, at Shrewsbury, which he bought in 1794, is better known by his name. Crawford, *Old New England Inns*, pp. 36, 48, and 50.

where we were glad to stop the remainder of the day and night, during which time we had a deluge of Rain. This morning fair, windy & cold. In hopes of Letters from England by Col. Tudor.³ When I orderd the things into the carriage, I saw a coat lined with Green Baize. Inquired to whom it belongd. No one knew. I presumed we had by mistake put Mr. Cranchs coat in with our own, as I heard you say he had a Lambskin one.

I would have returnd it by the stage but, they told us there was no security in sending it. I therefore wrote a Line & sent it to Mr. Packards [that *cancelled*] requesting them to send it on to Boston.⁴ I have two cloase Lines both up. I wish when you see Mrs. Porter ask her to have one of them put up. We proceed as far as we can get to day. My best Love and regard attend you all. We are just sitting of.

Your affectionate Sister

A. ADAMS

East Chester, October 22, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have been from Quincy near 3 weeks. In all that time I have not heard a word from thence. I have written twice. I have not yet been into N[ew] York, and one might as well be out of America as in this village only 20 miles distant from N[ew] York, for unless we send in on purpose we cannot even get a Newspaper out. Yet are we in sight of the post road.¹ It is quite a village of Farmers who do not trouble their Heads about any thing, but the productiveness of their Farms. Mrs. Smith has lived here 18 months with making only one visit in the place. There is an Episcopal Church near here where there is divine service one [*sic*] a fortnight. Thiether we went last Sunday.

We have had some pleasent weather during the last week. I rejoiced in it, both on account of the Military parade & the Festival which was Brilliant indeed, and on Mrs. Norton's² account. I think it was the week she designd for her journey. Mrs. Smith is anxious to hear from

³ Probably Colonel William Tudor, prominent merchant and scholar of Boston, who married Delia Jarvis and became the father of William Tudor (1779-1830), and Frederic (1783-1864), the Boston "Ice King."

⁴ The Reverend Asa Packard (died 1843), Harvard, 1783, married Nancy Quincy, of Braintree, on July 27, 1799.

¹ The Boston Post Road, the highway between New York and Boston.

² Elizabeth (Cranch) Norton, wife of the Reverend Jacob Norton.

her Children. I fear in the multiplicity of Sister Peabodys cares, she will not think how desirous Mrs. Smith is of hearing from her Boys,³ and she ought to receive all the comfort she can, for she has her full share of anxiety and trouble. I cannot leave her here this winter with not a single creature within 20 miles of her to speak a word to, or shorten the long solitary winter Evening.

I want her to take her little Girl & go with us to Philadelphia. Her feelings are such as you may suppose on such a proposal. What under different circumstances would have given her great pleasure, she now feels as a soar calamity [*sic*]. Yet I do not see what else she can do.

I make no reflections but in my own Breast. It is some comfort, to know that she has not been the cause, and that she could not prevent the misfortunes to which she is brought.

From the Col[onel] we have not heard, nor can I learn that his Brother has.

I hope you are well and the rest of our Friends. Tell Sister Smith⁴ I will give her half a dollar pr pair for as many as she can knit for me, and I will send you the money to pay her and to get me some more cotton.

Tell Mrs. Brislers Friend, that I hear every day or two from him and that they are

[The second page of this letter is missing.]

East Chester, October 31, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have received but one Letter from you since I left Quincy now near a Month. I have been here three weeks, except 3 days which I past at my sons in N[ew] York.¹ Next Monday I leave here for Philadelphia, where it is thought we may now go with safety.

I was in hopes to have taken Mrs. Smith with me, but her situation is difficult, not having received any advise what to do, and she is loth to go for the present. I cannot say so much as is in my mind, the subject being a very delicate one, and wishing to have her do no one thing but what may prove beneficial to the whole. Sister Peabody has not yet

³ William Steuben Smith, and John Adams Smith, grandsons of Mrs. John Adams, spent the winter of 1797-1798 with their great-aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth (Smith) [Shaw] Peabody, wife of the Reverend Stephen Peabody (A.B. Harvard, 1769), who was her second husband. The Peabodys lived in Atkinson, New Hampshire.

⁴ Probably the second wife of William Smith, the brother of Mrs. Adams. The first wife of William Smith was Catherine Louisa Salmon.

