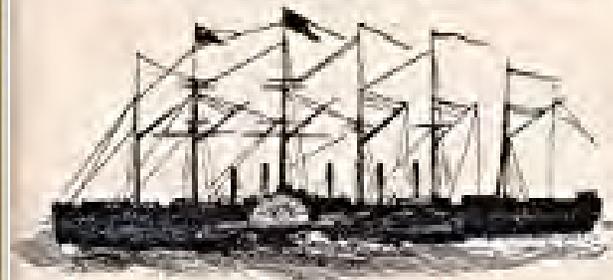




A Casual View of America

The Home Letters of Salomon de Rothschild, 1859-1861

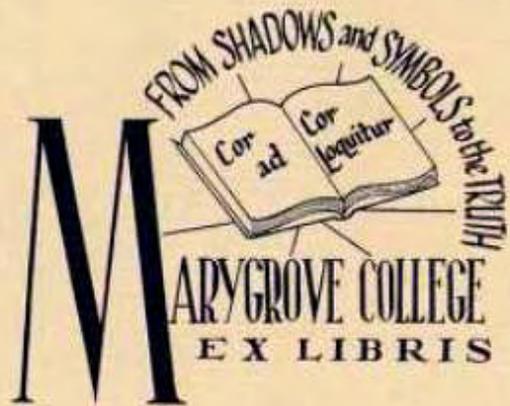


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SIGMUND DIAMOND

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PREFACE

The letters in this book were written by Salomon de Rothschild to various members of his family between 1859 and 1861. At some point they were gathered together and copied in a green leather notebook, which was ultimately presented to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, where it is now catalogued as Nouvelle Acquisition Française 11,700. In the process of copying—not always correctly, as internal evidence indicates—the letters were pruned of all personal references to members of the Rothschild family and possibly of other material as well. What follows is a translation of the document in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Suspension points (...) have been used to indicate the omission of material, but in every case these omissions were made by the copyist of Rothschild's letters; I have made no additional omissions. At various places in his letters Rothschild used English words, phrases, occasionally even entire sentences. These, of course, I have retained exactly as he wrote them; they are enclosed in single quotes (inverted commas). All interpolated material has been printed in square brackets.

It is a pleasure to record my indebtedness and gratitude to the colleagues and friends who helped me in innumerable ways. I am grateful to Mr. J. Porcher, Conservateur en Chef of the Cabinet des Manuscrits at the Bibliothèque Nationale, for the many courtesies extended by that institution and for permission to microfilm and publish these letters. Michel Crozier, of the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris; David S. Landes, of the Department of History at the University of California at Berkeley; and François Crouzet, of the Department of History at the University of Lille, suffered many an interruption of their own work to come cheerfully to the aid of a friend. These letters were obtained in the course of

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A CASUAL VIEW OF AMERICA

a visit to Paris in connection with research that was supported by a grant from Columbia University, and they were translated during my fellowship year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California. Both institutions have my deepest gratitude.

S. D.

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A CASUAL VIEW
OF AMERICA

*The Home Letters of Salomon de Rothschild
1859-1861*

Salomon de Rothschild, baron.

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
Sigmund Diamond

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INTRODUCTION

About the life of young Baron Salomon de Rothschild we know very little; he died too soon to have left much of an impress on the affairs of the world or even on those of the great bank that bore his family's name. He was born in 1835, the third son and fourth of the five children of Baron James Mayer de Rothschild, son of the founder of the bank and head of its branch in Paris. During his early youth the Rothschild bank was at the height of its power and influence. The Rothschild brothers—James, a friend of the reigning monarch, Louis Philippe; Amschel in Frankfurt; Salomon in Vienna; Nathan in London; and Karl in Naples—were rapidly extending the range of their influence and the variety of enterprises and activities in which they made their investments. But the Paris branch of the family, at least, was interested in other matters as well, and as a child Salomon must certainly have seen, perhaps even talked to, some of the devotees of his father's salon.

For a salon it certainly was. Heinrich Heine was at the Rothschild mansion often, and though he was ambivalent in his feelings toward the man whose clarity he accepted, he did not doubt that James de Rothschild had as excellent taste in the choice of intellectual companions as in the choice of stocks and bonds. "He might be entirely unversed in a subject but he always knew who was the best man in it," Heine wrote.

He probably did not understand a single note of music, but Rossini has always been an intimate family friend. Ary Scheffer is his court painter; Carême was his cook. Herr von Rothschild certainly knows as little Greek as Demoiselle Rachel, but Letronne is the scholar whom he most values. The brilliant Dupuytren was his physician, and between the two was the most brotherly affection. Herr von Rothschild was one of the first to perceive the worth of Crémieux,

the great and noble-hearted lawyer. . . . Similarly, he at once appreciated Louis Philippe's political capacity. . . . Herr von Rothschild discovered Emile Pereire, the Pontifex Maximus of railways, and immediately made him his chief engineer.¹

There were occasions when Heine, as Franz Grillparzer, the Austrian writer, noted angrily, mocked and scorned James de Rothschild even while eating at his table, but his feelings toward the Baroness Betty were less complicated. To her he dedicated his poem "The Angel," and through her he solicited funds from the Baron. Balzac, too, was a constant visitor to the Rothschild mansion and, like Heine, the beneficiary of the Baron's charity. But he was more gracious; to the Baron he dedicated two of his novels, *Roueries d'un créancier* and *Un Homme d'affaires*.²

With such guests, conversation must have been heady as wine; and young Rothschild, whether or not he was intoxicated by their ideas, could hardly have remained oblivious to them. Who he was, what it meant to be a Rothschild, how to view the world around him—from his father's friends he must have received clues to these questions. And from them and from his parents, too, he heard ideas and was exposed to values that influenced his consciousness of himself as a privileged person in a hostile environment.

He could not, for example, deny to himself, even had he wanted to, that he was a Jew; and though the pre-eminence of his family ensured him against many of the indignities suffered by his co-religionists, that very pre-eminence imposed the obligation to come to the aid of the less fortunate. Even the ironical Heine had to concede, though grudgingly, the courage of James de Rothschild when he protested to the French government against a French consul's involvement in a charge of ritual murder leveled against the Jews at the time of the Damascus incident.³

Nor could he have been entirely unaffected by the increasing evidence that the social order that had permitted the Rothschilds to act freely in business was now being challenged by an alternative vision of society that held out the threat of economic and social disaster. In France the position of the family was shaken by the events of the

Revolution of 1848. In the New World, too, the evidences of leveling, so dangerous to those who believed in a society of ranks and orders, were everywhere apparent; and if they were not accompanied by the violent manifestations so characteristic of the European scene, it was because the defenses of aristocracy had never been so strongly built in America as in Europe.

Even the antislavery crusade, a humanitarian movement to those Americans who supported it, was seen by many conservative Europeans as a threat to the institution of property on which all societies of order and stability must rest. The issue of emancipation, which the American was likely to see as a humanitarian or, possibly, a political issue, was perceived by the conservative European as including a social dimension as well. Democratic leveling, abolitionism, socialism—all threatened to take away the "degree" without which society was anarchy. "Friend Sue attaches himself to Fourierism," Balzac said one day to Heine and to Eugène Sue, the novelist, "in order not to become a communist. But the people are frighteningly logical and they do not understand these delicate nuances." "And what of America?" Sue asked. "America . . . has four million slaves. They work, but they do not vote. If ever these slaves should step to the polling-place in furtherance of the principle of majority rule, they will elect the man who promises them to divide up all landed property, or, at least, to give them the usufruct that the previous owners had acquired through their labor."⁴

Under the circumstances, could young Rothschild have grown up insensitive to his Jewishness or to his social position? Conditions in the New World created little anxiety about the former, and much, as his letters reveal, about the latter.

For no one, of course, is life exclusively a matter of solving problems and confronting issues; and here and there, in the scattered bits of information about Salomon, there is an occasional broad hint that his life was not entirely without frivolity. If those incorrigible gossips the Goncourt brothers are to be believed, even his trip to the United States was the outcome less of serious purpose than of misadventure. "Salomon Rothschild, having spent a million on the stock exchange

in attempted secrecy from his father," they wrote in their journal, "received from his father this letter: 'Mr. Salomon Rothschild will spend the night at Ferrières, where he will receive certain instructions pertaining to himself.' The next day he received the order to leave for Frankfort. He spent two years there keeping books; he thought his term of penance was over and wrote to his father, who replied: 'Mr. Salomon's affair is not terminated.' And a new order dispatched him for a couple of years to a banking house in America."⁵

George Templeton Strong, the sober, conservative New York lawyer, met Salomon during his visit to the United States and could not conceal his disapproval. "Made my debut in the New York Club this afternoon," he wrote in his diary on August 16, 1861. "One enjoys . . . a sensation of being nobby and exclusive when one dines there, which ought to promote digestion. . . . My respect for the Club has greatly increased since Baron Rothschild's friends had to withdraw his name, because the Baron, though illustrious and a millionaire, was immoderately given to lewd talk and nude photographs. I did not give the Council credit for moral courage enough to deny him admission."⁶

In the way the members of his own family spoke of him there is further evidence that the sobriety of the banker's life was not entirely for him. In 1862 he married Adela von Rothschild, the daughter of his cousin Karl, of Naples and Frankfort, and Louise, who was herself the daughter of his cousin Lionel Nathan in England. Adela was "the most intimate friend" of Salomon's English cousin Constance, but Constance had her doubts about him. He was "brilliantly gifted," she said, "but less addicted to steady work and habits of business than his brothers." She met the young couple on their honeymoon in Venice, and Salomon seemed to her to be "genial, brilliant, somewhat dare-devil."⁷

He died in Paris on May 14, 1864, at the age of 29, only two years after his marriage and less than a year after the birth of his daughter, Hélène. He was buried at Père Lachaise in the family vault; a cantor chanted at the funeral services, two rabbis spoke, and Albert Cohn (his former tutor and adviser to the family on philanthropy) gave

"a touching farewell." His death, said the *Archives Israélites*, was a loss not only to his family but to the entire Jewish community of Paris, "of which he was one of the strongest pillars, especially in his capacity as member of the Charity Committee. His care and his solicitude for the needs of the poor will bring blessings to his name." Special prayers were offered at the synagogues in Nice and Tetuán, which had been beneficiaries of his charity, and alms were distributed in Paris and in Palestine in his memory. The Goncourts, of course, saw the other side. "Cabarrus, Rothschild's doctor, told Saint-Victor that the young Rothschild who died the other day really died of the excitement of gambling on the stock exchange," they wrote. "Imagine it; a Rothschild dead of a paroxysm of excitement over money."⁸

Exactly what it was that brought Salomon de Rothschild to the United States in 1859 we do not know. It may have been his father's hope, as the Goncourts suggest, that exile from Paris would improve his character and tame his spirit. But the Rothschilds had extensive interests in the United States, and it seems more likely that Salomon was sent on a mission in connection with them. The Rothschilds had acted as financial agent for the United States Department of State; during the Mexican War they held a contract to provide credit to the United States government to purchase army supplies in Mexico; they held bonds of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and various state banks and United States Treasury notes; they had heavy investments in the repudiated debts of a number of states.⁹ Indeed, it was suggested in European newspapers that Salomon's purpose in coming to the United States was to extend his family's business. "Young Baron Salomon von Rothschild is at present in New York," the *Wiener Mittheilungen* reported, "and after having stayed for some time at the house of August Belmont, correspondent of the Rothschilds, he plans a trip to the West and South of the United States. It is known that the House of Rothschild has planned for a long time to expand its business interests in America and particularly to establish contacts with the Southern parts and California, where there has so far not been any representation of the European bank."¹⁰

If it was Rothschild's intention to establish connections with the South, he could hardly have found a better go-between than August Belmont. Belmont had been born in 1816 in Alzey, Germany, the son of a wealthy Jewish burgher. He entered into the service of the Rothschild bank in Frankfort at the age of 14, and before he was 21 was sent on missions to Naples, the Papal Court, and Havana. In 1837 the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* reported that the Rothschilds had decided to establish a branch in New York. "A young man in charge of this project, Mr. Belmont, left a few days ago to journey to that city via Paris and London."¹¹ Financially, politically, and socially he prospered greatly, and with remarkable rapidity.

By 1844 he was active in the Democratic Party, and he capped his political career with twelve years of service as chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1860 to 1872. From 1853 to 1857 he served first as Chargé d'Affaires, then as Minister Resident, at The Hague. It had been his hope to be appointed Minister to Naples, where he apparently anticipated being able to influence the Spanish royal family to sell Cuba to the United States, with the proceeds of the sale being used to pay off the repudiated Spanish government bonds in which the Rothschilds had heavy interests. He remained a strong supporter of Southern efforts to acquire Cuba.¹²

With his marriage to Caroline Slidell Perry, the daughter of Commodore Matthew C. Perry and niece of Louisiana Senator John Slidell, his ties to the South became those of kinship as well as interest. He met his Southern friends at his New York clubs, at Saratoga, and at Newport, and he entertained them in his Fifth Avenue mansion.¹³ From Belmont, then, who was undoubtedly Rothschild's mentor on American affairs and his sponsor in the circles of wealth and influence in which he traveled, the young man's innate conservatism and property-consciousness received reinforcement.

His background and the auspices under which he visited America would in any case have made this country difficult for him to understand. But the events of 1859-61—their swift pace and the decisive manner in which they were transforming American society—made it harder still.

Rothschild's visit to the United States spanned the period during which events were marching swiftly to the final crisis of civil war. His first letter was written scarcely two weeks after the execution of John Brown; his last, when the dogs of war had already been unleashed. Between the two letters lay the final rout of the forces of stability and adjustment that for decades had staved off the necessity of seeking a military solution to the slavery question. The collapse of the Whigs and the split between northern and southern Democrats had paved the way for Lincoln's election in 1860. For the first time in the history of the United States a party in which the South had no influence had won the presidency; immediately Southern fire-eaters demanded secession of the slave states. During the winter of 1860-61 the states of the Deep South, headed by South Carolina, withdrew from the Union and established a new confederacy. The border states, however, were hesitant to act, and so long as they remained within the Union compromise seemed possible. Rothschild saw this possibility slowly destroyed by the incapacity of the lame-duck Buchanan administration and by the unwillingness of the incoming Republican administration to act decisively.

The issue that confronted Lincoln at his inauguration on March 4, 1861, was to find some means of restoring the Union short of the only terms that would have satisfied the secessionists, namely, opening the territories to slavery and guaranteeing the unhampered existence of slavery by constitutional amendment. His policy, therefore, was to play for time—to refuse to recognize the legitimacy of secession but at the same time to provoke no aggressive action. Whatever Lincoln's ultimate intentions may have been, they were frustrated, and the political impasse ended at last over the question of the federal forts in the seceded states. To turn them over to the South was recognition of the legitimacy of secession; to fail to do so was an affront to those who regarded themselves as a sovereign state. When, on April 12, 1861, General Beauregard ordered his forces to fire across the harbor at Charleston, all hope of compromise ended.

Fearful though the portents were, there were some who were able to discern in the events of those years evidence of vitality and future

promise. Wah Whitman called 1859–60 the “year of meteors,” a year from whose omens the future greatness of the country could be dimly seen:

Year of meteors! brooding year!
 I would bind in words retrospective some of your deeds and signs . . .
 I would sing how an old man, tall, with white hair, mounted the
 scaffold in Virginia. . . .
 I would sing in my copious song your census returns of the States,
 The tables of population and products, I would sing of your ships
 and their cargoes. . . .
 Of such, and fitful as they, I sing. . . .
 Your chants, O year all mottled with good and evil—year of fore-
 bodings!
 Year of comets and meteors transient and strange. . . .¹⁴

But how could a Rothschild be expected to see greatness in John Brown's raid? For him it was evidence that the dark forces of lawlessness, the curse of European history, were present in the New World, too. And how could he see the heterogeneity of American society as a source of men's strength and determination to defend a system that allows each man to be freely what he is? For a Rothschild, to whom rank and attachment to a social position were the very essence of an orderly society, heterogeneity was evidence of disorder and imminent chaos. Self-confident to the point of arrogance and equipped with a fixed standard from which to judge the working of a society, he went through the country with magnificent imperturbability, casting verdicts, seeing less than he supposed, and unaware of what he did not see.

His very limitations, however, were not without a certain virtue. A snob he was, but like the best of the breed he saw ironies and inelegancies that those who looked ever up and never down could not have seen; and he seasoned his observations with considerable pungency. He was, moreover, a sophisticate, who was able to consider what he saw in America in the light of his knowledge of alternative ways of organizing a society. Was America really so different from

Europe as its staunchest defenders insisted? Did we not pay a price for those differences that undoubtedly did exist? Equality, yes, but also banality; freedom, yes, but no sense of mutual obligation. And was there not good reason to believe—did not the very issue of the Civil War proclaim—that if America had been unique a century before, it was now being inexorably driven down the same historical path that Europe had traveled? Can there be a political revolution, Rothschild asked, without a social revolution, and was not abolitionism the harbinger of that social revolution? The question was not trivial.

Convinced that a Union victory would threaten the foundations of the social order that provided security for him and his kind and endanger the national interests of France itself, Salomon de Rothschild importuned his family to bring every pressure to bear on Napoleon III to recognize the Confederacy. That the Emperor was sympathetic to the Confederacy, that he saw in an independent South a buffer that would safeguard his Caribbean adventures against Northern interference, that he attempted to get the states of Europe to recognize the Confederacy—all this cannot be doubted.¹⁵ Moreover, far-fetched though it may seem, there was even some reason for Rothschild to feel, as he reported to his family, that there were those in the South who were willing to put themselves under the protection of Napoleon. The Havana correspondent of the *New York Times* reported a widespread rumor in Cuba that “a French prince will be called upon to rule over the Southern states.”¹⁶ And George Templeton Strong remarked how curious it was “to observe how freely these agents of the Confederacy talk of assigning Louis Napoleon Texas, or even Louisiana and Arkansas and everything west of the Mississippi.”¹⁷

There is considerable reason to doubt, however, whether Salomon's entreaties had any influence on his family. The sale of Confederate bonds in Europe was handled not by the Rothschilds, but by the banking house of Emile Erlanger and Company, of Paris, Frankfurt, and Amsterdam.¹⁸ To be sure, the rumor was widespread in the United States that the Rothschilds had invested heavily in Con-

- p. 207; Anton Bettelheim, *Balzac* (Munich, 1926), pp. 116, 193, 201; Corti, *Rothschild*, pp. 219-21, 282-83.
3. Corti, *Rothschild*, pp. 223-25.
 4. Quoted in H. H. Houben, *Gespräche mit Heine* (Frankfurt am Main, 1926), p. 517.
 5. Robert Ricatte, ed., Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Journal* (Monaco, 1956), V, 118. Ferrières was the Rothschild estate near Paris.
 6. Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong* (New York, 1952), III, 39-40.
 7. Constance Battersea, *Reminiscences* (London, 1922), pp. 77, 84, 87.
 8. *Archives Israélites*, XXV (1864), 493-94, 563, 855; Goncourt, *Journal*, VI, 208.
 9. Reginald C. McGrane, *Foreign Bondholders and American State Debts* (New York, 1935), pp. 8, 9, 31-34, 51, 132, 151, 201; Ralph W. Hidy, *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), pp. 195-99, 333, 339, 378, 413, 577; Justin H. Smith, *The War with Mexico* (New York, 1919), II, 266.
 10. VII (1860), 7, quoted in Rudolf Glanz, "The Rothschild Legend in America," *Jewish Social Studies*, XIX (1957), 20.
 11. Vol. I, No. 4 (1839), p. 9, quoted in Glanz, "Rothschild Legend," p. 19.
 12. Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba: 1848-1855* (New York, 1948), pp. 258-59; Richard J. H. Gottheil, *The Belmont-Belmonte Family* (New York, 1917), pp. 173-75.
 13. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston, 1863), pp. 22, 26; Croswell Bowen, *The Elegant Oakley* (New York, 1956), pp. 46-47.
 14. "Year of Meteors," in Emory Holloway, ed., *Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose and Letters* (London, 1938), pp. 220-21.
 15. Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy* (Chicago, 1931), pp. 64-65, 75-76; James Morton Callahan, *The Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy* (Baltimore, 1901), pp. 111-19, 161, 184, 206-11; Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Boston and New York, 1931), pp. 204-15; Owen F. Aldis, "Louis Napoleon and the Southern Confederacy," *North American Review*, CXXIX (1879), 342-60.
 16. November 23, 1860.
 17. Strong, *Diary*, III, 395.
 18. Erlanger's son was engaged to John Slidell's daughter. Callahan, *Diplomatic History*, pp. 58-63; Owsley, *King Cotton*, pp. 396-402.

19. Quoted in Glanz, "Rothschild Legend," p. 21.
20. VII (1863), 258, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21. In the ensuing years, tales about the role of the Rothschilds in causing the Civil War became the stock in trade of currency cranks and anti-Semites. Ezra Pound charged that the "United States were sold to the Rothschilds in 1863." Willis P. Overholser invented an exchange of letters between the Rothschilds and the mythical New York banking house of "Ikleheimer, Morton, and Vandergould" in 1863 relating to the passage of the National Banking Act. On February 12, 1940, *Social Justice*, published by Father Charles E. Coughlin, contained an article, "Abraham Lincoln and Rothschilds," alleging that the Civil War resulted from a Rothschild plot to fasten their "financial domination" on the United States and that the murder of President Lincoln was "resolved upon" by the Rothschilds. "And Israel went anew to grab the riches of the world." In June 1959, that article was reprinted in the *Bulletin of the Loyal Legion*, the official publication of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, composed of descendants of Union officers, with the warm endorsement of General U. S. Grant III, grandson of the Civil War hero and chairman of the Civil War Centennial Commission. Ezra Pound, *Gold and Work* (London, 1951, trans. from the 1st Italian ed. of 1944), p. 5; see also Pound, *America, Roosevelt and the Causes of the Present War* (London, 1951, trans. from the 1st Italian ed. of 1944), p. 13, and *Canto XLVI*. Willis P. Overholser, *A Short Review and Analysis of the History of Money in the United States* (Libertyville, Ill., 1936), pp. 46-47.
21. Bertram Wallace Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1951), pp. 160-62; Morris U. Schappes, ed., *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875* (New York, 1950), pp. 956-58; *Letters, Speeches, and Addresses of August Belmont* (New York, 1890), pp. 92, 99-101.
22. Quoted in Hugo Bieber, ed., *Heinrich Heine: A Biographical Anthology* (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 386-87.

• *The Letters* •

I

New York, 17 December 59

. . . We have learned here with great pleasure of the expedition to China; it is taken to be an assurance of peace between France and England.¹ The prospect of war between these two powers had caused a sudden panic in America and that panic had stopped many commercial transactions, which now, however, will be resumed. But we are kept sufficiently preoccupied by the internal politics of the country—the abortive attempt of Brown and his accomplices and their execution have once again aroused hatred between the two great parties which divide America; and there are people who have come to the point of fearing a complete break between the states of the South and those of the North.² Responsible men in the North, to prevent such a calamity, have declared themselves in favor of maintaining the status quo, but the people are enraged against slavery and they are being stirred up by clever agitators.

At the head of these agitators is Beecher, the brother of Mrs. Beecher Stowe (of Uncle Tom).³ He regularly makes the most incendiary speeches, and, since he is a clergyman, he usually chooses Sunday and the church to give vent to his eloquence. In Washington the Congress is so divided that it still cannot name a president.⁴ In Philadelphia there have been disturbances, and in South Carolina the sum of \$200,000 has been put aside in case of war with the Northern States. A touching Union! But I think that all this excitement will end in a puff of smoke.

I am beginning to get my bearings a bit in what is for me a very new kind of life; people are exceedingly polite and invitations are showered upon me. . . . During my walks I am frequently entertained by the spectacle of fires; they are so frequent here that no one

concerns himself with them and not even the people in the very next house are bothered. The fire department is admirably organized; the engines are magnificent and are manned by volunteers who compete with one another to see who will arrive first at the disaster. So, when two companies of firemen arrive at the same time, since the first to arrive has the right to command the others, they begin by fighting over the question of priority. The fires generally don't last very long, since the fire engines are so well made. There are even some that are steam-driven and do not have to be pulled through the streets, but these have the disadvantage of running over people and knocking over carriages each time they are used; apart from that, they are very useful.

I do not know very much about what in France is called the confidence game, but I can assure you that Americans are clever thieves. I had just taken money from the desk and entered a shop to pay a bill. I had scarcely put my wallet in my pocket and gone a hundred steps when it disappeared—and with it the \$100 it contained.

But there is something going on here more serious than the most important political events; it is the construction and establishment of a garden or park that will be nine miles in circumference. All the Americans tell me they are going to have a park more beautiful than the Bois de Boulogne. It will cost \$10,000,000.⁹

1. In 1859 the Anglo-French military forces in China insisted on going directly through the city of Tientsin on their way to Peking, where ratifications of the Treaty of Tientsin, negotiated the previous year, were to be exchanged. The Chinese blockaded the mouth of the Pai-ho and repulsed the Anglo-French attack on their fortifications. Napoleon III agreed to an English proposal to dispatch a punitive expedition, and the French forces sailed from Toulon and Brest in December 1859.

2. John Brown's raid occurred on Sunday, October 16, 1859. He was captured two days later and hanged on December 2.

3. On December 16, 1859, Henry Ward Beecher and Wendell Phillips, the noted Abolitionist leaders, spoke at a sympathy meeting for John Brown at Cooper Institute in New York City. Two thousand

people paid 25 cents each to attend a stormy meeting at which, according to the *New York Times*, nearly one hundred police were needed to restore order.

4. Rothschild was referring to the election of the Speaker of the House. Not until February 1, 1860—on the 44th ballot—was William Pennington, a New Jersey Republican, elected.

5. Central Park was under active construction in 1858-59. It quickly became a source of great pride to the people of New York.

II

New York, 19 December 59

I must confess that New York has made an impression on me entirely different from what I had expected. I have found here the most aristocratic sentiments rubbing elbows with the most democratic institutions. I have seen few countries where society is more exclusive, and this exclusiveness is founded on nothing at all. Wealth, political position, and education are not the keys that provide admittance. One is fashionable or one is not, and the why of it is completely unknown to those who are the objects of this preferment and to those who confer it. In my opinion, this is the strangest and often the most unjust social system it is possible to have.

I found people infinitely better informed and more cosmopolitan than I expected, and I should find them perfectly agreeable if they did not have a constant tendency to exaggerate the faults of their country. Financial and industrial activity has rather disappointed me; with the exception of the unbelievable expansion of the 'dry goods' trade (the importing of manufactured goods) and the immense scale on which these houses are established, business appears to me to be rather slow at the moment. It is true that the difficulties arising out of European politics and the fears felt here for the dissolution of the Union are powerful enough reasons to slow down

business and discourage long-range commitments. I suppose now that everything is going to recover again; for people here believe that the Italian question has been entirely solved since the announcement of the Congress,¹ and that the differences between France and England are completely settled by the uniting of the two countries' military forces in the Chinese expedition. And as to the internal politics of this country, sober people have been so frightened by the consequences of a rupture between the North and the South that a strong reaction has suddenly welled up on all sides. 'Meetings' have been organized in favor of the Union; and although it is expected that the 'antislavery' (Republican) candidate will be named President of the Congress,² union between the North and the South will be re-established and the great slavery question will be allowed to rest until next year.

Meanwhile, the extremists among the Republicans have begun to stir; their chiefs, Beecher and Phillips, make such incendiary speeches that sober Americans say they deserve to be hanged. But in this country of exaggerated liberty, one is permitted to attack one's neighbor's property and the law is infinitely more solicitous of the thief than of the honest man. What also astonishes me greatly is that, with very few exceptions, both statesmen in executive office and those in Congress are so little respected and so lightly regarded. Nonetheless, some of them are very eloquent, and if any interesting questions should come up I will go to Washington next month to be present at some of the debates.

Belmont is quite the politician now. As such, as well as by virtue of being a businessman, his standing is quite high here.

1. Presumably the announcement of the Treaty of Villafranca, six months earlier.

2. I.e., Speaker of the House. The balloting had begun on December 5, 1859, and not until February 1, 1860, was Republican Congressman William Pennington of New Jersey elected. The election itself was prolonged and embittered by Southern charges that Congressman John Sher-

man, the leading Republican candidate for the post at the start of the balloting, had endorsed Hinton R. Helper's anti-slavery tract, *The Impending Crisis*. Public interest in the election was intense, and when the result was announced the newspapers of Richmond draped themselves in mourning.

III

New York, 3 January 60

If it were not for the innumerable visits that I paid to the ladies on New Year's Day, I would have been quite rested. It is the custom here on this occasion to visit all the ladies that one knows and even those that one has seen only once. The ladies draw up a list, and the one with the longest is the most fashionable lady in town. So one sees only black clothes in the streets, and on that entire day I believe I saw only a single petticoat out of doors. Besides, I had to conform to custom, for I find people to be terrifyingly polite and I am almost dead from dining out and staying out all evening. So I return privately to the opinion I originally held of Americans, but I am told to wait until I have left N.Y. and that then I shall revert rapidly to my first opinion.

It is bitterly cold here. A snowstorm has made it possible to go sleighing, but I don't like sleighing: you run the risk of returning with your nose or ears frozen. But what is a great deal of fun is ice-skating, and Central Park presents a delightful sight with its 4,000 skaters, coming, going, jostling each other, falling. This park will certainly be one of the most beautiful in the world, and the Americans are as proud of it as they are of Washington.¹

Speaking of Washington, I think that next week I shall go there, for Congress will be organized by then and it will be a curious group to see. At this moment, political passions have risen to the boiling point, and either the slavery question will be buried forever, or else

there will be a separation between the states and perhaps civil war will follow. To know what political passions really are, one must see them, and it is a strange spectacle for a foreigner.

After having studied the question on the spot, I must tell you something that will startle you and will lower me greatly in your esteem. But if I were an American and if I had to declare myself, I, too, would be as much a 'Staunch Slavery Man' as the oldest planter in the South. One makes rather strange acquaintances here; the day before yesterday I dined with a very amiable gentleman who was introduced to me as General Saunders. In the midst of eating, they shouted at me from the end of the table: "You don't know it, but General Saunders is a great friend of Louis Blanc, of Ledru-Rollin, etc." Now that was unpleasant enough for me, but my informant went on: "It's not his fault if your head is still on your shoulders; it was he who in the Club Blanqui said that the guillotine was not fast enough and proposed to attach a small steam engine to it."

"Is this true?" I asked, looking at my neighbor with horror. "Oh," he said, "it was an error of youth that I certainly should not commit now; but I had been asked to speak and it was necessary to think up something novel."

You might think that on that first occasion I would have removed myself from the presence of this republican hangman; oh well, the man is seen and received everywhere. Caussidière is established here as a wine merchant with a very aristocratic clientele.³

1. "Crowds rushed to Central Park yesterday," wrote the *New York Times* on December 29, 1859, "assured by the extremely cold weather that the skating would be in its prime. . . . It is said that 600,000 pairs of skates have been sold in this City since the skating mania of the present season broke out and a serious rise in the price of the article is hinted at."

2. Louis Blanc and A. A. Ledru-Rollin were Republican leaders in France during the Revolution of 1848. The Rothschild family had been closely associated with King Louis Philippe, and the new republican government accordingly kept them under police surveillance.

3. Marc Caussidière, prefect of police in Paris for the republican gov-

ernment in 1848, notified Baron James de Rothschild that he was being kept under surveillance. When the Baron assured him he would not try to escape and gave him sums of money to be distributed as charity, Caussidière promised him police protection. Later, when Caussidière himself went in exile to London, Rothschild sent him 30,000 francs. "You can return it to me in ten or twenty years, or whenever you want," he wrote. (Eugène de Mirecourt, *Histoire contemporaine, portraits et silhouettes au XIX^e siècle* [3d ed., Paris, 1870], pp. 47-48). Caussidière established a lucrative wine and brandy business.

IV

New York, 12 January 60

The weather has been so bad that the 'steamer' bringing me news of you has not yet been able to enter the harbor. It snows as I have never seen it snow; one might as well be in Russia. I don't know why it is, but you do not suffer as much from the cold here as in Europe. The air is purer, more invigorating, and it would be an excellent climate if inside the house one were not suffocated by hot-air stoves, gas heaters, or coal stoves. Everybody lives here all day long in a temperature very like what we put up with in the old days at poor grandfather's house. From so much heating come the many fires.

Moreover, the negligence of the government in preventing accidents of all kinds is shameful, and I am astonished that more serious misfortunes don't happen. An engineer who by his error, negligence, or incapacity causes the death of countless people is not punished at all. But I hope the frightful accident that has just happened will make for greater watchfulness and care. A manufacturer had put up some cotton mills in Lawrence, but to save several thousand dollars he had not given his buildings the necessary strength. A rumor to this effect was widespread, but the government claimed that there was nothing to be done because no accident had happened. The day before yesterday the building suddenly collapsed on 800 workmen inside, burying almost all of them in the ruins. Rescue work began

immediately, but to add to the horror fire broke out in the debris and burned those unfortunates who had not been crushed. More than 300 persons perished and 150 were more or less seriously injured in the catastrophe.¹ This would really be a blessing for humanity if the European newspapers took note of it to attack the American government, which concerns itself much more with its political influence than with the welfare and security of those it should govern paternally. The word "liberty" signifies here, as it does in all democracies, the power to do all sorts of harmful and annoying things to one's neighbors.

Speaking of democracy, the day before yesterday I was taken to the Democratic ball at Tammany Hall. Introduced into the room where the bosses fortified themselves from a vast punchbowl, I shook hands right and left with cobblers and corner grocers. Then all these gentlemen, walking two by two and giving their arms to one another to counterbalance the effects of the rum, came forward, following the band and behind a pole surmounted by a cap that was more or less Phrygian in appearance, only spoiled by silk and gold lace. I was told that this bonnet recalled the victory of General Jackson over the English at New Orleans.² Caught up in the procession, I advanced triumphantly amidst two columns of ladies—and what ladies! I! Such figures and such clothes! Still, if only they had been pretty! After a lot of speech-making that was required by the occasion, the dancing began; but one would have thought that the dances were performed by friends of the monkey who showed slides on the magic lantern. This queer sight amused me for a time, but as I had forgotten my eau de Cologne I fled.

I saw there the three rivals for the post of ambassador to France, Dix,³ Van Buren,⁴ and Faulkner.⁵ The last has been appointed; he does not know a single word of French, and I fear that your tablecloths will suffer as much from his presence as from that of old Mason.⁶ He takes with him a secretary or attaché who would do very well as a 'waiter' in a pub in the City of London. I do not understand this mania for always sending us peasants, when there are really some very good people here. . . .

Yesterday there were some very lively debates in the House; since one member could not find words expressive enough, he took a revolver from his pocket. His opponent immediately armed himself with a 'bowie-knife'; the ladies, enchanted by the incident, pressed forward in the gallery crying: 'Let me see the fight.' But the guards separated the fiery orators, who then made their apologies. I shall soon send you Helper's pamphlet,⁷ which is making quite a stir at the moment and which is the essence of the Republican doctrine. . . .

1. On January 10, 1860, the Pemberton Mills at Lawrence, Mass., were gutted by fire; more than 200 employees were burned to death or crushed by the falling walls. It was an open secret, the *New York Times* charged, that the building had been poorly constructed; it was rumored that the architect had been hired because he was related to the former governor of Massachusetts. January 11, 12, 1860.

2. The ball was held to celebrate Jackson's great victory of January 8, 1815.

3. John Adams Dix (1789-1879) was a leader in New York Democratic politics whose career was checked by the opposition of pro-slavery Democrats. Late in the administration of President Buchanan, when the cabinet was being destroyed by corruption and political crisis, he returned to public life as Postmaster-General and, briefly, as Secretary of the Treasury. He served as Minister to France from 1866 to 1869.