¹ Probably in Beaver Street. See footnote 1 to the letter of May 16, 1797.

written to Mrs. Smith, which she regrets. I know how much she has been engaged, and fear the consequences upon her Health. She feels most keenly, and you know by experience what it is to pass through such a Heart rending trial. I wish these repeated summonses to the surviving Brothers might have a serious influence. The sisters are not unmindfull, but William has to me, the air of a too free thinker.²

Since I wrote you last I have Letters from my sons abroad, Thomas's late as 17 August. He has consented to go to Berlin with his Brother, who writes that he cannot by any means part with him, especially upon being sent into the center of Germany where I shall scarcely meet a Countryman twice a year, "he says." and Thomas writes me, I intreat you to negotiate a successor to me, for I plainly see untill some such arrangement is made, I shall not be released. He says since I wrote you last, my Brother has been married and given me an amiable and accomplished sister.³ He is very happy and I doubt not will remain so, for the Young Lady has much sweetness of Temper and seems to Love *as she ought*. Thomas speaks highly of the Family and of their kindness and attention to him, says they are about to embark for America & settle in the city of Washington, where Mr. Johnson has property. They will be an agreeable acquisition to the city at which I rejoice for the sake of my Nephew and Neice.⁴

I have nothing of consequence to communicate. This place is as retired as you can imagine. We however keep up a communication with N[ew] York and Philadelphia. I had a Letter from Brisler, who was well with the rest of the Family yesterday.

I write merely to keep up our communication, and to tell you that we are all well. I will thank you to go to our House and see that particular attention is paid to the Carpets. I fear they will suffer. Adieu.

Yours affectionately

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, Novbr. 15, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I yesterday about 11 o'clock went into the Presidents Room to see if John had returned from the post office. My good Gentleman was soberly

² "William" refers to Colonel William Stephens Smith, whose extravagance and long, silent absences from home were a source of great displeasure to Mrs. John Adams. Apparently the colonel's wife had appealed to his brothers and sisters for news of him.

³ John Quincy Adams married Louisa Catherine Johnson, in London, on July 26, 1797.

⁴ William and Anna (Greenleaf) Cranch. See footnote 8 to the letter of January 24, 1789.

standing at the fire with your Letter open and very gravely reading it. I scolded and very soon carried it of. I thank you for all your communications. The P[resident] says one of Sister Cranchs Letters is worth half a dozen others. She allways tells us so much about home. And if he does not get them clandestinely he does not often see them. I wrote you a few lines the day before I left East Chester. On that day Mrs. Smith got Letters from her Brother Justice [Justus Smith] by a private hand, informing her that both he and the Col[onel] had written frequently by the post, and were astonished that she had not received any Letters, that by a private hand he had written and sent her some money in October. The Col[onel] was not then at Shenang [Shenango, Pennsylvania?], the Name of the place which Justice owns, but was expected in a few days. These Letters communicated some comfort. She came to N[ew] York with me in search of the Man by whom the money and Letter was sent. Since I have been here, I have had a Letter from her informing [me] that he had been sought where he formerly lived, but had removed from thence. I have contemplated the plan you mention. It may be put into effect if future circumstances require it. At present, it would be expensive and lonely, and not less subject to unpleasant feelings than being here on a visit, which is all that at present is expected, nor will she be obliged to appear on my publick Evenings, unless it is her choice.

I found Mr. and Mrs. Brisler and the Children very well and much the better for their country excursion. The Girls Becky and Nabby were very well, and both Mr. and Mrs. Brisler say, behaved with great prudence and discretion, quite to their satisfaction. I found every thing in the House in perfect good order, and all my old Hands escaped through the Pestilence.¹ One only of them had the fever. The others returned as soon as Brisler got home, those whom he had dismisst when he went out, and those he retaind in pay, so that at present I could not wish to be better off than I am with respect to domesticks, which greatly enhances the comfort of Life.

I regret that there should be an opposition to Mr. Whitman,² and that

¹ Epidemics of yellow fever raged in Philadelphia in the summers of 1793, 1797, and 1798.