4. Almost certainly John Van Buren (1810-66), the popular son of former President Martin Van Buren. He had served with his father as attaché of the American legation in London, and had an important political career in the radical wing of the New York Democratic Party.

5. Charles James Faulkner (1806-84), a moderate on the slavery issue and an ardent expansionist, served in Congress from 1851 to 1859. Buchanan appointed him Minister to France in 1859.

6. John Young Mason (1799-1859), "a fat-brained, good-hearted sensible old man," as Nathaniel Hawthorne called him, served in Congress and in the cabinet of Presidents Tyler and Polk. He was Minister to France from 1853 to 1859 and was one of the signers of the Ostend Manifesto of October 18, 1854, in which the United States ministers to France, Spain, and Great Britain declared it to be American policy to acquire Cuba by force if Spain should refuse to sell it.

7. The "interference" of the sergeant-at-arms stopped the fight be-

tween Congressmen John B. Clark and John Bussing Haskin, the *New York Times* reported, but "produced profound disgust and indignation in the galleries." January 13, 1860.

8. Hinton Rowan Helper's *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* had been published in 1857. During the prolonged contest to elect a Speaker of the House, the book was violently denounced by Southern congressmen.

V

New York, 16 January 60

. . . Politics has not changed at all here; there is still no agreement on the choice of a president, although one hopes that the different factions of the Democratic Party will unite behind a candidate named Hamilton.¹

The organization of the House will allow the general affairs of the country to be taken up once again and make possible the payment of the five million piastres² owed to the postal system. But there will be no change in the relations between the different parties; on the contrary, these become more difficult and more venomous every day.

In the South, irritation has reached its highest pitch. A number of Irishmen and Northerners who had inopportunistically expressed their opinions on the slavery question were publicly whipped, then 'tarred and feathered,' and sent back to the North dressed in that simple but embarrassing costume. These excesses are certainly very regrettable, but one must admit that the Republicans are to blame. The violence of their invective and the advice they give to the blacks to revolt must naturally bring reprisals from a fervent and unyielding people.

I think, however, that the good sense of the nation will prevail and will prevent disunion and collision; but people feel much more sure about pecuniary interests as the means of settling the trouble. The big manufacturers are afraid that if the South secedes, it will refuse to send its cotton to the North and will establish its own great

industrial establishments. I have already written everything I think about America, but I can add that the more I see of things, the less I find myself in favor of this form of government. You certainly know of my liberal ideas and my lack of sympathy for despotism; but I believe more firmly than ever that in a state there must be a combination of an irremovable power united with an elective power, the two powers counterbalancing each other. In such a system public opinion has enough strength to prevent abuses; it can warn the irremovable power by overthrowing the elected power. On the other hand, universal suffrage confers authority on persons who are not worthy and who often do not have the necessary aptitude for public affairs. The latter, to curry favor with the multitude, often support dangerous ideas and give minor jobs to those who can be useful to them when they seek re-election.

The nomination of Faulkner to the legation in Paris and that of his son-in-law Lotte [*sic*] to the post of secretary are a new proof of what I have said and one that you can easily appreciate yourself.

This system is carried to such an extreme that even in New York, the municipal government uses the enormous taxes levied on the people not for the embellishment or maintenance of the city, but to encourage the supporters of the party; and you will be astonished to learn that taxes have risen to the sum of \$8 million (40,000,000 francs).

. . . I continue to be sufficiently entertained in this country, although I detest balls, where I am usually forced to dance, something that bores me. The reason is that at these gatherings there are almost no young women. There are always very pretty young girls, it is true, but they are young girls and they are hot for marriage. As for the young men, they are impossible and I hate them all without exception.

. . . To my great astonishment I have found that there is absolutely no gambling here. As a result of several serious losses the custom is to play only 'long whist' at 5 piastres a 'rubber,' without paying for points. 'Poker' is banned entirely, and one goes into hiding to play it. As for gambling houses, they are declining. I have never set foot in one, and have every intention of keeping it that way.

1. Probably Andrew Jackson Hamilton (1815-75) whose politics, like his name, were a compromise. A unionist Democrat from Texas, Hamilton had substantial support as a compromise candidate for Speaker of the House in 1860, though he had been elected to the House for the first time in 1859.

2. The piastre was not a French or an American coin, and it is impossible to know exactly what coin Rothschild was referring to. But it is possible that by using the name of a relatively worthless coin from some outlandish country, he suggests his attitude toward the United States.

VI

New York, 6 February 60

The letter of the Emperor to his minister, Fould,¹ has made the businesslike hearts of the Americans rejoice, and this homage to King Cotton has given a new popularity to our sovereign, for the despotism of a man and the despotism of a mob are brothers.

Now, thanks to the abolition of tariffs, Washington is dethroned and General Jackson is only a small boy alongside His Majesty. These fine people feel obliged in my presence to drown my sovereign in a deluge of eulogies.² Nevertheless, the Catholics in this country are as excited as elsewhere, and the mandates of the priests yield nothing in vehemence to the language of the primate of Ireland.³

You complain of the dirt of Paris; let me tell you that compared to New York, Tetuán is a waxed ballroom.⁴ Every day it snows, but they leave it to the sun to make the snow disappear: as a result, there are slush puddles three feet deep. As for the mayor, he has been put in office by the contractors of the city; he is their representative, to the great anger of the property holders, who pay \$40 million in taxes and enrich the rabble. I laugh out loud thinking of the benefits of equality, and find that one must pay dear and suffer a lot to bear the glorious title of American citizen. . . .

1. On January 15, 1860, Napoleon III announced publicly his intention of publishing a letter he had sent ten days earlier to Achille Fould, his Minister of State, in which he declared that tariff barriers would have to be reduced in order to lower prices, increase consumption, and encourage the expansion of commerce.

2. The Anglo-French commercial treaty of January 23, 1860, lowering tariffs between the two countries, was a subject of considerable discussion in the New York press. Among Southern sympathizers, moreover, Napoleon III's reputation was rising. Strong reported that it had been suggested in the *Richmond Enquirer* "that the South secede from the Union and put itself under the protection of Louis Napoleon!" *Diary*, II, 476.

3. The Catholics of France, who had long been among the most loyal supporters of Napoleon III, felt betrayed by the shift in the Emperor's Italian policy; it presaged a weakening of the power of the Papacy.

4. Rothschild had actually been to Tetuán, Morocco, in the 1850's. During the course of his visit he interceded with the Pasha on behalf of the Jewish community, distributed alms, and promised to send a doctor from Paris to attend the indigent. He did so; when he died in 1864 the Jews of Tetuán held a memorial service for "him to whom our city owes its medical service and so many other benefits." *Archives Israélites*, XIX (1858), 668-69; XXV (1864), 563.

VII

New York, 10 February 60

My dear brother-in-law:

. . . My impressions of the country have been much more favorable—something I didn't think would happen—and the Yankee gains by being seen at home. What is extraordinary, however, is that the crudest people, the least agreeable, the least attractive, are the politicians. It seems that their great distinction consists in their almost total lack of education. You will have a specimen in the new minister to France, Mr. Faulkner, compared with whom old Mason was a veritable dandy, the soul of elegance. I do not understand this mania

for always sending to us in Europe such unpolished people, when the dominant idea among Americans is to appear as civilized as the people of the old world and to cover up their poor education.

We are in the midst of a great political conflict here. I do not know how it will end, but I think that the Democrats will sweep everything before them again this time. The great misfortune is that the extremist Democrats are blackguards and that people are forced into their arms by fear of the Republicans. People here are delighted with the Emperor. The brochure "Congress and Pope" and the attacks against the Catholic clergy have made all Protestant hearts throb;¹ but the enthusiasm of the worshipers of King Cotton knew no limits when His Majesty declared himself the apostle of free trade. I do not think, however, that this will do much to increase the export of cotton, which customs duties did not hinder anyhow.

We have had some frightful storms, unlike anything people can remember. The damage has been widespread; along the Hudson alone it has been estimated at \$200,000, the equivalent of 1,000,000 francs. On top of that, there have been many disasters at sea.

The most disagreeable aspect of this climate is the sudden changes in temperature, which often fluctuates 30 degrees from morning to evening. . . .

It seems necessary that the last weeks of the carnival should be frantically gay (there are so many girls to be married!). While high society amuses itself the lower orders lose no time either. Yesterday there was a party at the home of a wine merchant. Several young men, wishing to celebrate this occasion after their fashion, went out and got a cannon, which they loaded and fired twice to the great applause of their companions. The police looked on without budging; but since it was three o'clock in the morning, all the good people in the neighborhood being awakened with a start, ran out half dressed, thinking that some unknown enemy was attacking the city. This is one of the many American practical jokes.

Lent continues to throw a pall over New York; balls have ceased completely and there are no more than a few rare dinners. The ladies go to the theater, the men to boxing matches. I saw one of

these exhibitions, and what interested me most was that the audience was composed of people from all the dangerous classes of N.Y. This sort of diversion is much more interesting to the American people than the most important political debates.

Yesterday we celebrated St. Patrick's Day, he being the patron saint of the Irish, who gave themselves over completely to the celebration! The city was completely theirs; from morning to night immense processions wound their way through the main streets and blocked traffic—never have I seen such a grotesque mob. The street-car conductors, thinking that they alone had the right to impede traffic, became angry; fights broke out, heads were broken, and horses were killed. In the evening the celebration ended with the burning of a house, which, naturally, was insured.²

The theaters, which the people of N.Y. love passionately, are not worth much. I have rarely seen such depraved taste; they applaud only the feeblest dramas or low-grade farces worthy of the St. Cloud fair. This low taste is to be seen everywhere, in the arts as well as in letters. You should see the work of American painters! ! !

There is a French theater here which has declared bankruptcy three times this year; I still have not had the courage to go there. . . .

1. For reasons of policy Napoleon III allowed considerable publicity to be given to a pamphlet, *The Pope and the Congress*, in which it was suggested that the requirements of Papal independence could as well be met by the retention of Rome and "a garden" as by the maintenance of a large temporal dominion.

2. The copyist of Rothschild's letters must have made an error in the transcription of the date of this letter or perhaps combined two letters; St. Patrick's Day, of course, is celebrated on March 17. The *New York Times* of March 19, 1860, described the riotous scene in terms much like Rothschild's: "Drunken women with infants in their arms, men argumentatively disposed to establish logically the fact of their own sobriety, and victims of pugilistic skill, with too much color about their eyes, were yarded like cattle, in the fenced enclosures for prisoners in the Court."

VIII

New York, 30 March 60

I made a short but interesting excursion to Washington, passing through Baltimore and Philadelphia. I cannot admire the way Americans travel. Their railroads are in a deplorable state, and no one cares a rap. To get to Washington, you must change lines six times, take a steamboat—called a 'ferry'—three times, and pile into a great omnibus containing all kinds of people any number of times. Here, too, is the great pleasure of American railroads: there is only one class, in which everyone travels indiscriminately. You should see what fine traveling companions one collects! Let us ignore those that one only sees, though it is true they spit outrageously and do all sorts of obnoxious things. But there are some who follow you in spite of all you can do, and who, finding themselves comfortable in your company, multiply without limit! To the great horror of faithful Pierre, who tells me with amazement "I have just found five bugs in Monsieur's trunk," I answer "Kill them," with the stoicism of a Cato. As for the degree of comfort of the coaches, nothing need he said: they are first-class coaches for the use of sixty people, who, upon entering, buy the right to do everything except rest; for when you have finally fallen asleep you never fail to be jolted awake, rudely shoved by the vigorous hand of the conductor who asks for one of your many tickets, or summoned back to reality by the shrill voice of the 'boy' who offers you newspapers and the latest publications.

Happily, we arrived at Washington after a delay of only several hours. The locomotive, finding itself in Pennsylvania, had felt obliged to imitate the local shoemakers and went resolutely on strike in the middle of a field; encouraged though it was, it did not wish to go forward. Our position was rather disagreeable, since there was only a single track. Happily, the train coming from the other direc-

tion was courteous enough to stop, which permitted our own to withdraw finally, thanks to an additional locomotive that came up as a reinforcement.

Arriving in Washington is very diverting. As in all the cities of the Union an army of coachmen, worse than the coachmen of Valencia, wrangle with those unfortunate travelers who they feel are rich enough to be jolted about in their ramshackle carriages. They begin by battling each other; then they fight with the traveler under the pretext of taking him to their coaches. A man is very lucky indeed if he enters the coach with his body intact and his clothes untrampled.

Since Alphonse's visit to the capital of the Union (it is the seat of disunion!),¹ Washington has grown, spread out, but it has certainly not changed. Many streets have been added, but not one has been completed; the houses seem to have an unfinished look. I found that the dust there is worthy of the Sahara and is carried in by gale-like winds; no one ventures into the streets on foot for fear of being blown away—this is true above all of the ladies!

After a few days I became acquainted with the most distinguished men in the country, some of whom I had already seen in New York: Benjamin² and Jules,³ the two Representatives of the Mexican race [*sic*] and the two greatest orators in the country; Latham,⁴ one of the Senators from California, very young and destined to become the most important man in his country; President Buchanan, his ministers, and all the candidates for the presidency—there are fifty-three of them. In the Republican Party Seward⁵ has the best chance; among the Democrats, Joe Lane,⁶ Hunter,⁷ or Breckinridge.⁸ The last, who is now Vice-President, has all my sympathies. He is a young man, charming, full of fire and intelligence, and—a rare thing—a perfect gentleman. Slidell⁹ gave a dinner in honor of Benjamin, Stœckl (the Russian minister),¹⁰ and me, at which the most interesting men here were present. I was swamped with invitations from all these gentlemen and could get away only after promising that I would soon return. Breckinridge, who presides over the Senate, took me to the Capitol, which is a very beautiful building, and showed me in great

detail the two chambers, the Supreme Court, and all their representatives. For a while I had thought of spending several days at the convention in Charleston,¹¹ but I decided not to because in Cincinnati large placards have been put up telling the public that the Rothschilds have sent countless millions to buy a President of their own choice.¹² . . . My own opinion is that the Democrats will lose the contest and that Seward will carry it off.

You must have heard talk about the capture of two Mexican steamships by the American fleet,¹³ which asks nothing more than a pretext to get mixed up in everything. Brother Jonathan is like John Bull; he troubles himself very little with justice and busies himself only with his own interests.

Within two years, Mexico will be a province of the Union; meanwhile, the American government, as the price of giving support to Juarez,¹⁴ will be conceded the port of Sonora. When one has tasted part of a cake, one wants to eat the whole thing. The Yankees turn envious eyes toward the beautiful island of Cuba.¹⁵ It would be so happy under an American regime!! It would serve the cause of humanity to free it from the Spaniards!! The pretext will arise, as it arose for Mexico. Moreover, General Walker¹⁶ is highly regarded here, although his intimate and confidential friend was arrested a few days ago for swindling. But in this country that is a detail of only minor importance.

1. Baron Mayer James Alphonse de Rothschild, Salomon's older brother, had visited the United States some years before. At the time of his visit, the *New York Sun* reported that a member of the Rothschild family would probably remain in the United States to help August Belmont extend "the business of the firm in the United States, Mexico and South America, and eventually to the East Indies and China." Quoted in Rudolf Glanz, "The Rothschild Legend in America," *Jewish Social Studies*, XIX (1957), 20.

2. Judah Philip Benjamin (1811-84), Senator from Louisiana, later Attorney-General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State of the Confederacy.

3. Possibly Rothschild was referring to David Levy Yulee (1810-86), Senator from Florida. Like Benjamin, Yulee was born in the West Indies, to a Sephardic Jewish family that had emigrated from Morocco. Rothschild may have intended to say "Spanish" rather than "Mexican race," in reference to their Sephardic origin.

4. Milton Slocum Latham (1827-82), former Congressman and Governor of California, was elected to the Senate in 1860. A Southern sympathizer, he defended slavery, supported Breckinridge in the election of 1860, and predicted independence for California in the event of secession. He was defeated for re-election and had no further political career.

5. William Henry Seward (1801-72), had a long and distinguished career as Governor of New York and United States Senator from 1838 to 1860. On the eve of the Republican convention of 1860, he was the leading candidate for the presidency. He served as Secretary of State in Lincoln's cabinet.

6. Joseph Lane (1801-81), was appointed Governor of Oregon Territory by President Polk in 1848. In 1850 he was elected delegate to Congress from the Territory, and in 1859 he was sent to the Senate. He was Breckinridge's running mate in the election of 1860.

7. Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter (1809-87), of Virginia, had been Speaker of the House and was elected to the Senate in 1847. Something of a moderate before secession, he served briefly as Secretary of State of the Confederacy.

8. John Cabell Breckinridge (1821-75), was elected to Congress from Kentucky in 1851. He served as Vice President in the Buchanan administration, and was the pro-slavery candidate for the presidency on the Democratic ticket in 1860.

9. John Slidell (1793-1871), of a prominent New York merchant family, migrated to New Orleans in 1819. His sister Jane was the mother of Belmont's wife, Caroline Slidell Perry. He and James M. Mason were the principals in the famous Trent Affair (1861), one of the more ticklish episodes in the diplomacy of the Civil War.

10. Edouard de Stoeckl, the Russian minister to the United States.

11. The Democratic Party convention of 1860 was held in Charleston, South Carolina. When the platform supported by Stephen A. Douglas—reaffirming the doctrine of popular sovereignty—was adopted on April 30, delegates of the seven Southern states withdrew. Douglas was unable to obtain the two-thirds majority needed for the nomination, and the convention adjourned to meet in Baltimore on June 18. The delegates from the seceding Southern states met a few days earlier in Richmond, and then on June 28 in Baltimore.

12. In the fall of 1860 an anti-Douglas campaign was waged in Illinois, and elsewhere, on the grounds that he was the candidate of the Rothschilds, who would control him if elected.

13. In March 1860, Commodore Turner of the United States Navy captured off Vera Cruz two ships that had sailed from Havana to support General Miramón in the uprising against Benito Juárez. The ships, which were seized as pirates when they refused to show their colors, were taken to New Orleans.

14. Benito Pablo Juárez (1806-72), leader of the liberals in Mexico and claimant of the presidency, defeated the Clerical Party, under General Miramón, in the civil wars, and then waged war against the armies of Napoleon III and the Emperor Maximilian.

15. Southern extremists had long sought to acquire Cuba, and the decade 1850-60 was filled with military and diplomatic threats against that island. The Spanish consulate in New Orleans was wrecked; the notorious Ostend Manifesto was issued; a bill was introduced in the Senate to purchase Cuba from Spain so that two additional slave states could be formed from the island.

16. General William Walker (1824-60), "the gray-eyed man of destiny," was an indifferent doctor, lawyer, editor, journalist, and politician, but a filibuster extraordinaire. His career began in Lower California in 1853, and reached its peak when he was declared president of Nicaragua in 1856. He was deposed after a falling out with Cornelius Vanderbilt.

MAN cannot live by politics alone, and even in the United States of 1860. Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge, John Slidell and James Buchanan were momentarily elbowed off the front pages of the newspapers by a different tribe of movers and shakers. On April 17, 1860, Tom Sayers, the English champion, and John Carmel Heenan, "the Benicia Boy"—claimant to the American championship—met at Farnborough, England, in the first great international prizefight. The supremacy of the western world was at stake; both fighters knew it and so did the public on both sides of the Atlantic.

"The coming fight between Sayers and Heenan excites almost as much interest as did the war in Italy last summer," wrote the New York Times on March 24. The English were a bit more restrained; the "wide and deep interest in the fight," wrote the Times's London correspondent, makes the interest "felt in the Oxford and Cambridge

boat-race, or even a 'Derby,' tame by comparison." Not all Americans, however, felt that national pride demanded a Heenan victory. The Times, indeed, felt that true patriotism required a Heenan defeat. "Are not the pugilistic and sporting fraternity quite conspicuous and influential enough already, without the encouragement and stimulus of such a triumph as would be afforded by the whipping of Sayers?" it asked. "It is to be hoped, therefore, that the result will be such as to suppress rather than stimulate the passions of the most riotous, unscrupulous and pestilent crew that ever a city was cursed with." But if the American must win, it added, let not the news come on the eve of a nominating convention. "We shudder while reflecting upon the effect which might be wrought at such a moment, by the mention of the victorious name of John C. Heenan, of California."

The fighters themselves had fewer doubts as to the relation of their cause to the national interest. Heenan strode into the ring, an American eagle emblazoned on his robe, with the motto "May the Best Man Win" embroidered over its head; thirteen white stars for the original union—on a blue ground—completed his coat-of-arms. Sayers was supplied with the royal standard of Great Britain and Ireland, at each corner of which a rampant lion roared defiance. Above the insignic were the proud words "Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense."

Two hours and twenty minutes later, after 42 bare-knuckled rounds, the fight ended when the two umpires cut the rope against which Heenan was choking Sayers. The official decision, a draw, left both sides dissatisfied, and the arguments over the merits of the two fighters—and the two countries—went on interminably. A full year later, after eight states had already seceded from the Union, the correspondent of the London Times reported that at a breakfast of the New York Press Association, there was talk of "Heenan and Sayers, Secession and Sumter, the press, politicians, New York life, and so on. The first topic occupied a larger place than it was entitled to. . . . [All] seemed convinced that Heenan, if not the better man, was at least the victor in that particular contest."

Alas, poor Heenan. It was his one great triumph. He never received the replica of the championship belt he had been promised,

and shortly after his return to the United States he was divorced by the glittering Adah Isaacs Menken. Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall came to his rescue, though, and the presence of "the Benicia Boy" lent tone to many a political rally in New York City.

IX

New York, 16 April 60

. . . Today I want to give you a summary of local news, although it amounts to very little. Public attention is divided between two great events, the results of the convention at Charleston and—much more important to Americans—the great international combat between [Heenan] and Sayers. This is a fight which is to establish the international supremacy of the English or American nation. John Bull and Brother Jonathan are equally interested in the outcome of the struggle and entrust all their glory to the fists of their champions. We have returned to the time when the Roman gladiators were the most important and most illustrious people of their age.

But to get back to the Charleston convention. All the delegates leave Wednesday, including the former American minister to The Hague.¹ It is impossible to predict the result, but I think it will be Douglas or Guthrie.² . . .

I don't know if you have heard the story of the duel between two representatives of the 'great' American nation, Mr. Dover, the Wisconsin Republican, and Mr. Pryor, the Virginia Democrat. The duel was to have taken place with 'bowie knives,' the seconds—at four paces and armed with pistols—having permission to shoot the first one who did not fight according to the rules. Dueling with 'bowie knives' forbids the use of the right arm, except to ward off blows; and as these little pocket knives are three feet long and cut like razors,

even if one is lucky enough not to get killed, one's left arm is in a pretty state.

Pryor didn't find the game to his taste and preferred rifles at fifty paces.³

1. August Belmont, who had served as Chargé d'Affaires and Minister to the Netherlands from 1853 to 1858, was a delegate to the Democratic convention at Charleston.

2. James Guthrie (1792-1869), was active in Kentucky politics and served as Secretary of the Treasury from 1853 to 1857 in President Pierce's cabinet. On the eve of the Charleston convention, he was considered a leading Southern candidate against Douglas.

3. Roger A. Pryor's antagonist was not Congressman Dover, but Congressman John F. Potter of Wisconsin. Pryor proposed a duel with rifles at fifty yards; Potter suggested bowie knives at four feet. Pryor rejected the suggestion, maintaining that there was "no such mode of settling difficulties between gentlemen," and that bowie knives were "vulgar, barbarous and inhuman." "Involved as a participant in many duels, and as a second in duels without number," the *New York Times* said, "he may be styled a permanent Professor in the College of Honor, and is called in to consult on hopeless cases of wounded pride." His own pride was doubtless grievously wounded when Congressman Potter was presented a bowie knife seven feet long at the Republican convention in Chicago.

X

New York, 26 April 60

. . . We are living in the exciting atmosphere of the elections. Never in my life have I seen anything like the 'canvassing' and 'bribery' which take place openly in this country. Three states have elected their governors, Connecticut and New Hampshire having gone Republican, Rhode Island, Democratic; but everywhere the

struggle has been very close, and 500 to 1,000 votes have swung the balance in an election in which 80,000 votes were cast. In several days the convention at Charleston will begin, and we will know who the candidate of the Democracy will be. The Republican convention at Chicago will take place a month later.

The other day an extraordinary thing happened to me. I received a letter saying that an old woman, sixty-seven years of age, too sick to go out, had an important message to give me, and begging me to visit her at a time when her family would be away. The letter was signed with a well-known and honorable name, but I was told that I should come to the designated address alone. In this country, a rendezvous like that can be dangerous, I was told. But the note sounded so authentic that I went to the place . . . armed with my revolver, a precaution that I thought was completely useless. I was led through a number of rooms and two or three dark corridors. A huge door closed behind me, and I was beginning to feel very pleased at having six bullets at my disposal, when I was introduced into the room where the old lady was. She virtually threw her arms about my legs in gratitude for my having come. I asked what I could do for her. She replied that she was a Jew, that she had always dreamed of seeing a member of the Rothschild family, and that now she could die happy, having satisfied her deepest desire. I was very happy that I had been able to please the poor old lady, and that I had no need to make use of my weapon. . . .

XI

New York, 1 May 60

. . . I should ask you to go to Canada during the month of June to spend some time there. The Prince of Wales is expected and his arrival will provide the occasion for some very fine Canadian and

Indian celebrations. The Prince eventually is to visit the United States, where everyone is embarrassed to think how he will be received.¹ Since one cannot make categories and declare what class of society will have the right to entertain the future King of England, hardly anyone but government officials will be able to receive him; and since these are usually people of dubious education, the good Yankees are rightfully afraid that they will be made fun of.

They are already beside themselves with excitement at the idea of providing a dignified reception for the Japanese Embassy which is coming to Washington. I cannot tell you how amusing is the advice given by the newspapers for the reception to be held for these noble barbarians. They want to make a big impression on these new guests with their American civilization; but since the representative of Emperor Tei-Ho is to go on to Europe later, they are afraid of comparisons and don't know how to solve the problem. The problem is made more difficult because they don't want to untie their purse strings.² This Japanese Embassy will have to share the honors of public curiosity with General Tom Thumb and the Barnum Museum.

Nonetheless, public attention at this moment is directed toward affairs in Europe—not political affairs, for democratic America blindly applauds everything the Emperor does, but that great international conflict which will decide whether English or American fists are superior. The Yankees claim that the English have not acted loyally toward their representative; they complain of interference by spectators and also of having been relieved of their wallets, brief-cases, watches, and similar objects, kept by their antagonists as souvenirs of that friendly occasion.

Yesterday evening I just missed seeing the fight of the two champions take place all over again. While returning home I met an American citizen leaving a 'bar-room,' his face flushed, hat on his ear. This man—six feet tall—came toward me and asked me rather brusquely 'If I was an Englishman.' I assumed he was a supporter of Heenan who had drowned his sorrow at his defeat in several bottles of whiskey. Not having undergone any 'training' which would have allowed me to box, and not being sure if my man was a sup-

porter of Heenan or Sayers, I answered with a most diplomatic grunt, which could not give away my country, and at the same time I took from my pocket one of those brass knuckles that I take with me every night and that I prefer to any other weapon. I began to walk faster and my new friend no doubt thought it was useless to follow me.

There is still nothing new on the subject of the nomination of the president; there is such animosity between the different representatives of the South that one is almost afraid the convention will dissolve. The two candidates who have the best chance are Douglas and Guthrie; the first had more chance at the beginning but the other is now coming up again. In any event, the Democratic Party imposes on its candidates an oath to work for the acquisition of Cuba by peaceful means or otherwise. That smells of a filibuster; they are disappointed, however, by the brilliant conduct of the Spaniards in Morocco and are fearful of not finding them so easy.³

In their foreign policy the Americans bear a strong resemblance to the English; their conduct in Mexico, where, contrary to international law, they captured two ships belonging to Miramon, incites reprisals against Americans residing there. I think war will soon be declared against Mexico. The Americans will seize the country and say that they have been forced to do so; I don't know how far these events will please France and England, but I believe things are much more serious than one thinks.

1. The Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII of England, arrived in New York on October 11, 1860, after spending the summer and early fall touring in Canada and the United States.

2. The first Japanese mission sent to the United States was to exchange ratifications of the treaty of commerce that Consul Townsend Harris had negotiated in Japan in 1858. The delegation met President Buchanan in Washington on May 17, 1860, and was given a triumphal parade in New York on June 16. There was considerable concern over the impression the Americans would make. The *New York Times* was aware that the United States was not likely to be in good odor in the Orient by virtue of

American participation in the coolie trade between China and the West Indies. It was distressing to note, moreover, that the Board of Aldermen would be the official hosts for the Japanese while they were in New York City. European visitors quickly discover "the exact social status of an alderman" and know enough about the American political system "to be able to account for such anomalies as the representation of a great metropolis on state occasions by half a dozen uneducated rowdies." But the Japanese gentleman knows nothing of this. "He will take it for granted that the men who receive him . . . are the princes of the population. Any other hypothesis would wound his self-love." April 25, 1860.

3. On February 5, 1860, a Spanish army of 60,000 captured Tetuán after a forced march from Ceuta. King Mohammed II was forced to sue for peace.

XII

New York, 22 May 60

We should have had a rather insignificant and monotonous week politically, if the Republican Convention at Chicago had not nominated Lincoln of Illinois, an extremist; to a great degree this assures the presidential chances of Douglas. People are busy with the slave trade. American warships have captured several slave ships; but certain newspapers disapprove of their vigilance, for the American is a philanthropist only when it doesn't cost him anything, and each Negro costs the government \$300 to send back to his own country. The Japanese delegation is attracting the attention of many stargazers; it seems they have brought magnificent presents to the President of the United States. Commodore Perry, Belmont's father-in-law, having been the first to sign a treaty with the Japanese, the ambassadors are bound to make their first visit in New York to Mrs. Belmont, who will hold a reception for them.

I don't think that Peruvian affairs interest you much, but Bolivia, aided by France, is going to take possession of it. . . .

XIII

New York, 27 May 60

. . . Politics is played here too, and probably with more bitterness than in any other country—gentle benefits of republican government and of intelligent universal suffrage. The same scenes that dishonored the Democratic convention at Charleston occurred at the Republican convention in Chicago; so, Seward was sacrificed to Lincoln. The latter has had all possible jobs before arriving at the presidency; he has been successively a sailor, grocer, sail-maker, rail-splitter, etc., etc. It is the fact of his low origin that won him the nomination, but Douglas before being a lawyer was a 'cabinet-maker.'

The Democrats claim that one must treat the two candidates according to their abilities, and give each the job he knows best: 'Lincoln is, then, to be intrusted with the care of making rails, and Douglas with that of making cabinets.'

I shall not tell you of the new difficulties with Mexico, which the United States will not long be able to head off. It think it [the prospect of war] is the best thing that can happen. . . .

What a spectacle this is for a relatively disinterested observer. How disorderly these popular movements are. How strange that the politicians do not know what party to choose, and what airs they assume. The newspapers attack each other and blame each other for all the ills of the country. The financial world has been plunged into a stupor; the banks have suspended payments, as if it were a perfectly natural thing, and the government has stopped paying its employes because there is no more money in the treasury.

That last phrase will astonish you and yet it is the truth. Mr. Cobb,¹ the Secretary of the Treasury, has stated that expectations concerning customs duties have not been realized and that there is no money in the treasury. As for the Secretary of the Navy, he has

said that the Navy is in a deplorable state and that the necessary sums to expand it are lacking; the Secretary of the War has no troops and very few guns, and anticipates, in the event of the separation of the states, the total disorganization of the Army. Aside from that and the difficulties between the North and the South, President Buchanan tells us in his message that the country has never been so prosperous. His message is platitudinous, a poor defense plea by a quibbling lawyer; many people claim to admire it, but it is far from getting my humble approval. Perhaps it is very presumptuous, but after all! . . .

Let us put politics aside, and allow me to tell you a story about the Baltimore police. One day I dined out and I returned when it was so dark that people were afraid to set foot in the street. To take a short cut I had to go through a little street still darker and narrower than the others, if that is possible. I saw or rather sensed that I was being followed by a man of rather imposing size. I hurried, my shadow imitated me; I stopped, but my companion crossed the street, came up behind me, and was going to put his hand on my shoulder, when I turned, grabbed him around the waist, making it impossible for him to use his hands, and shouted "Police" with all my might. The man struggled a moment before saying: 'But what are you hollering like that, I am an officer?' At that point, half a dozen policemen who had been running toward the noise came up and asked what was happening. The man, rubbing his arms, said: 'I had seen that man very near a store and thought that he had bad intentions.' I was interrogated, and said it was outrageous that in a free country one could touch a peaceful stranger who was quietly entering his own house. The gentlemen of the police seemed incredulous when I said to the one who had arrested me: "You have failed in your duty and I am going to have you suspended; give me your number." At these words, I was told: 'Sir you can go.' I did not need to have it said twice. How lucky that I had forgotten my leaded cane and my brass knuckles; otherwise, I should have beaten up a police officer and spent the night at the 'StationHouse.'

1. Howell Cobb (1815-68), a supporter of compromise measures on the slavery issue, had an active career in Georgia and in national politics. He had been a member of Congress and Governor of Georgia before being appointed Secretary of the Treasury by Buchanan.

XIV

New York, 12 June 60

. . . People are concerned here with virtually nothing but politics. Who will be nominated,¹ who will be the lucky one to be elected? That question is the order of the day. In a week, part of the great secret will be revealed, but a powerful movement for dissolution of the Union is being prepared. Whatever the result of the contest, the malcontents will secede and will try to take away with them part of the States. A rupture is therefore imminent between the North and the South; in spite of the reassurances to the contrary that I receive from every quarter and the smiles of incredulity from all my friends, I am sure that in a short time America will be divided into the States of the North and the States of the South and that they will soon be delivered over to adventurers of the kind we know in Europe.

I shall probably leave next week to spend a few days in Baltimore so that I can be present at that political chaos called a nomination—at that great struggle where all ambitions and all intrigues meet in conflict; where every means are used, honest or otherwise; where corruption, threats, and influence go into action and prove to the whole world that this country, despite its apparent greatness, despite its youth, despite its vigor, resembles a fruit that rots before it ripens. I must stop, for if I abandoned myself to my ideas I would become a misanthrope. . . . Later on, I will invigorate myself again with a 'shower-bath' under one of the falls at Niagara, and I will see if the land of the Mohicans has changed in looks and nature since Cooper described it.

1. At the Democratic convention in Baltimore, which had been adjourned until June 18.

SEVENTY-TWO gentlemen of Japan landed at the foot of Manhattan Island on June 16, 1860, after a short boat trip from Amboy, New Jersey, where "for the first time in the history of the world, the natives of Japan and Jersey beheld each other face to face." In anticipation of the event, the *New York Times* was solemn: "The first formal embassy ever sent by the most exclusive and most polished of Oriental nations is coincident with the visit of the heir to the most highly civilized and powerful kingdom in Christendom. Princes from the East and from the West arrive . . . to study the sources of our greatness. . . . The great Republic of ancient times subdued all nations by the force of her armies. . . . the most important of modern democracies extends her influence quite as far . . . [but] ours are the triumphs of peace, not the tragedies of war."

The reality of the event was less solemn than the anticipation; indeed, it was touched with absurdity. Not that the Japanese were unbusinesslike. Sketch pads in hand, they went about the city drawing pictures of gas fixtures, men's and women's hats, shower stalls, and water closets. "Eschewing baubles, they purchase Colt's revolvers," said the *Times*, adding worriedly, "The cautious persons . . . who ask if we are not too liberal in sending . . . a whole battery of cannons, howitzers and rifles to Jeddo, have some reason for the inquiry."