² On October 23, 1797, at a town meeting in Quincy, the Reverend Mr. Kilborn Whitman was offered the position as assistant to the Reverend Anthony Wibird, at a salary of five hundred dollars per annum and a house to live in. Mr. Whitman declined: see the letter of December 26, 1797.

it should principally arise from Mr. & Mrs. Black,³ whom I very sincerely regard, tho I cannot say I respect their judgment in this case. I have not a doubt but Mr. and Mrs. Black will be reconciled in time. Reasoning and not railing will have the effect. Mr. Flint⁴ was opposed by the latter. Present my compliment[s] to Mr. Whitman, & tell him if our State constitution had been equally liberal with that of New Jersey and admitted the females to a vote, I should certainly have exercised it in his behalf. As it is, he may be sure both of the Presidents and my good wishes for him, with a sincere desire for his settlement.

I have received one Letter from Sister Peabody written just after the death of Charles,⁵ but Mrs. Smith has not had a line from her since her Children have been with her. Sister Peabody has so many cares that she has not much time to write, but I wish she would to Mrs. Smith. In her lonely hours she thinks much of her Children, and wishes to have from her Aunts hand some account of them. I have written her twice since I came from home, beside, one or two Letters just before I left home. I know not if she has received them. I am sorry to learn that Mrs. Cranch⁶ is unwell. I have just been writing to him, and I have recommended to her to keep good spirits, and that it is a long lane which has no turn. Ask Cousin Betsy when I am to speak for the wedding cap?⁷ No Congress yet. A House but no Senate. Ben Bache is as usual abusing the President for *forcing* the respect from the people, degradeing this city by representing the military parade here as all forced. That it is a corrupt mass of Jacobinism, Quakerism and *abominationism*, I will most readily admit, but at the same time there are many worthy and respectable people here. Inclosed is a specimin of Bache Gall. But all will not do. I can see where the respect and attention is sincere. Many affecting proofs I have witnessed in this tour, one in particular of a private nature, at Brunswick [Maryland]. A white headed venerable Man desired to be admitted to the President. When he came in, he bowd respectfully and

³ Probably Mr. and Mrs. Moses Black, who held the title to a mansion house in Quincy in February, 1788. Mr. Black's sister became that Mrs. Hall whose death, together with that of her husband, is mentioned in the letters of December 12 and 26, 1797.

⁴ On July 31, 1797, at a town meeting in Quincy, the Reverend Jacob Flint, of Reading, was proposed as an assistant to Anthony Wibird, but refused the offer later because the salary was too small.

⁵ Charles Smith, son of William Smith, brother of Mrs. John Adams, Mrs. Richard Cranch, and Mrs. Stephen Peabody.

⁶ The wife of the brother of Richard Cranch (1726-1811).

⁷ Elizabeth Quincy Shaw (1780-1798), daughter of Elizabeth (Smith) [Shaw] Peabody, by her first husband.

said he was happy to see him, inquired if that was *his Lady*? I came, said he, many miles this morning on purpose. I told my wife this morning that I would come, and she said why aint you affraid. No said I. Why do you think I should be affraid to go and see my Father? This was said with so much hearty sincerity, that to me it was of more value than the whole Military calvalcade [*sic*] of Pensylvania.

Write me often, and remember me affectionatly to all Friends.

Yours as ever

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Philadelphia, Novbr. 28th, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your kind Letter of Nov'br. 19th by this days post. I had previously received two others both of which I had replied to, but I do not know how to pass a week without hearing from you. At the same time I received your Letter, I also had one from Mrs. Smith informing me that she had received Letters from the Col[onel] of 2d of Nov'br and that he had written her word that he should be home soon. She accordingly gave up the thoughts of coming to Philadelphia, which is a very great dissapointment to me. I fear she will be waiting & expecting, expecting & waiting, the rest of the winter, but I cannot advise her not to stay a reasonable time. She writes me in anxiety at not hearing a word from her Aunt. Sister Peabody did not use to be inattentive to her Friends. She knows the Boys are well and happy, but she should know that there Mother is not so, and for that reason is the more anxious for her Children, and wishes to have it to say that she hears often from them; for she may be blamed for placing them at such a distance from her, without considering the utility it is of to the Children. I have written repeatedly, so has Mrs. Smith, both to Sister and the Children. Before I left home I wrote & inclosed in one Letter a ten Dollor Bill. I never received any acknowledgment of it. Betsy¹ should write if her Mamma cannot. Pray do you represent the matter to her. I have requested that all Letters may be sent on under cover to the President at Philadelphia, and I will see them forwarded.