The problem was with the Americans—with their inexperience, their bumptious curiosity, and their politics. The well-behaved and supercilious among them could not conceal their disdain for the gawkers who mobbed the Metropolitan Hotel all day, staring at (as George Templeton Strong remarked) "a vision of some ugly Mongol mug protruded for a moment and then withdrawn." To carry the precious box containing the treaty, the officials of the parade could

find nothing better than an Adams Express wagon, decked out, it is true, with festoons and wreaths of flowers and with the words "Japanese Treaty" printed on all four sides so that those who ran might know. Light-fingered men and light-virtued women swarmed like bees around the hive, the former picking treasures indiscriminately, the latter bestowing theirs upon the Japanese. The Times was outraged: "The public have a right to know whether the building set apart at their expense for the entertainment of a foreign embassy . . . is made to serve as the scene of a 'legion of amours' between Japanese boys and women of the sort who contract 'unions' at sight with newcomers of all nations."

Worst of all, the civic celebration was in the hands of New York's "Forty Thieves," the Aldermen and Councilmen, who succeeded in converting the great municipal ball for the Japanese into a political rally. The Times was indignant: "[How] did it happen that . . . New York contrived to give the Japanese a ball from which everyone who attended it was delighted to get away. . . . There were just people enough present who ought not to have been there . . . to trouble and deform the general aspect of the scene. . . . You cannot successfully pepper a respectable ball with pugilists and emigrant runners."

You can, however, successfully line your pockets with money from the city treasury—which is what the "Forty Thieves" did. Newspaper insinuations, a taxpayer's suit, and threats of a grand jury investigation could not force them to submit an itemized statement of expenses. Not until December 1860 was the issue resolved, when the Aldermen reduced their bill from \$105,000 to \$82,822.73. The Times was soured on the whole affair: "It may seem discourteous, but we cannot help saying we are glad they have gone. Their visit has not been without a certain interest to us, but we have had enough of it. . . . The truth is, the Japanese came to acquire knowledge, not to impart it. . . . That they will profit by this excessive liberality on our part, we may rest assured. We can only hope that we may not find ourselves among the earliest victims of our own over-zealous . . . benevolence."

The visit was not without a certain interest to the Japanese too.

Yanagawa Masakiyo, one of the chief retainers of Niimi Masoki, head of the mission, kept a diary of his visit. He had entered into a new world, in which all objects and values and relationships were unfamiliar and cried out for assessment. But he did not always notice what the Americans, no doubt, expected to impress him with. George Templeton Strong attended the reception the Belmonts gave for the Japanese visitors and was struck by its elegance: "Splendid house—probably the most splendid in the city. . . . Mrs. Belmont (Commodore Perry's daughter) received her guests most graciously and gracefully. She is very beautiful and stately, certainly among the loveliest of our New York duchesses. . . . The first-chop Japanese made their appearance . . . looking impassive and insensible, and were duly cultivated and admired by everyone." Masakiyo was one of the "first-chop" Japanese who attended the reception, and his diary reveals him not to have been insensible to everything. "Two Japanese spaniels in the house sniffed our clothes," he wrote, "and realizing that we were Japanese . . . would not leave us. . . . They loved us as soon as they saw us and when we departed they followed us, and though they could not speak they had feelings like men . . . we were quite sad and shed a tear when we left them." And as a foreigner he was sensitive to some aspects of America that were generally overlooked. "The people of this country," he observed simply, "both men and women, are white."

XV

New York, 18 June 60

I returned to New York to see the arrival of the Japanese, for I had spent two days at Staten Island, at the home of Mr. Cunard, the director of the steamboat line. Staten Island is a delightful place. The entire island is covered with country homes and undulating parkland, dominating the river in the north and the entrance at

Sandy Hook. The view, although different, can be compared for beauty and uniqueness with the Bay of Naples or that of Valencia.

Some time ago there was one thing that was wrong with Staten Island. This was the close proximity of the Lazaretto that had been established on a nearby island. People found that that reduced the value of their property, and one evening last year several hundred of them got together, broke into the hospital, set it on fire, and destroyed it from top to bottom.³ The patients had been previously carried out and placed on the grass some distance away. There they spent the night, somewhat chilly, until tents were set up for them. An investigation was held, but—like all investigations in this country—it came to nothing. The Lazaretto was then set up on another island, but its inhabitants, seeing that the perpetrators of the first attack remained unpunished, found it perfectly natural to imitate them and no one yet knows what will be done for the patients this year.

On Staten Island I saw a rather strange phenomenon of natural history—locusts which very much resemble those of Egypt without having the same destructive instincts. It seems that every seventeen years, on a specific day at a specific time, predicted exactly by the naturalists, the trees become filled with them, the sky grows dark, and their buzzing resembles the sound of thousands of little bells. The insect deposits its eggs on the ground, and, by what force I do not know, these eggs work their way down to an extraordinary depth. The insect is formed after eight and a half years and is covered with an envelope similar to a chrysalis, with the peculiarity that it has the exact shape of the body and is equipped with legs. This chrysalis takes eight and a half years to get to the surface of the earth and break through, and then climbs a tree where it sheds its envelope at a definite day and hour. . . .

The Japanese made their triumphal entrance into New York last Monday. To judge from the newspapers, never again will such a spectacle be offered to human eyes. The reception for Queen Victoria in Paris, the coronation of the Emperor Alexander in Moscow, were nothing compared with American magnificence. All the windows along the line of march had been rented in advance at exor-

bitant prices; all the shops and public buildings were closed for this national holiday. The stock exchange itself had to close down. The city of New York, which has some slight pretensions to being a metropolis and which whispers that it is the real capital of the United States, wanted to distinguish itself. To begin with, a police ordinance enjoined the public to behave itself. In Baltimore, the unfortunate Orientals had been robbed; in Philadelphia, the crowd had shouted 'beggars,' 'monkeys,' etc., etc., at them. These gentlemen are not very good in English, but they knew enough to understand that these were not flattering comments being shouted at them.

Last Saturday the firing of cannon announced the debarkation of the representatives of the Tycoon.

To do honor to them, or rather to show them off to the populace, they were paraded through the entire city, a demonstration that lasted five hours. The whole militia was astir, reminding one of the national guard before '48; with this difference, that the uniform of each regiment is chosen by its members, so that there is a regiment of Scots, of Frenchmen, of Prussians, etc. The Scots, the French, and the Fifth Regiment of locals are the only ones that had even the slightest military appearance. The regiments never succeeded in forming a line in spite of many laughable attempts. The parade passed before us in the following order:

A four-wheeled carriage that held one of the police chiefs with a gold-headed cane. He used this instrument to scatter the crowd, and he saw to it that the wheels of his 'mylord' rolled over the feet of those who didn't get out of the way quickly enough.

A squad of police on foot, and one on horse; the latter held on to the pommels of their saddles and paid much more attention to their horses than to the public.

Then came the troops, who took two hours to march past, stopping from time to time to rest; they used these pauses to sit down on the pavement or to have a drink at the bar. Wealthy militiamen have a Negro at their side to hold their rifles during these rest periods.

After a long wait, we finally saw the principal actors in this grotesque exhibition. The city had done things right. Each Japanese of distinction had his own coach, and the three ambassadors were

each accompanied by a naval officer and were drawn by four horses decked out in the Japanese colors. One must admit that the coaches were a bit old and that the coachmen did not have an absolutely impeccable appearance—round hats, frock coats, waistcoats, and motley pants—but to make up for this, a magnificent pair of gloves, 'deep canary yellow.'

Behind the three ambassadors came the chest containing the treaty and two high officials guarding it, who were supposed never, for any reason, to lose sight of it. In other cities, less rich than New York, it had not been possible to find a carriage spacious enough to hold the precious box. So an omnibus had been chosen, and the box and its guardians had been perched on the top.

This time a special kind of coach had been constructed, covered with painted paper and Japanese and American flags. If it had only had a large ticket office it would have made a very presentable mobile theater. A young Japanese, who is called Tommy here,¹ was seated triumphantly on the chest, grinning at the men, blowing kisses to the ladies. Then came the other foreigners of lower rank, each one accompanied by an alderman or by a 'common councilman.' (I call them 'the common men of the council.') These gentlemen looked very much like the coachmen on their vehicles. They had merely put on their Sunday clothes with magnificent gray hats and the same canary yellow gloves I mentioned before; they seemed embarrassed and ill at ease, but their suffering seemed compensated by the effect they thought they were producing on the surrounding masses.

The parade was completed by the rest of the militia.

The Japanese are all very ugly and effeminate; they are wrinkled like baked apples and often deeply pitted with smallpox scars. Their hair is shaved in front, tapering from the forehead to the top of the head, with the hair in the back gathered in a tuft, like circus clowns. Their hands are white, tiny, and very aristocratic, and their nails would be the envy of the most beautiful girl in Paris.

They make enormous purchases here, but always of objects of minimal value that they haggle over outrageously. Many shopkeepers offered them as presents the articles that they most admired; they accepted without the least shame, profiting from the privilege of the

barbarian to disregard the laws of reciprocity. They have no taste for the arts and prefer a child's toy, a 15-franc clock, to a finely chased piece of silver.

Tommy, who is the son of one of the great dignitaries of the state, is a spoiled brat and the terror of the Embassy. He meddles with everything; runs after women, who are delighted to be kissed by this awful ape; he is popular throughout the Union and is happy with his fame as a clown.

They are entertained every day; Monday there will be the grand ball given by the city, and Tuesday Mrs. Belmont receives them. . . .

The convention in Baltimore continues, but it will accomplish nothing, and animosity between the Northern and Southern delegates will increase. These gentlemen profit from the intervals between sessions to have fights with each other, which result in the most shameful scenes. By the way, here is an incident that took place:

The Union Club is made up primarily of old codgers among whom are two gentlemen whose ages total 150 years: Messrs. Niel and Bryant, very respectable and very rich. They had begun a political discussion about Garibaldi, one claiming he was Italian in origin, the other that he was Scotch. After the most persuasive arguments, Mr. Bryant supported his reasoning with a mighty punch, which by a fatal coincidence met Mr. Niel's nose, which is very long—and Mr. Niel became angry. The owner of the nose, taking up the cudgels in its behalf, attacked the other violently, and fisticuffs began. The two enraged septuagenarians were separated. They went, pistols in hand, to settle their quarrel in Norfolk. Mr. Niel was shot in the arm, which makes him very heroic.² . . .

1. Edward Cunard came to New York as agent for his father, Samuel, when the Cunard Company established regular service to New York in 1848. He was one of a small group of leading New York businessmen appointed to a committee to plan the reception for the Prince of Wales.

2. Ever since the yellow-fever panic of 1856, the people of Staten Island had regarded the Lazaretto as a health menace and an impediment to the development of the Island, and they periodically brought charges

against the hospital and its administration. On the night of September 1, 1858, while New York City was celebrating the laying of Cyrus Field's trans-Atlantic cable, a mob set fire to the hospital buildings. The flames were held in check by local people under the direction of Dr. Bissell until the arrival of the regular firemen, who shouldered Bissell aside and allowed the fire to burn unhindered. The next night the mob set fire to the remaining buildings; not until the hospital was destroyed was martial law declared. "This riot, robbery, arson, and murder," said George Templeton Strong, "was in fact a mere operation in real estate . . . for the sake of a ten per cent increase in the market value of building sites and village lots." *Diary*, II, 412.

3. "Tommy" was seventeen-year-old Tateishi Fujiro Noriyuki, an assistant interpreter with the delegation. Talkative and affable, smiling and waving his fan, he was anything but a model of the inscrutable Oriental and was extremely popular, especially with what the *New York Times* called "the Light Female Brigade."

4. "Two old fools, Samuel Neill and Tom Bryan, have been making themselves ridiculous by going to North Carolina in this weather and fighting a duel. . . . They got into a squabble . . . over the weighty question of Garibaldi's nationality." Strong, *Diary*, III, 33.

THERE was much for the goggle-eyed to stare at in New York in the summer of 1860. Sandwiched between the visits of the Japanese and the Prince of Wales was the arrival of the largest ship that had ever been built, the ill-fated Great Eastern. Designed by Isambard K. Brunel to carry passengers and freight from England around the Cape of Good Hope to Colombo, Ceylon, she was nearly three years in the building. The launching of the enormous ship—she was 692 feet by 83 feet and weighed nearly 19,000 deadweight tons—was too difficult a task for existing engineering techniques, and she incurred serious damage. Not until June 17, 1860, two and a half years after launching, was the ship ready for her maiden voyage to New York. She headed out from Southampton, the pathetic total of thirty-eight paying passengers aboard. Eleven days later, after a dangerous passage of the shallow water at Sandy Hook, she steamed majestically through the Narrows. Hundreds of small craft were out to greet her, and Belmont and Baron Rothschild steamed down the bay aboard

the United States revenue cutter Harriet Lane to accompany her to port.

The rich and the poor, the city slicker and the country bumpkin, came aboard to visit her, 143,764 of them, at a dollar a head, during the first five days she was in port. George Templeton Strong gazed in wonderment and exclaimed, "This big ship . . . is the incarnation . . . of a good deal of thought, study, and experiment by quite a number of generations. Such a result is not developed out of the coracle of our bare legged, wood-stained ancestors, tempore Julius Caesar, by a single step." The country cousins had less elevated thoughts. "'Derned ef I'd a come ef I'd a known 's would ha' been so hot,'" the New York Times reporter heard "a beety, browsy red-checked country girl" tell her "astentive friend from the Jarseys." "'Well, now, ain't that yere bully?'" said a little boy as he looked at the enormous piston-rod.

As the income from paying visitors slackened, the ship was sent out on excursions, first to Cape May, New Jersey, then to Annapolis, Maryland. Misfortune continued to dog her; so noisy were the 1,000 passengers of the first excursion in their protests against their "con-temptible" treatment that only 100 paid for the round trip to Annapolis. She was less a leviathan than a white elephant; by 1865 she was being used to lay the Atlantic cable, and she ended her days as a floating amusement hall. Still, not until 1899 was a ship built that equaled her in size.

XVI

Jamestown, 4 July 60

. . . I will tell you some more about the Japanese; this one more time is necessary, but I assure you it will be the last. Besides, these noble barbarians have—thank God—returned to the homes of their fathers, the Americans having told them that they, the Americans, are the

greatest nation in the world, and having taken good care not to allow them to visit Europe, not even the *Great Eastern*.

Before their departure, both the city of New York and Belmont gave them a party. The city's was held at the Metropolitan Hotel, which, for the occasion, was connected with a large theater called the Nihlo. It could have been very beautiful, but they succeeded only in creating a filthy mob compared to which the festivals at the Hotel de Ville and perhaps even those of Valentino seem composed of German princes. We made up a large party of society people to go along to the ball, to which 12,000 people were invited. After we had been amused long enough by the shapes and costumes of the guests, and after we had with considerable difficulty elbowed our way through a solid mass of 3,000 persons—which had been impatiently waiting several hours for the dining room to open—we went to pay our respects to the Asian princes, who had not been made any handsomer by their sojourn in New York. They were seated on a platform and competed in silliness with the menagerie of Van-Amburgh.² To complete the similarity, a man with a long cane in his hand, who by his appearance and clothes could have passed as a trainer of bears, shouted at the top of his voice: 'Pass on, gentlemen, pass on.' When we wished to leave, we were completely separated by the crowd, and I found myself with two ladies on my hands. The fair sex loses all its charm in a mob, and I confess that I felt very happy when after an hour I found myself in the street.

Belmont's ball took place the next day, and was magnificently elegant. The Japanese spent their time eating and were made rapturously happy by a drink from their own country called Saki, which Commodore Perry had brought back. This drink is strikingly similar to perfumed hair tonic.

I was going to leave Wednesday morning, when a dispatch informed us of the arrival of the *Great Eastern* at Sandy Hook. Great excitement in the city; everyone wanted to see the entrance of this monster ship into New York. My friend Hart came to look for me and got me aboard the harbor boat with the authorities. We were going to see one of the most magnificent spectacles I have ever witnessed: the *Great Eastern* making its entrance into this superb bay

of New York, which, though it is of a different type, rivals those of Naples and Palermo. It approached majestically, followed by a swarm of steamboats and private yachts, all of which looked like little fish playing about a whale. The *Great Eastern* stopped to salute us, and at the same moment the cannon of the fortress and those of all the ships began firing. It was a very impressive sight, and this royal homage to industry and commerce seemed to erase past hatreds.

I began my journey at New York; right now I am at Jamestown, on the banks of Lake [Chautauqua], at the home of Mr. R., one of the sons of [a member of?] the English parliament, and the director and engineer of a very imposing railroad now under construction, which, when it is completed, will completely link the West to New York. This will be a very productive railroad, and Salamanca² has a great deal of capital in the enterprise. Mr. [one word missing] has much capital and is a man of first-rate ability; in a few weeks he is leaving to rejoin his wife, who is in Paris. . . .

I came to spend several days here with him; the country is superb and the lake on which his cottage is situated rivals the Tegernsee. One could spend two whole weeks here without tiring of it, for there are charming walks, game, and fish galore.

I was able while here to study the American character in a form which was completely new to me. Corruption has not yet penetrated here, nor that false civilization which I could not bear in New York. Democratic and even ruder forms are seen in the most extreme degree. You dine at the same table and eat the same food as the workingman. A man in rags extends his hand to you and will be offended if you do not take it. You must shed your aristocratic ideas, if you still have them; but these are decent people tempered by hard work, always ready to be of service, conscious of their strength and of their independence. All are self-made men and proud of it. From infancy on, they have only one idea: 'Go ahead.' The coachman of my carriage was certainly no more than nine years old, and a little chap of five, seeing me take photographs, came over gravely to ask me to hire him, saying that he would take two piastres a day. This is how one makes one's way, and to the degree that the corrupted people in the cities of the Union disgust me, just so much do the

country people excite my admiration. If I remain for a long time in this country, I will end up by becoming a full-fledged political economist.

Today was the Fourth of July, a day celebrated in every state of the Union, even in the smallest towns; it is the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. We were invited to go to Randolph¹ to take part in the public celebration and to have a meal that was more friendly than tasty. The toasts followed each other thick and fast, and I was not particularly pleased when I heard my name called, for I had to reply. But anyway, I put my timidity in my pocket and stood up bravely. After having thanked them and having regretted that my lack of familiarity with the English language would prevent my answering with sufficient dignity, I said how much I had been struck by the grandeur of the country, its strength, its power, its commerce, etc., etc. I was happy to be with them, celebrating the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, but if their immortal glory had been to accomplish in several years what it had taken others centuries to achieve, one of the most glorious pages of history for the children of France was having understood them and helped them win their independence, which had since been so nobly used.

Rochambeau, Lafayette, Franklin, and Washington were brothers. We on the other side of the Atlantic had cultivated these sentiments of fraternity toward America, whose every new progress gave us the greatest happiness. Since arriving in this country I had seen that these feelings were shared by the Americans. I hoped, therefore, that my table companions would join with me in the toast: "To eternal friendship between France and America."

I had enough of it when I had finished, although the many knives banging noisily against the glasses proved that my listeners were satisfied. . . .

1. Isaac Van Amburgh, the "Lion Tamer," was born in Fishkill, N.Y., about 1815. A great lion tamer, he was partner in a company that exhibited a traveling menagerie.

2. The Duke of Salamanca, adviser of the Spanish royal family, was a sponsor of the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad.
3. Randolph, N.Y., halfway between Jamestown and Salamanca.

XVII

Montreal, 12 July 60

. . . Since my letter from Jamestown I have really been on the road, for on the fifth I went directly to the falls of the Niagara. What can I tell you of that sublime spectacle? So many clever pens, so many distinguished artists, have tried to do justice to this subject that I can only belatedly add my admiration to theirs. I have seen the falls from every vantage point and in every aspect—from above and below, by day and by night, by the light of the sun and by the light of the moon. In my opinion, the most beautiful sight is the rainbow by moonlight.

On the other hand, one can appreciate the grandeur of the spectacle by going to the foot of the falls in a little steamboat, which needs every bit of power in its engine not to be swept away by the current. The stereopticon views are so exact that one thinks one is seeing old friends again, except that they cannot give the majesty of the view, the thundering sound of that immense cascade, or, above all, the effects—so completely different from one another—of the light.

I do not think that nature has produced anything to equal this. But nature in America is so grandiose in everything, so luxurious, that nature in Europe cannot stand comparison. In the middle of the rapids on the American side, before the water reaches the cataract, there is a bridge of rocks from which, several days ago, an unfortunate traveler slipped, never to be seen again.

This is the fate which awaits Blondin¹ one of these days. For

Blondin decidedly does exist; this is not an American boast. He gave a great exhibition the evening of my arrival, of a kind that I have never seen before, and I was enchanted; it was enough for me to see the rope on which he does his tricks. It is a cable 500 meters long, 200 feet high, and suspended at an angle of 45 degrees.

Last year it was placed on the right side of the 'suspension bridge' in such a way that during part of the crossing he could have fallen in the water and been saved. But this year he has had it put up on the other side in order to eliminate all chance of saving himself, for he would fall on the rocks below.

What a fine spectacle for American curiosity!

I was assured that Blondin was as much at ease on his rope as we are on our bedroom floor, and perhaps more so; for he places himself on his back, on his head, makes an omelet, eats it, and pushes his agent in a wheelbarrow. The latter had enough after one experience and doesn't want to do it again. . . . He has even given a performance at night and shot off fireworks. He has wagered a considerable sum that no one can imitate him. One acrobat wanted to take the bet, but first he wanted a preliminary trial on a river only so deep that he would risk no danger beyond getting wet. But he had scarcely taken a few steps on his aerial journey when he went to join the fish, to the great delight of the spectators. He got off with a 'good-drinking,' which ended forever the thought of following Blondin.

The great suspension bridge, near which the French clown does his tricks, is the most beautiful of its kind, reaching from one bank of the river to the other without any supporting arch. . . . There are two ways of getting from Niagara to Montreal, by train and by steamboat, stopping at Toronto and Kingston. I naturally chose the steamboat and started out on Lake Ontario, which extends for 180 miles and ends at the St. Lawrence.

Toronto and Kingston are pretty towns, but they offer the traveler only modern buildings which are tasteless.

The interesting part of the voyage is the descent of the St. Lawrence, a magnificent river which crosses Canada and is 800 miles long and often twelve miles wide. From Kingston to Ogdensburg one

passes 'the thousand islands.' There is nothing more picturesque, more varied, more pleasant. The large islands, and there is one eighteen miles long, are inhabited and cultivated; the smaller ones are covered with fine shade trees where the canoes of the Indians and the boats of the fishermen are protected. Others are simply rocks which, when they are hidden under the water, form what are called rapids. One must cross a series of them between Toronto and Montreal. But the most interesting are those of Lachine. They are so dangerous that an Indian pilot must be taken aboard. A great mass of foam swirling around the invisible rocks forms real mountains, as in a turbulent sea. Then the steam is shut off; the current alone carries the boat along at a speed of twenty miles an hour. Eight sailors are at the helm to make it respond instantly, and quick as lightning they carry out the orders of their copper-colored chief. Then there is a solemn moment when no one speaks, not even those who are disciplined by long practice. The pilot steers the ship straight toward a point of the rocks which rises above the water, and at the moment when it looks as though the ship will touch and be broken up, the force of the current is such that it makes it sheer off and pass by with only a foot to spare.

This maneuver is necessary, for on the other side other rocks that one all but touches obstruct the channel, which is just the width of the boat. The boat plunges into the waves (which cover the deck and the passengers), lifts itself, plunges again, and after a quarter of an hour resumes a calm and steady course. The skill of those pilots is so great that no accident has ever happened to the ships they steer. Only one—it was a tug without passengers that wanted to pass. It struck the rock, split apart, whirled around, hit against the other rocks, and was dashed to pieces.

The ships are large and comfortable, but since there is only a single class, all types of people mingle together as they do in American trains. The hotels make use of people who have the manners of gentlemen, make your acquaintance during the trip, and for reasons of pure friendship recommend an inn to you; most often the place they mention is a frightful hole.

Montreal is a pleasant enough city, well situated on the side of a mountain and on the banks of the St. Lawrence; it is half French, and in the lower part of the town the visitor might think he was in a village in Picardy or Normandy. The people have the same slovenly accent that characterizes these two provinces; they live in little low houses, most of them of wood, and in incredible filth. While the father works, mainly in woodcutting, the mother sits on the doorstep rocking a child of six months, surrounded on all sides by a legion of brats separated in age by barely nine months and one day. In this occupation the Canadians surpass even the Americans. Otherwise they are decent people, always ready to be helpful, not knowing how to read or write, remaining entirely under the domination of the priests. The latter misuse them by stirring up fanaticism and often by pushing the population to regrettable excesses. So there are veritable wars of religion. A Catholic priest preaches against Protestantism, even as a Protestant attacks the Catholics; speeches not being enough, they come to blows. Recently, in connection with an election, there was a pitched battle between 5,000 Canadians and Irishmen on one side and an equal number of Orangemen and Protestant sailors; the garrison remains a powerless spectator at these bloody battles, which they dare not repress violently for fear the country might rebel.

There is a great rivalry between the three large cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec. All want to be the seat of government, and they have so bored the English Ministry with their clamoring and their recriminations that in order to reach agreement, it has been decided that none of them will be the capital and that the government will be transported to Ottawa, a growing little town, half of which belongs to upper Canada and the other half to lower Canada. What a life they are preparing for the poor Prince of Wales—the parties will be splendid, but his duties will be hard. . . .

One of the great curiosities of Montreal is the 'Great Victoria Bridge,' over which the 'Great Trunk Railway' crosses the St. Lawrence, nearly two miles wide at this point. It is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and extraordinary works of art in the world. All the piers are of stonework and are capable of withstanding piles

of ice carried along by the most powerful current. The bridge itself is tubular and made of iron; it cost 35 million francs, but the railroad will never even pay the interest on it, for it crosses hundreds of miles where one sees only pine forests and a few woodcutters' huts.

1. Emile Gravelet—or Charles Blondin as he was known professionally—was one of the great acrobats of the nineteenth century. His tricks on the high wire over Niagara Falls were hair-raising. He carried his son across on his back; he cooked an egg and ate it while on the rope; he turned somersaults; he lay down on his back. Once, at Jones' Wood in New York City, he crossed the rope blindfolded with his body in a loose-fitting sack. The *Times* supported him against charges that his was a mere frivolous activity. "Is there a clod-hopper or a rail-splitter in the country . . . who, if he had the requisite boldness and skill, would not become a politician or a tight-rope dancer, without delay, if he thought he could 'better his condition' by the change?"

2. Actually the Grand Trunk Railway, which Rothschild refers to variously as the Great Trunk Railway and the Great Trunk Railroad.

XVIII

Saratoga, 26 July 60

. . . I still haven't given you any details about the end of my trip to Canada. The unbearable heat kept me from prolonging my stay, but I saw enough of the country to have a perfect idea of it.

Quebec is, because of its location, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Situated on a height between two large rivers, the St. Lawrence and the St. Charles, it dominates an immense extent of water and land, and the panorama that one sees from the citadel is one of the most beautiful and most splendid that I have ever seen. People who have been to Constantinople claim that it is very much like the Bosphorus. One of the striking characteristics of this country

is that for the local population, the main, really the only, communication route is the river, so that along the entire length of the St. Lawrence one sees only a row of houses that form a single street. Several miles away from the river everything is deserted or uncultivated forest. It is through these forests that the 'Great Trunk Railroad' runs, a railroad that I think will never return anything to its shareholders.

From Quebec several charming excursions can be taken; unfortunately I was alone, so that I enjoyed things much less than if I had had a friendly companion. On the other hand, the group of shoemakers and laundresses on vacation that one meets on the boat often makes journeys very unpleasant.

The falls of [one word missing] and of [one word missing] would be infinitely more impressive if I had not previously visited Niagara, and the trip would be delightful if it were not for one's traveling companions. Going up the St. Lawrence at night to return to Quebec, I saw again a splendid display of the aurora borealis, at the top of which blazed a most beautiful comet, smaller than the one two years ago, but still quite remarkable. The next morning I completed my astronomical observations with the sight of a solar eclipse.

There is an enormous number of people here and I know many, but I don't like hotel life; so tomorrow morning I go to Lake George, the most beautiful lake in America. . . .

XIX

New York, 5 August 60

There is a tropical heat wave here; some twenty miles from here the temperature reached 120 degrees Fahrenheit, or 53 degrees centigrade. The poultry die wherever the blast of hot air overtakes them.

I spent a very pleasant week at Lake George¹ with the greatest

orator in the Union [word missing],² whose wife is also one of its greatest beauties. There is nothing more refreshing, more pleasant, more charming, than the lake, surrounded by wooded mountains and studded with many islands between which a little steamboat plies. We often went for moonlit walks along the shores of the lake where Cooper located many scenes in his novel "The Last of the Mohicans." It was with real pleasure that I reread this book—so filled with local color—and visited the places he pictured. In spite of their beauty they have already changed a great deal, and perhaps in a few more years implacable civilization will have banished all the poetry from them, leaving the traveler only the memory of the past. It was in these waters that the great battles for Independence took place; it was here that Montcalm, Monroe [*sic*], Wolfe, and so many others fought. They never dreamed that neither the one nor the other would possess this area. It was here that the bravest Indian chiefs struggled for their independence, not knowing that their scions, after laying down their bows and arrows and 'tomahawks,' would lead the same miserable existence here around the dwellings of their conquerors, happy when some charitable person throws them a few miserable pennies.

Who knows but that one day these proud Americans might not be equally reduced! . . .

Let me tell you about Lebanon, the village of the 'Shaking-Quakers';³ that's the name given to those five or six hundred madmen who do no harm to anyone and who spend their time cleaning their houses and making things of straw. They claim that it is not only with the heart and tongue that one must pray to the Creator, but with the whole body; and they put this theory into practice, going through the most bizarre dances during divine service. Everything is in motion—arms, head, legs—and if you allow yourself to laugh, you are immediately ejected.

Anyone is admitted to the bosom of the congregation on condition that he must dance; that's a rather warm exercise at this time of the year. The Quakers are of both sexes, but there is no communication between them. On joining the congregation they must give up

all their property, which is used to gain converts. Their great hope is that within a given time, everyone having become a Quaker, the world will come to an end!

Should I tell you about Saratoga? One must be an American and have lived in America to understand what Saratoga really is. It is a 'watering-place,' where you drink the waters without having need to, where you acknowledge that you ought to have fun but where you never do. You leave the hotel only to swallow a mouthful of dust or to cover yourself with mud. It is a place where everyone dances while cursing the heat; where they really let you die of hunger while claiming all day long that they will feed you; where you see people of every opinion and of every kind. All America is represented here. The politicians hold a 'meeting' every day, where different opinions are debated.⁴ Every day the young girls put on new dresses in order to attract admirers. When one of them has several around her, she encourages them all until she has made a decision in favor of one of them. I was present several times as a confidant at these intrigues and it is quite diverting, I assure you. The girls give their handkerchiefs, their gloves, even their slippers; it binds them to nothing. The married women are less generous, although they make an exception for some people. I have to my credit a pretty collection of pocket handkerchiefs, for I never ask for anything else.

The evening before my departure there was a big meeting in favor of Douglas, in which the speakers called the people of the South a rabble, traitors, etc. To show still more enthusiasm, the partisans of the 'little giant' put a barrel of tar and resin in the street and set fire to it. The flames were going splendidly, when up came a stage-coach driven by a coachman of a different political party. In this country coachmen are knee-deep in 'politics.' This one drove his carriage straight at the barrel, which he knocked over and broke to pieces. In a second the inflammable material spread, causing a fire that the people at the 'meeting' had to put out themselves. What a cum all these people are!! . . .

1. A dispatch from Lake George to the *New York Times* of August 1, 1860, reads: "Lake George, doubtless, feels honored by the fact that Baron Rothschild, of Paris, whose income is 16,000,000 francs a year, is sojourning on her banks. With his suite of ten 'people,' he is making a tour of our watering-places."

2. Without doubt Rothschild is referring to Stephen A. Douglas. His second wife, Adèle Cutts, was the reigning belle of Washington at the time of their marriage and was accounted one of the most beautiful women in the United States. The Douglasses were in Boston, Mass., on July 12, 1860, and stopped off at Saratoga Springs and Troy, N.Y., before arriving at Brandon, Vermont, on July 28.

3. Mount Lebanon, N.Y., was the location of the central ministry of the Shakers.

4. Saratoga was the scene of some important political and business meetings at the time Rothschild was there, and one may perhaps speculate on the connection between those events and his visit. The convention of the Young Democracy of New York met at the United States Hotel on August 1. The previous week Stephen A. Douglas was a guest at the same hotel, "speaking, caucussing and playing the agreeable." At the same time, executives of the Baltimore and Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York Central, and Erie Railroads were meeting at Saratoga. "The constant and informal interchange of calls and visits . . . render the whole like a single party." *New York Times*, August 1, 1860.

XX

New-Port, 16 August 60

. . . All of New York society is gathered here. Boston, Philadelphia, and especially the South have sent a good share of theirs, too. . . . Here one 'cottages' a great deal; that is, you spend your time making visits and getting together in little intimate parties with those who have cottages. Belmont, who has reared a very beautiful house, entertains with considerable taste.¹

New-Port is the refuge of almost every city of the Union, for it is

very refreshing during the intolerable heat in New York. This is the place where one can study American customs! "The match making! Every young lady has to look out for herself" and participate wholeheartedly in the hunt for a husband. There is nothing quite so entertaining as to be a disinterested spectator at all these little intrigues that never cease. As for me, I am behind the scenes, being generally the friend of the mamas and of women who are already married; for, since the young girls know that I am 'not in the market,' they ignore me, and no one is afraid of confiding her secrets to me. . . .

. . . It is very amusing to follow the girls in their diplomatic negotiations; they show more guile and tricks than the signers of the Treaty of Paris. They are charming with everyone, they offer hope to all, but they never lose sight of the handsome young man or the large fortune on which they have fixed their eye. What I don't understand is that, after having been so close to so many young men, they generally make such faithful wives. People here say that it is love which works this miracle, but I think that the husband's 'revolver' and 'knife' are more effective in frightening off gallants. On the other hand, the social customs of this country are such that society casts as many stones at the gentleman as at the lady, and always decides in favor of the husband no matter what offenses he has committed.

I must say, though, that a foreigner is entitled to be somewhat astounded when he sees returning at ten in the evening a gentleman and a lady—married or not—who have been out alone together, perhaps walking or in a carriage or horseback riding; or when he hears a girl suggest to a young man not that he take her to the beach, but that he go mixed-bathing with her. I don't think, though, that the bathing is particularly dangerous, because there is nothing more disillusioning—above all, with the Americans, whose charms do not exactly sparkle—than to see them in bathing suits. . . .

At this time all the young girls of America are busy preparing their weapons to attack the young Prince of Wales, who is going to arrive in the United States in a few days. Since English law permits him to marry whomever he pleases (provided that she is not one of

his own subjects), many young American girls, confident of their charms, already see themselves as Queen of England. So people in New York are prepared to make greater efforts for him than for the Japanese, who were less marriageable.¹

On October 8 he will be given a ball that will cost 150,000 francs. I do not know if the Prince will please New York, for he did not make a good impression in Canada, where his trip led to the most shameful disorders between the Orangemen and the Canadian Catholics. . . .²

1. In the summer of 1860, August Belmont rented Mrs. Ritchie's villa on Bellevue Avenue in Newport. Among his neighbors were Hamilton Fish, P. W. Rhinelander, Erastus Corning, T. Jefferson Coolidge, James Lennox, Henry Van Rensselaer, William Schermerhorn, and Ward McAllister. It was reported that he paid \$47,000 for fourteen acres adjoining the Ritchie estate, on which to build his own home. Belmont led an active social and political life in Newport that summer. He served on the businessmen's committee to arrange a banquet for the Prince of Wales in New York; he gave a party in honor of Senator Douglas; he and Douglas were honored guests at "the affair of the season," the ball given by Commodore Stevens of the Newport Yacht Club; he contributed \$100 to the Garibaldi Fund of Newport. He spent much of his time driving his imported coach—"the sensation" of Newport—through the streets of the resort.