The city of Philadelphia is very Healthy at this time. I have had my Health much better than for several years past. I have not had a single days confinement since I left Quincy. The President took a bad cold by riding with the carriage windows down a very raw day in complasance

¹ See footnote 7 to the preceding letter.

to the Military, and was confined ten days after we came here, but good Nursing got the better of it. The Senate and House have dispatchd their answers already to the speech.² I believe they were asshamd of their delay the last session. What, said the Duke de Liancourt³ to the President, soon after the late constitution was adopted in France, do you think of our Constitution?⁴ I think, replied the President, who was then Vice President, I think that the Directory are Daniel in the Lions Den. The Directory however, saw their Fate, and having an Army at their beck, banishd the Lions, before they devoured them. But still the Den ya[w]ns for them and will sooner or later have them.

The measure of their iniquity is not yet full. They are instruments in the hands of Providence to scourge the nations of the Earth.

29th: Mr. Bartlet from Haverhill attended the Levee.⁵ I requested the President to ask him to take a Family dinner with us, which he did, and I was happy to learn by him that he brought Letters to Mrs. Smith, so that I hope her mind is more at ease. I did now [*sic*] however get any, but that, as I hear they are well, I do not so much care for. I will thank you to make my Bacon for me, and when it is fit to smoak let Mr. Belcher carry it to the same place he got the other smoakd at. But I do not want it here. God Willing I will eat it at Home, & stay not an hour here longer than duty requires. I should like to have a Barrel of cheese sent if [it] can come immediatly. Otherways I fear we shall be frozen up. As to Butter I do not know as I am not there to make it myself I fear it will not be put up so as to keep. I hope Mrs. Pope will not forget me. Pork I should like to have a plenty of that.

² The second session of the Fifth Congress extended from November 13, 1797, to July 16, 1798.

³ François Alexandre Frédéric, duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt (1747-1827). This interesting nobleman founded on his estate, Liancourt, near Clermont, a model school for the education of the children of poor soldiers, called "École des Enfants de la Patrie," and was a member of the Estates-General in 1789, after which he was an emigré from France until the Consulate. As a result of his visit to North America, he wrote *Voyage dans les États-Unis, d'Amérique fait en 1795-1797* (1798), an English translation of which appeared as *Travels Through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada*, London, 1799.

This duke is chiefly famous for the following colloquy with Louis XVI on the news of the fall of the Bastille, in 1789: "C'est une révolte?" "Non, Sire, c'est une révolution."

⁴ The Third Constitution of the French Republic, that of 1795, which set up a Directory of five and a Legislature of two Chambers: the Council of Elders, and the Council of Five Hundred. This Constitution lasted till 1799, when it was replaced by the Consulate (1799-1804).

⁵ Bailey Bartlett (1750-1830), of Haverhill, Massachusetts, member of the House of Representatives (1797-1801).

I inclose you a 5 dollar Bill. I forgot amongst my pensioners old Mrs. Hayden. Pray send her two, and get some salt peter & molasses with the other to do my Bacon. Will you be so good as to see that Pheby does not suffer for wood or any necessary.

I this moment have received a Letter from your son of 21 Nov'br, a very excellent Letter. He writes me that Mrs. Cranch was better, that Richard had been sick with the Quincy but was better. William had a bad cold.⁶ He is doing well I hope. He writes in pretty good spirits. No News of Mr. Johnsons Family tho they saild the 10 of Sepbr.⁷ I am under great fears for them.

I think Baxters resolution a good one. The next News I expect the parson will be courting. I am sorry to hear Mrs. Greenleaf has been so unwell. My Love to her and Mrs. Norton. A kind remembrance to all Friends.

Affectionatly your Sister

A. ADAMS

Philadelphia, December 12th, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received yesterday your kind favour of 29 Nov'br and 8th December. I had a few lines from you on Monday. I got my Letter to day to myself. I believe I shall not venture to communicate it. The President will be very angry with some of his Neighbours, if through their means we lose so good a Man, as is now in our power to settle.¹ The judgement of those in opposition is weak. I would sooner take the opinion of *Gains*, with regard to the merit of a preacher than either of them. I do not know what their objections are. Spear ought to know that the Scriptures combine the Gosple with the Law. I fancy Mr. B[lack]'s objection[s] are not much more forcible. I think Mr. Whitman ought not to decline merely on account of those persons, who all of them, I have not a doubt, will be conciliated by a prudent conduct. To Mr. Flint there was an obstinate intemperate opposition from a certain quarter which I always condemned, and tho I did not like Mr. Flint so well as Mr. Whitman as a preacher, yet both the President and I determined to sit down quietly

⁶ Richard and William Cranch were sons of William Cranch (1769-1855), who married Anna Greenleaf (1772-1843) in 1795.

⁷ Joshua Johnson, of a Maryland family, was the father-in-law of John Quincy Adams, and a brother of Thomas Johnson (1732-1819).

¹ For the choice of Kilborn Whitman as assistant to Anthony Wibird of Quincy, see footnote 2 to the letter of November 15, 1797.

with him if he had accepted the call of the people. I have a regard for, and Love my Neighbours but I cannot but condemn their conduct on this occasion and look upon it as mere obstinancy [*sic*] to make themselves of consequence. Poor Mrs. Hall & her Husband are both dead. They left a Child, but for some reason, I cannot devine what, her Brother will not let me, or any of the Family find it or see it, tho on Mr. Blacks account and from the regard I had for Mrs. Hall I have taken some pains to find it, and know how it was situated. I have written to Mrs. Black respecting it.²

Mrs. Smith is gone back to East Chester determined to wait there the arrival of the Col[onel]. We had a Letter from him this week. He was then at fort Stanwick³ on his way to East Chester, he says. It was dated 29th November. It was directed to Thomas [Adams] supposing him, private Secretary to the President.

We have not any late Letters from London. I presume Mr. [J. Q.] Adams is gone to Berlin. I had a Letter from Thomas [Adams] dated the 10 of Sep^r. Thomas speaking of his new sister says, "She is indeed a most lovely woman, and in my opinion worthy in every respect of the Man for whom she has with so much apparent Cheerfulness renounced father and Mother kindred and Country to unite her destinies with his." This is a great deal for Thomas to say.

I inclose to you some remarks from Fennos paper upon some of Baches lies and abuse and a strip of paper containing Baches round assertion that the observations Printed in the Boston Centinel upon the Sermon of the Bishop of Norwich were "*Positively known*" to proceed from the pen of the Duke of Braintree, as he stiles the President.⁴ If this has not been printed in any of our papers, let it be sent to the Mer-

² See footnote 3, to the letter of November 15, 1797.

³ Fort Stanwix, on the Mohawk River, in Oneida County, New York. It was erected in 1758 by John Stanwix (1690-1765).

⁴ See the *Columbian Centinel* for Wednesday, November 8, 1797. On February 17, 1797, Charles, Bishop of Norwich, preached in London at the Church of St. Mary le Bow, "before the society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts [*sic*]." After paying an elegant tribute to the character of George Washington, the bishop, probably with the thought of encouraging contributions, dwelt so feelingly on the need for spreading the gospel in North America as to make certain citizens of the United States think that he was describing their state of society as little better than that of savages. This letter of protest, signed "An American," occupies a column and a half on the first page.

Charles Manners-Sutton (1755-1828), grandson of John, third duke of Rutland, and a favorite with George III and his family, became Bishop of Norwich in 1792, Dean of Windsor in 1794, and, in 1805, against the wishes of William Pitt, who wanted the place for another, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. His son was Speaker of the House of Commons, and first Viscount Canterbury (1780-1845).

cury⁵ to insert, that the world may see what bold and daring lies these wretches are capable of. Yet when call'd upon for proof, they have not a word to offer. The wretch who is supposed to have written this for the Aurora is a Hireling Scotchman Campbel⁶ by name, who fled from England for publishing libels against the Government, and has been employ'd by the Jacobins here to excite a spirit of opposition to the Government. Who the writer of those remarks upon the Bishops Sermon was, is as well known to the Pope of Rome, as to the President. Scarcely a day passes but some such scurrility appears in Baches paper, very often unnoticed, and of no consequence in the minds of many people, but it has, like vice of every kind, a tendency to corrupt the morals of the common people. Lawless principles naturally produce lawless actions.— I have not heard from your son since I wrote you last. I am glad to learn that Mrs. Greenleaf is like to get rid of her complaint by a collection of the cause of it to one point. I dare say she will find herself better. Miss Alleyne is gone to Levingstone Manor to pass the winter with her sister. Mr. G[reenleaf] is yet confined, tho I believe he hopes soon to be liberated.⁷ The vice President is come and dines here to day with 30 other Gentleman.