2. Long in advance, the New York aristocracy began preparing for the Prince's visit. The Booles and the Bagleys of the Council were shoved aside; men like General Winfield Scott, John Jacob Astor, William F. Havemeyer, Hamilton Fish, John A. King, August Belmont, and George Templeton Strong formed a committee to plan a proper reception.

3. Despite the insistence of the Duke of Newcastle, in charge of arrangements for the Prince's North American visit, that demonstrations by Orangemen and Catholics would not be tolerated, the Orangemen of Kingston, Ontario, insisted on parading with inflammatory political banners. The Duke refused to allow the young Prince to enter the city. His action satisfied nobody, and Catholic-Protestant enmity flared up dangerously.

XXI

New York, 15 September 60

Here I am back in New York, which, though it is filled with visitors, is sad and resembles Paris in August (minus Paris). I am planning to go to Massachusetts to the mountains, which I am told are superb, for New York is completely caught up in the excitement of the presidential campaign. Immense banners advertising the different parties are hung over all the streets; every day, or every evening, there is some kind of demonstration.

On Wednesday a monster mass meeting was held at Joneswood [*sic*] in honor of Douglas. Twenty or thirty thousand Democrats were assembled. Since it was cold, there was some fear of lack of enthusiasm, so it was decided to hold a feast for the crowd. A whole steer was roasted, as well as a sheep, a calf, and a pig, so that every taste could be satisfied. Five hundred barrels of beer were readied to wash down this immense pile of food. Yet the method of preparing the food was most primitive—a deep hole scooped out of the ground and two stakes supporting a huge spit. Such was the spectacle, more picturesque than inviting, offered by this part of the affair. The political side consisted of four platforms set up for the speakers.

The meeting was opened not by a banquet nor even by a meal, but by a veritable wallow of food on which the famished mob leaped like a pack of wild animals. The orgy over, they gathered around the platforms. I will spare you the political part and tell you only that Belmont, a friend of Douglas and president of the 'meeting,' gave a 'speech' to the crowd that was nicely done, although improvised.¹

The next day, Thursday, was the Republicans' turn. Beginning at eight in the morning, traffic was blocked by a great demonstration. From all parts of the city, bands headed toward Cooper Institute,

where the 'meeting' was held. When the speeches were finished, the audience formed squads, each carrying a torch and most of them dressed in red. They went through the most densely populated sections of the city in perfect order, but with the most infernal shouting.² I cannot tell you what an impression this scene, worthy of Dante, made on me. It reminded me of the sad days of '48; it made me think of the dangers that constantly hang over our heads and made me foresee for this country an era of revolutions and civil wars.

Several hours after the political meeting at Joneswood [*sic*], Douglas was supplanted by Blondin, an acrobat of a different sort. This celebrated 'clown' did his tricks on a rope 2,000 feet long at a height of 200 feet in a strong wind. Those who were at the exhibition compared the sensation they experienced with that of seeing a man hanged. Blondin, who knows the value of time, left immediately for Niagara, where he had to work before the Prince of Wales. In spite of the repeated objection of the Prince, Blondin carried his agent on his back the entire length of the rope. He then made the dangerous crossing on stilts, to the great horror of the young man, who was made sick by it. Nevertheless, several pure-blooded Yankees were dissatisfied and wanted their money back because some practical joker had spread the rumor through the crowd that it was the Prince of Wales whom Blondin would carry. The naive spectators felt they had been cheated.³

If Blondin is not a hoax, I cannot say the same for the monster balloon—the "New York"—which was supposed to cross the Atlantic and deposit its passengers at the Hotel des Bains de Mer, at Boulogne. Everything was provided for: supplies of all kinds, instruments for making observations, guns to defend the bold adventurers if by some mistake they should wind up in Nubia or Oceania. Indeed, even a little 'steamer' was ready in case the balloon landed in the ocean too soon. The nacelle weighed 500 pounds; the steamer, 800; the netting, 500; and the balloon, 8,000. The balloon contained 850,000 cubic feet of gas and was more than 150 feet high. They were about to leave, they were ready to call "Let go," when a loud snapping and cracking was heard.

The aeronauts had thought of everything except the strength of

the wind. The immense balloon just split from top to bottom, to the great relief of the travelers who were still on terra firma. The professor is now back at his machine again, but I'm afraid that next time there will be few lovers of the sport to accompany him.⁴

1. The rally was held on September 12, and the crowd gathered to hear speeches by Douglas, Herschel V. Johnson (his running mate), and Belmont. Nothing could hold the crowd back in its mad rush for food; there was "a pulling and hauling at greasy bones and gravy-soaked fibre, a melee over the rind of pork, a tossing of crackers and bread and meat hither and thither, and the barbecue was ended." *New York Times*, Sept. 13, 1860.

2. Carl Schurz was the main speaker at the Republican rally at Cooper Institute on September 13, but the surprise of the evening was the speech by William E. Dodge, until then a Bell supporter, who declared for Lincoln. After the meeting the Wide-Awakes, a quasi-military organization of the Republicans, paraded through the city. "Each man shouldered his torch-stick as he would a musket; and shifted it at the word of command as a soldier would his piece. . . . the sound of their drums as each club paraded to its head-quarters, for a long time continued to disturb the rest of drowsy Demerats." The Wide-Awakes had been organized in February 1860, in Hartford, Conn., to escort Cassius M. Clay from the railroad depot to the speaker's stand. The South saw in the organization a military threat. *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 1860.

3. After putting on his usual performance—standing on his head, pretending to stumble, turning somersaults, and carrying a man on his back—Blondin offered to carry the Prince of Wales over Niagara Falls. When his offer was politely rejected, he crossed on stilts.

4. Rothschild is undoubtedly referring to the giant balloon, "Great Western." The professor, Thaddeus Sobieski Constantine Lowe, later became the founder of the Balloon Corps of the Union Army. During the summer of 1860 the "Great Western," his monster balloon in which he hoped to cross the Atlantic, was on public display and was of special interest to the visiting Japanese delegation. Lowe was to have been accompanied on his expedition by an astronomer, an artist, a sea captain, and a historian, but the balloon's envelope burst on September 8, 1860.

XXII

New York, 1 October 60

Here politics is just as embroiled as in Europe, and perhaps I will be present at revolutions of another sort; there is a great uproar and talk about disrupting the Union, about resistance by force of arms, and much else. But when the 'Almighty dollar' is in jeopardy these great patriots will look twice, and I think that all these great movements, these fine projects, will fizzle out.

You have no doubt learned of the defeat, capture, and execution of Walker in Honduras; good riddance—one less filibuster.

The Americans are inclined to be offended at the unceremonious manner in which their fellow citizen was treated, but it will all end with the demand for the dismissal of Captain Salmon, commander of the *Icarus*. In New Orleans one of the friends or supporters of Walker knocked down with his fists the captain of the English ship which had brought the news of the adventurer's punishment.¹

Right now, everyone is caught up in the excitement of the visit of the Prince of Wales. These proud republicans—so independent—are positively intoxicated at the idea that a head which is about to be crowned is willing to do them the honor of coming to see them. In certain cities the reception that has been given to him shows the effects of lack of practice on the part of the good Yankees in these matters; but in New York, 400 'gentlemen' have got together to give him a ball and a banquet that is to cost 200,000 francs. Such a thing will never happen again in New York, and since only 2,800 guests have been invited, all kinds of bootlicking is going on to get tickets.²

You ask what my plans are for the winter. At first I had thought of going to California, but besides the fact that it would not be very useful for business, the ships are now so bad—they have been with-

drawn from service to Europe, the Adriatic, and the Baltic—and even so dangerous that it would be better to go by land (thirty days by 'Stage Coach'), and that would be a little hard at that time of the year. . . .

There is no choice, therefore, in my opinion, but to visit Baltimore and Philadelphia more thoroughly; Cincinnati, Chicago, and the cities of the West; New Orleans, Mobile, Charlestown [*sic*], and the cities of the South; from there I will be able to go to Havana from the fifteenth of January to the fifteenth of February. It's the best time, for there are no fevers.

As for Brazil, I should like nothing better than to go, but there is no direct communication; and unless one takes a sailing ship—and a merchantman, at that—it would be necessary to go back to Liverpool. In Europe one cannot imagine what distances in America are like; New Orleans is as far as Paris, and San Francisco two and one-half times farther. . . .

As soon as it gets a little colder you will be doing me a great favor by sending me some game; there are no pheasants, hare, or partridges here. . . .

1. It was known as early as June 1860 that General William Walker had embarked on another filibustering expedition to Central America. Word came on August 20 that he had captured Trujillo, Honduras, and the *Times* angrily demanded that a ship be dispatched to bring him home to stand trial. We cannot afford, it said, to have the world think that the American people countenance filibustering or that the American government cannot prevent it. The British Navy did what the *Times* felt the American Navy should do. Walker was captured and turned over to the Honduran government for sentence and execution.

2. Planning the reception for the Prince of Wales was the cause of considerable self-consciousness about the nature of American society and American manners. Are the aristocracy alone to be invited to the ball, the *New York Times* wondered? "Our aristocracy includes every class, all professions, men of old families, men of new families, men of no families at all; dwellers on all the avenues, in all the streets, on all the squares; dwellers in hotels; railway conductors, commercial travelers, and

civilized Arabs generally. Who shall be taken, and who shall be left?" Those who were taken were worried about the impression they would make. George Templeton Strong described the meetings of the reception committee: "Shall we ten reception committeemen dress alike? Shall it be white vests and black cravats or vice versa? Are silk vests considered provincial in Paris? What manner of gloves prevailed at the Tuileries when Governor Fish was there last . . . ?" Strong was revolted by the snobbery he saw: ". . . I hope the community won't utterly disgrace itself before he goes away. The amount of tuff-hunting and Prince-worshipping threatens to be fearful." *Times*, Sept. 10, 1860; *Diary*, III, 43, 44.

THE VISIT of the nineteen-year-old Prince of Wales provided something of a challenge to American society. Would it be the occasion for reaffirmation of belief in democracy, or for the poor to gawk at royalty and the rich to show that to be an American was not necessarily to be a provincial? Walt Whitman watched the great parades in honor of the Japanese mission and the Prince of Wales, and pondered the future of his country:

Over the Western sea hither from Nippon come,
Cautious, the swart-check'd two-sworded envoys,
Leaning back in the open barouches, bare-headed, impassive,
Ride to-day through Manhattan. . . .
I chant the new empire grander than any before, as in a vision it
came to me,
I chant America the mistress, I chant a greater supremacy. . . .
And you Libertad of the world!
You shall sit in the middle well-pois'd thousands and thousands of
years,
As to-day from one side the nobles of Asia come to you,
As to-morrow from the other side the queen of England sends her
eldest son to you.
The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed,
The ring is arched, the journey is done,
The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd, nevertheless the perfume pours
copiously out of the whole box.

The socially prominent pondered little more than how to make a good impression. "Everybody has talked of nothing but His Royal Highness for the last week," wrote George Templeton Strong. "Reaction is inevitable. It has set in, and by Monday next, the remotest allusion to His Royal Highness will act like ipecac. What a spectacle-loving people we are! . . . I fear we are a nation of snobs." The politicians, annoyed that they had been ignored by the "aristocrats," boycotted the affair. "But do not the Aldermen inflict a wrong upon their own high station," the Times wrote, "when conceding that any class in the City except themselves can be regarded as 'an aristocracy? . . . the word 'aristocracy' implies the possession of political power; but what power have the Astors, Aspinwalls, Taylors, and so forth, when compared with such patriots as the irrepressible Boole, the magnanimous Tuomey, and the warmly chivalrous Genet?"

But in a democracy few cats have a chance to look at a king, and it was doubtless nothing more than curiosity that impelled 200,000 New Yorkers into the streets on October 11 to see the great parade given for the Prince, and the Prince himself in a barouche pulled by six black horses lent by the Adams Express Company.

The parade was for the many, the grand ball at the Academy of Music was for the few. When princes are present, barons may be ignored. Rothschild "came at an early hour," the Times reported, "but his coming created no sensation." Still, sensations there were that evening. The menu by Delmonico was one, and a delightful one: *Consommé de Volaille, Huitres à la Poulette, Saumon, Truite au Beurre de Montpellier, Filets de Bœuf à la Bellevue, Pâté de Gibiers à la Moderne, Galantines des Dindes à la Royale, Cochons de Lait à la Parisienne*—on and on, course after course, to the concluding *Glaces à la Vanille and Charlottes Russes*.

A less pleasant sensation was the collapse of the raised dance floor in the middle of the opening Straus quadrille. Had the New York Aldermen "been at the bottom of the ball," the Times said gaily, "this would have looked like a parody on Guy Faux." But order was quickly restored, the Prince withdrew until the carpenters repaired the floor, and dancing resumed at midnight. Strong was bored by

the Prince and outraged by his countrymen. "From any more princes of the blood, libera vos Domine," he wrote sadly. "May this nice-looking, modest boy find his way home, or at least to our boundaries, with all convenient speed." Peter Cooper looked "like one of Gulliver's Yahoos caught and cleaned and dressed up." "Your Royal Highness, isn't it time for us to balancer?" he heard the wife of Governor Morgan ask as she approached the Prince for the opening dance.

On the night of October 14, the people of New York entertained the Prince after their own fashion; nothing fancy or effete, just a firemen's torchlight parade with dashing horses, clanging bells, and smoking engines. "Such a serpentine illumination and conflagration," the Times announced with satisfaction, "might have satiated the burning desires of even Thais and Alexander."

A few days later, the Prince resumed his journey to West Point, Boston, and home. He left behind golden memories for those with whom he danced and broken hearts for those with whom he did not. Looking back on the event, Strong shook his head sadly. "Inferences from the phenomena that accompanied his visit," he wrote, "are: (1) No community worships hereditary rank and station like a democracy. (2) The biggest and finest specimens of flunkeyism occur in the most recently elevated strata of society, as for example, Cooper, the 'self-made millionaire glue boiler' . . . ; (3) Under all this folly and tust-hunting there is a deep and almost universal feeling of respect and regard for Great Britain and for her Britannic Majesty."

But perhaps Strong—and Rothschild—were too hard on the American people. The London Times saw in their behavior a virtue that escaped detection by their critics. "Happy is the prince," it wrote, "who governs a nation which has learnt in the ordinary affairs of life to govern itself, that can be its own police, its own army, that can frame its own laws; and recognizes the duty of obeying them without fear and without compulsion."

XXIII

New York, 15 October 60

We have had a week so filled with political activity and with parties in honor of the Prince of Wales that I don't really know where to begin.

Before the arrival of the noble heir to the crown of England, the city was kept excited by daily parades: Monday it was the Republicans, who marched their 12,000 'Wide-Awakes' (a veritable army in red oilcloth uniforms). They each carried huge torches and the American flag and they had immense banners on which you could read their slogans. These men went through the streets bellowing in favor of their candidates; the crowd answered according to its convictions, either with 'hurrabs' or with curses—which occasionally led to private fights without serious consequences. These men in their scarlet uniforms and with their torches looked like so many devils escaped from hell.¹ The next day the supporters of the 'Union Ticket,' Bell and Everett,² had a counter demonstration with torches and bands of music. On still another evening there was a great meeting of 60,000 people in and around Cowper [*sic*] Institute.

But politics had to yield to the Prince of Wales, and the most enthusiastic supporters of the most extreme opinions declared a truce in their domestic discussions to celebrate his arrival.

Try to imagine all the ships in the port and in the bay decorated with flags; the army and the whole militia under arms, passing in review, and, following along, the Prince's coach; and a population of a million people sticking their heads out of the windows and jamming into all the streets along his route. These poor people waited without a murmur from ten or eleven o'clock in the morning to seven at night, the military review having delayed the royal cortège considerably. When it finally arrived, it was already dark; it was

impossible to see anything, but you should have heard the frenzied 'hurrabs' of these good republicans, who greeted the royal scion with more enthusiasm than they would have shown for a liberator of their own country. Lord Newcastle said to one of the members of the reception committee, Mr. Belmont, 'I have never witnessed such a scene in my life, and never wish to witness any which could diminish the impression this one has made upon me.' And, in fact, there is nothing better than a popular reception in which spontaneity of feeling is the principal ingredient. But what an education for the politicians of this country, who fight for power, offering the people only the sight of their slovenly dress and unkempt beards. This country is too much in love with great names, lofty titles, decorations—in a word, everything that glitters to the eye—to be able to keep its democratic government for long. I am more and more confirmed in my opinion, as I have told you many times, that in fifteen or twenty years America will be divided, and the different parts of this great whole will each be governed by a man who is king, emperor, or president. The name will not matter, but in fact he will be a dictator; and if he gives great festivals, if he introduces an aristocracy in America, he will be adored—for here as well as elsewhere there are two quite distinct classes, those who love to see, those who love to be seen.

Right now the former find nothing except some foreign prince or some Japanese ambassador to satisfy their fancy; the latter, to their great regret, have nothing to show. The taste for grandeur is rapidly seizing this country, and those who will return in ten years will find it very much changed.

The horses that pulled the carriage of the Prince of Wales and those that he and his retinue used to review the troops belonged to the important people in this city; and at the review the Prince was mounted on a pretty little mare that belonged to Mrs. Belmont.