Remember me kindly to Mr. Cranch and respectfully to Mrs. Welch. Tell Cousin Betsy I will send her an old Maids cap, that will never be out of fashion.

Love to Mrs. Norton and family. How much charigned [*sic*] shall I feel if you write me that Mr. Whitman has given his answer in the Negative. I hate Negatives when I have sit my Heart upon any thing. Half the year I must sit under as strong Calvinism as I can possibly swallow and the other half, I do not know what is to come.

My paper reminds me to close, and my company that I must dress for dinner.

Yours most affectionately

A. ADAMS

⁵ The *Massachusetts Mercury*, published in Boston.

⁶ Possibly George Washington Campbell (1769-1848), who was born in Scotland, was christened George and added Washington to his name later. He was a member of the House of Representatives for Tennessee from 1803 to 1809, an ardent supporter of Jefferson, and an enemy of John Randolph of Roanoke.

⁷ For the release of James Greenleaf (1765-1843), speculator in land, see footnote 5, to the letter of June 6, 1797. For James Greenleaf and his two wives, Antonia Cornelia Albertine Schotten (divorced 1802) and Ann Penn Allen, see Greenleaf, *Greenleaf Family*, pp. 217-8. For the Stuart portrait of Greenleaf, see Anne H. Wharton, *Social Life in the Early Republic*, Philadelphia, 1903, p. 32.

[*Enclosed with letter of December 12, 1797.*]

Mr. Bache and his correspondents appear to be in great distress least the respect shown to the President of the United States by the people of every City and Town through which he past on his journey to his own Home, and on his return to the Seat of Government, should be construed into a satisfaction with the Government, and an approbation of its administration. As Mr. Bache is but a youth of yesterday, when compared with the old Patriots who first stood forth in defence of the invaded Rights of their injured Country against the usurpation of Great Britain, I who am grown grey with years, and was witness to what I relate, can tell him, that the Testimonials of respect which have recently been offerd to the President of the United States, are no Novelties to him.

Previous to the meeting of the first Congress in the year 1774, the Members from Massachusetts, (our venerable President was one,) were met, escorted and Feasted, (if you please) in all the principal Towns and citys through which they past. The same publick marks of respect were again manifested with increased splendour, at the Meeting of Congress in the year 1775. In the year 1789 when the President was first Elected vice president, a Troop of Horse waited upon him at his Seat in Braintree, and escorted him from thence to the Governours in Boston accompanied by Numbers of citizens. From thence he was attended to Cambridge by a large, and respectable concourse of people, where he was again met by an other Troop of Horse.

Throughout the State of Conneticut he received the same marked attention. The citizen[s] of New York were not less Zealous on that occasion, than they have been, to do honour to him as President. Troops of Horse, and respectable citizens went as far as Kings Bridge,⁸ and escorted him into the City of New York.

Every person who is acquainted with the Republican manners and habits of the President can witness for him, that every kind of show and parade are contrary to his tastes and inclination, and that they can be agreeable on no other ground, than as the Will of the People, Manifesting their determined resolution to support the Government, and the Administrators of it, so long as the administration is conformable to the Constitution. As to Mr. Baches polite allusion to Darby and

⁸ Kings Bridge, or Phillips' Bridge, or the Bridge at Spayten Duyvil. This bridge connected the extreme northeastern tip of Manhattan Island with the mainland. John Adams was welcomed there at four o'clock in the afternoon of April 20, 1789, on his way to the home of John Jay. See Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, index, pp. 328 and 458; vol. 1, plate 46; and vol. 5, p. 1238.

Joan,⁹ I consider that as highly honorary to the domestic and conjugal Character of the President who has never given His Children or Grandchildren cause to Blush for any illegitimate offspring.

Philadelphia, December 26, 1797

MY DEAR SISTER:

I received your Letter by this days mail of 17th. I am mortified at the loss of Mr. Whitman,¹ tho' from what you wrote me I apprehended it would be so. Every one has a right to their own opinion, and my conscience suffers as much when I hear Mr. & Mr. & Mr. deliver sentiments which I cannot assent to & preach doctrines which I cannot believe, as my Neighbours because a Man does not wear Calvinism in his face, and substitute round Os for Ideas. But we must be doomed to a—a droomadery. I am out of patience, and yet I am brought down, for last week I was obliged to lose Blood, and confine myself for a week in consequence of one of my old attacks. I had some Rhumatism with it, but am getting better, and should have ventured to ride out to day if the weather would have permitted.

I could not see company on fryday Evening, nor the Gentlemen to day who attend the Levee. Mrs. Cushing² came last evening and took tea with me. I promise myself some society with her. Most of the rest is parade & ceremony. Next Monday is New Years Day and we shall have a tedious time of it. I thank you for the care of my Bacon & carpets. I had much rather they should be down on your floor than not. As to the Chair, I pray you take it. I had Letters from Mrs. Smith this week. She thought it best to part with Mr. & Mrs. King as her family were small, so that she now has only one Man to look after the Stock, and a Boy & Girl. In that manner she lives without a Human being to call upon her from one week to an other, buoyd up with an expectation of the Col[onel]'s return, which however I have very little faith in. The old Lady³ is going out to stay with her now, which will render her situation more tolerable. I know she reluc's at the thought of coming here. If I was in private Life she would feel differently.

⁹ Darby and Joan, a married pair who are said to have lived in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the eighteenth century. They are the subject of a ballad called "The Happy Old Couple," said to have been written by Henry Woodfall. The names first appeared in print in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1735), vol. 5, p. 153.

¹ See footnote 2 to the letter of November 15, 1797.

² Wife of Justice William Cushing (1732-1810). See footnote 10 to the letter of January 24, 1789.

³ Mother of Colonel William Stephens Smith, son-in-law of John Adams.

I was fully sensible that the Boys must be taken from all their connections to break them of habits which they had imbibed. There were a train of uncles and Aunts and servants to spoil them and very few examples such as I wisht to have them innured to, and I dread their Fathers return least he should take it into his Head to take them away.⁴

I rejoice to hear that Mrs. Norton and Family are well. I hope Mrs. Greenleaf will recover her Health. Slip the inclosed into her Hand when you see her, and say nothing about it.

Where is Mr. Wibird⁵ & is he this winter? multiplying and increasing as he was? 5 dollors are inclosed that you may apply them to the use of Pheby as her necessities may be. I have not heard from Washington⁶ since I wrote you last.

I have been the communicator of very melancholy News to Mr. & Mrs. Black. I was much shocked when John returnd from Mr. Halls House and brought me word that they were both dead, and when the Baby at my request, was sent to me to see, I felt for the poor little orphan an inexpressible tenderness. It is a fine Baby and the Image of its poor Broken Hearted Mother, who the Physicians agree, dyed with fatigue and dejection of spirits without any symptoms of the fever. I hope Mr. & Mrs. Black will take the child, as soon as it is weaned.⁷

The President has agreed that he will not open any more Letters to me, and will be satisfied with such parts as I am willing to communicate. Accordingly he has not opend any since I scolded so hard about it. Pray if you have got the Song of Darby and Joan do send it me.⁸ I do not recollect but one line in it, and that is, "when Darbys pipes out Joan wont smoke a whiff more." and I know they were represented as a fond loving conjugal pair. Baches object was to bring such a Character into Ridicule. True French manners in Religion and politicks is what he aims to introduce, but corrupt as our manners are, there is yet too much virtue to have such doctrines universally prevail.

Remember me to all our Friends whom I hope to see again in the Spring.
And be assured I am, my dear Sister,

Your ever affectionate

ABIGAIL ADAMS

⁴ William Steuben Smith, and John Adams Smith, who were spending the winter with their great-aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth (Smith)[Shaw] Peabody, in Atkinson, New Hampshire.

⁵ See footnote 1 to the letter of October 4, 1789.

⁶ That is, from her nephew, William Cranch, son of Mary (Smith) Cranch.

⁷ See footnote 3 to the letter of November 15, 1797.

⁸ See footnote 9 to the enclosure with the letter of December 12, 1797.

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.