I must spare you a description of the following two days, which were used by His Highness to visit New York and by the people to look at him, follow him, and 'hurrab him.'

On Friday evening there was the grand ball given at the Academy

of Music by four hundred subscribers at 500 francs each; 3,000 people were invited. Great care had been taken to leave out all the authorities, so as not to give the young Prince any sight of the 'aldermen and common men of the council.' There was a prodigious amount of intriguing to get tickets, and I must confess that in spite of some impossible faces and some outrageous dresses, the gathering was well chosen and made up mainly of people I know. There were dresses of an elegance and sumptuousness without compare, magnificently beautiful jewelry; but what ought particularly to have struck the young Prince (in spite of the maternal injunction not to look at the fair sex) was the immense number of pretty women who were present. As a matter of fact I have never in my life seen such a collection. The meal was splendid, served in a room especially built for that purpose in which only three or four hundred people were admitted at a time. The service was admirable; there was virtually one servant for every diner. When the Prince arrived everyone was already there, and the room, filled with flowers, looked most charming. The floor was literally covered with people and the boxes were filled with beautifully dressed young women. The orchestra began by playing 'God Save the Queen' and then 'H[ail] Columbia.' The last note had barely died when the floor, overloaded with the enormous crowd that had pushed forward to see the Prince, collapsed. Fortunately, we had a fall of only about three feet; several meters away, where the floor slopes more sharply, the fall would have been fifteen feet. Here I must do justice to American women. Not one of them stirred, and after the first cry not a word was uttered; a panic would have caused the greatest disaster. Owing to the absolute calm that prevailed while the wreckage was being cleared away, it turned out that the only damage was a few sprained ankles, a few torn dresses, and a woman who had fainted but who was quickly brought around.

It took an hour and a half to repair the damage to the floor, and that threw a bit of a pall over the affair.

At midnight the Prince opened the ball with Mrs. Morgan, the Governor's wife, and he continued to dance till half past three. They

had chosen as his partners the best-looking and most elegant girls and ladies at the ball; Mrs. Belmont was among them. But the finest spectacle offered the prince came on Saturday night, the 'firemen torch light procession.' That's a specialty of this country and one of the finest things I have ever seen. I was opposite the Prince's hotel so that I could see everything quite clearly.

The entire corps of firemen was on foot, 6,000 men in full uniform—black helmets with copper ornaments, red flannel shirts, black flannel pants, white belts. They marched along by companies with a band at the head. Each fireman carried a torch as together they pulled their engines. Those who have never been in America do not know what a fire engine with all its accessories really is. Engines come in all shapes, some of colossal size. Some are pulled by men, some by horses; others are steam-driven. For a fireman, his company's engine is everything; it is more dear to him than his family; he spends everything he can to decorate it with jewels, painting, and gold and silver ornaments. Judge for yourself, then, what he must do on such an occasion as this to make sure that what amounts to his own mistress is more beautiful than those of the other firemen.

So, these machines were covered with Venetian lamps, flowers, flags, torches; some were lit up by Bengal fire, others by electric lights or by gas lights. When a company passed in front of the Prince's balcony, each fireman shot off fireworks which lighted up over an enormous distance the vast throng of people who were pushing forward to see this splendid sight. When the parade had ended, the various companies went their way through the city, which was as bright as in broad daylight.

1. Wide-Awakes from Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York held a monster election rally the night of October 3. Dressed in oilcloth capes and carrying lighted torches, they marched through the streets of New York, firing off Roman candles as they went. "The Wide-Awakes have invented for themselves a peculiar cheer," the *Times* reported; it consisted of a "numerical recital—'One, two, three,'—'four, five, six,'—'seven, eight,' and then a terrific 'tiger.'" Oct. 3, 4, 1860.

2. John Bell (1797-1869), of Tennessee, had a long career in both houses of Congress. A moderate on the slavery issue, he was nominated for the presidency of the United States in 1860 by the Constitutional Union Party. His running mate was Edward Everett (1794-1865), of Massachusetts, who at various times in his distinguished career had been a lawyer, an educator, a clergyman, an editor, the Governor of Massachusetts, a United States Senator, and Ambassador to Great Britain.

XXIV

Baltimore, 18 November 60

I am quite happy that the political situation in Europe is less alarming at this time. I cannot say as much for America. This great country is in the process of dissolution. You doubtless have read in the newspapers about the first effects of Lincoln's election; without waiting for the final result, several Southern states—Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, with South Carolina as their guide—have for all practical purposes seceded from the United States and are going to form a new confederation.¹ They have still not notified the federal government of their decision, but in reality they are no longer part of the Union. All their federal officers have submitted their resignations without having been replaced; these states no longer have senators or representatives in Washington; they have replaced the American flag with the 'palmeted flag,' the flag of the South.

The various state legislative bodies have been summoned to vote on a new constitution and to levy heavy taxes on the products of the other states. Charlestown [*sic*] is going to be declared a free port.

Even more, representatives have been sent to Paris to recommend the new government to the French government and to negotiate a new commercial treaty.² If this state of affairs should continue, the City of New York, whose interests are closely tied to those of the South, will secede from the State of New York, declare itself a free

port, and form a new independent state including Staten Island, Long Island, and King's County. This can scarcely happen, however, except by revolution and as a last resort. But I do not think that there will be a civil war between the States; perhaps separation can take place amicably.

There may be two means of restoring the situation.

The first (which seems impracticable to me) would be for Lincoln and [Hamlin], frightened by the political and financial crisis that their election has created, to submit their resignation, and for the electors to cast their votes for Bell and Everett, candidates of the moderate party of the Union.

The second expedient would be for those *slave* states which do not wish to secede, but whose interests are united with those of the secessionists—Maryland, Tennessee, North Carolina, Louisiana—acting as mediators, to urge the two parties to make mutual concessions.

The future is as black as it can be, for the political crisis has led to a financial crisis more violent than those of '37 and '57.³ Government bonds have fallen 30 to 50 per cent; commercial paper of the highest value can be negotiated only with difficulty at 1.5 per cent per month. Money is hoarded, cannot be found—it is invisible. What has given tremendous and incalculable proportions to this debacle is the insane confidence that the speculators have had for several years, the exorbitant level to which the mania of the capitalists and gamblers has pushed government bonds and industrial shares. What has ruined America is this boundless confidence of the people in its strength, its power, its wealth, and its vitality.

You will do me the justice of admitting that I have never allowed myself to be blinded by these appearances of prosperity and greatness and that for some months I have been predicting to you what is now happening. I did not think, however, that my predictions would be fulfilled so soon. I was all alone in my opinion then, and the Americans, always optimistic in things that concern their country and themselves, laughed at my fears and my doubts.

Now it is too late to change; half of America is ruined. . . .

1. Rothschild's guess as to the future course of events was quite accurate. South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860; Mississippi, January 9, 1861; Florida, January 10, 1861; and Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana by the end of the month.

2. Was Rothschild only anticipating what was likely to happen, or did he have information of some kind of mission to France? The first known Southern delegation to England and France—William Lowndes Yancey, Pierre A. Rost, and Ambrose Dudley Mann—was not commissioned until March 1861 and did not arrive until the following month.

3. The political crisis of the winter of 1860 created panic on Wall Street. Stocks plunged lower and lower, banking houses in all the major Eastern cities were forced to close, and Belmont and other bankers received shipments of gold from England to maintain their credit. The *Times* was sure that the brokers and stock speculators were rigging the market to make a killing. "They join their howlings . . . to the croaking of the politicians in the hope that between the two they may create a temporary panic in Wall-street, and buy in, at a lower figure, the poorest of the stocks which they sold at a high one." Dec. 26, 1860.

XXV

New York, 14 December 60

. . . Nothing new here, except that secession is coming about, despite the efforts of the conservatives; I don't think there is any way of preserving the Union—South Carolina will secede on the eighteenth of this month; North Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida at the beginning of January. Loans are being issued in all the states, and arms are being bought to repulse by force whatever material obstacle the federal government should place in the way of the wishes of the people of the South. Let us hope the separation will be accomplished peacefully.

The North is beginning to be frightened and a strong reaction is beginning to be felt; however, I am afraid it is too late. But in Mas-

sachusetts, that hotbed of abolitionism, the municipal elections in several towns have given a large majority to the Democratic Party. The reason is that the 'Almighty Dollar' is beginning to talk louder than political feelings. Manufacturing has stopped for lack of work, commerce is at a standstill, and thousands of workers are unemployed. Misery is already very great; what will it be in mid-winter? There will be a veritable war of poor against rich, of unemployed proletarians against property owners. Then you will see how right I was when I told you a few months ago that everything about the Constitution of the United States was wrong, and how wrong men of high rank were not to be afraid of this impetuous electorate whom they flatter in an effort to get it to vote according to their own selfish ambitions, but against whom, on the contrary, they should have taken measures dictated by simple prudence.

The political revolution has taken place; the social revolution will follow soon. I hope to God I am mistaken! But why shouldn't this social revolution take place?

One must not have two weights and two measures in this world. If over the years, for selfish ends, you have tried to win the popular masses by flattery, if you have told them and repeated it a thousand times—if you have convinced them—that they are the masters of the country's destinies, that they are infallible sovereigns, how will you prove to them now that they are all wrong and that they do not enjoy the inalienable right of seizing what you possess?

If it is moral to arouse the fanaticism of the people against the citizens of neighboring and friendly states, why would this fanaticism be any more culpable if it were directed against citizens of the same state? If it is just and natural to seize the property of some people, call it land or slaves, why would it not be equally just and equally natural to seize from other persons their *property*, which you call investment income, bonds, or houses? In both of these cases the moral is the same; it is an evil to which one will give the form of legality, and if you invoke religion and God on these questions, you will find some priests ready to declare that the spoliation of the rich is an act most agreeable to the Lord.

And, at bottom, if the majority of Americans are consistent with themselves, they ought to accept this idea of confiscation. For there are in the South thousands of Negroes who suffer the most abject servitude; they are horribly treated by barbarous masters; they must be given freedom. But—you are wrong in your idea of the treatment they are subjected to, and, besides, they are the property of the planters and you cannot attack property. A man cannot be the property of another man, and thousands of individuals ought not to suffer so that some people might be rich and live in abundance. This is all very philanthropic, and it is so easy to be philanthropic with other people's money! When you have imbued the people with these ideas, they will turn the reasoning around against you. Millions of men and women have worked in the mills and factories; the owners are millionaires, the workers starve; it is to these that the former owe their fortune—so it is necessary to divide it, or rather to let them take it. But property?—property is nothing, for a few people must not wallow in abundance, enjoying the labor of a large number of people who are in misery. By the principles you have preached, you have given to the lower classes the idea of social equality as well as political equality, of the right to work, and you come directly to the famous axiom which has become a principle with the masses: "Property is theft."

That is the destiny of this model government; that is the result of universal suffrage and the sovereignty of the people.

The English newspapers, in accordance with their praiseworthy habit, interfere in matters that do not concern them and commend the republican cause to victory, inspiring the abolitionists to hold firm; what will they say when the crisis seizes their country? They should ponder a bit on the happy condition of the 'coolies,' who take the place of black slaves in the British colonies! . . .

XXVI

New York, 7 January 1861

. . . In this country, New Year's Day, far from being a family holiday, is literally a holiday for the disinterested and the indifferent. The ladies dress at eight in the morning in ballroom costume in order to receive their visitors. The young men begin their rounds of annual politeness at ten in the morning and get over with at one time giving their thanks for all the dinners, balls, suppers, etc., etc., of the year. So for the most part all they do is come and go; there are some with a list of 150 to 200 visits to make.

For my part, I had a frightful number of them, but at six-thirty in the evening I stopped at the fortieth!!!! Among this number, I had been to see two people whom I did not know at all.

In every house there is a buffet copiously laid out, and some people pay visits only to different buffets. There are some who by nightfall are a bit tipsy. The owners of 'bar-rooms' give free drinks to their steady customers, so that at night the streets of New York offer a slightly Bacchic and eccentric spectacle.

I have personally been very well treated by the fair sex, for I have received a fairly large number of things embroidered, knitted, and crocheted by little white hands.

I put off my trip to Havana because of Belmont's ball on the fifteenth of this month, and also because the ship on which I was to sail had been damaged and was replaced by an entirely new ship, which is going to make its trial run. Now I am still not crazy enough about the sea to subject myself to such experiences.

Politics is always the same. The politicians are so unequal to the circumstances that they make error after error and botch things up each time there is a ray of hope for some settlement.

Yesterday, one appealed to people with the hope that everything would be solved, but today reinforcements have been sent to Major Anderson¹ and the quarrel grows more bitter. I await from one moment to the next the first cannon shot, which will be the signal of civil war.

Since the government feels itself powerless to control the storm, and it is, President Buchanan has thought up the idea of a day of fasting and public prayer; we have returned to the days of Esther and Mordecai! On the fourth of January everything was closed except the churches (my faithful Pierre having quite naturally made arrangements for my dinner the night before, for in spite of my lively desire to see the Union preserved, I cannot really sacrifice my stomach and my nourishment to it). The churches and the temples were filled with penitents; each 'reverend' gave a sermon for the occasion from his own point of view, but the most remarkable sermon was that of Rabbi Raphael [*sic*] of the German Congregation. The Unionist leaders found it so good that they got up a subscription to have hundreds of thousands of copies printed in order to circulate it in every state of the Union to enlighten the population on its duties and true interests.² I am not so enthusiastic, for he says that the Bible authorizes slavery. Indeed! The Bible also shows us Abraham and Jacob (not to speak of my 'Name-Sake') with a number of wives. . . .

1. Major Robert Anderson was in command of Fort Sumter, South Carolina.

2. Morris J. Raphall (1798-1868), a native of Sweden and Rabbi of Birmingham, England, arrived in New York in 1849 to become Rabbi of the B'nai Jeshurun orthodox congregation. He proved to be a highly popular speaker among Christians as well as Jews and gave frequent public lectures throughout the country. On January 4, 1861—the National Fast Day proclaimed by President Buchanan—he delivered a sermon titled "The Bible View of Slavery," which found sanction in the Old Testament for the institution of slavery. At the request of Samuel F. B. Morse and other officers of the American Society for Promoting National Unity, of which both he and Belmont were members, Rabbi

Raphall repeated the sermon a few days later at a meeting at which a fund was collected to print it. For this he was denounced by the Abolitionists, but denunciation was something to which he had become accustomed. The previous year, on February 1, 1860 (the day Congressman Pennington was elected Speaker of the House), Rabbi Raphall became the first Jew ever to open a session of the United States Congress with prayer. The event caused considerable comment about the place of religion in a democratic society. The *New York Herald* reporter was amused by the affair: "A Jew praying for the American House of Representatives! The next thing we shall have will be a Shaking Quaker dancing a reel!" Parson William G. Brownlow, of Knoxville, Tenn., found less to smile at: "[We see] that the House of Representatives was to have been opened . . . by the Right Reverend Eminent Doctor Raphall, of the Jewish or Hebrew Denomination, the people who killed Christ . . . [a] majority of the present Congress are about prepared to sell their interest in Christ's atonement!" *The Churchman*, the official Episcopal newspaper in New York City, was hardly less dismayed: "it was with extreme sorrow, and almost disgust, that we read the announcement . . . [It] was no less than the official rejection of Christianity by the Legislature of the Country." The *New York Herald*, however, applauded: "It was a concession to the great principle of religious liberty, without a parallel in any other country since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus." The quotations are from Bertram Wallace Korn, *Eventful Years and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century American Jewish History* (Cincinnati, 1954), pp. 99-100, 103-6.

XXVII

New York, 21 January 1861

. . . I won't tell you much about American politics today, because I am deeply disgusted with the lack of patriotism and astonished by the complete incapacity of all these demagogues. No one wants to sacrifice anything of his own ideas and pretensions, and I think that so far as the Union is concerned all compromise will come too late.

Georgia seceded the day before yesterday. Louisiana will follow

in two weeks, and then the border states will be obliged to make common cause with the secessionists. The South will then be able to form a powerful confederation. As for Lincoln, the future president, he is not up to his position and the Republicans themselves regret having nominated him. He rejects all forms of compromise and thinks only of repression by force of arms. He has the appearance of a peasant and can only tell barroom stories. The other day I saw one of his supporters, who had been to see him at Springfield to chat with him about the situation. He found him seated, legs on the mantelpiece, in shirtsleeves, hat on his head, amusing himself by spitting great gobs of tobacco juice that he extracted from his quid.

After a conversation which shed no light on the way Mr. Lincoln viewed things, the visitor—who is one of the Republican leaders—went away very disappointed in the future president. In this country, people do not take umbrage at nonentities; the greatest claim to public favor is to be unknown.

The season of parties has begun, but New York has not been particularly brilliant; still, Belmont has given a magnificent ball which will mark an epoch in the annals of New York society. The flowers, the ladies, and the clothes competed in beauty and brilliance, and I confess that the spectacle was charming. Lady G. Fane,¹ one of those old English girls, who is sixty, travels for her education, and complains that she has still not seen a single handsome person in America, spoke to Mr. [several lines omitted] . . . Belmont—who was back of her—immediately drew near, and to the great confusion of the old prude, thanked her, saying that she had just paid the greatest compliment to his house he had ever received.

Since we are on the subject of balls, I want to tell you about the one at the Hotel St. Nicholas given annually in celebration of the Battle of New Orleans.² It is a semipublic affair. Invitations are extended by the committee, but the committee itself is somewhat mixed socially and so were the guests. You are given a free meal, but must pay for the wine; and the condition in which many of the patriots found themselves testified that they wished to contribute generously to the general expenses.

I was invited to dine with the committee. There I saw for the first time Mr. Richard Schell, who is implicated in the theft of 800,000 piastres in bonds. I never heard anything like the cynicism of this man, who explained to two or three politicians, admirers of his talent, how to make money with the help of the money of others and of the state, saying that he has so thoroughly mixed up the accounts that he defies anyone to nab him. Great applause from his listeners. As for me, I felt my pockets to see if I was missing anything and I made off.

The dance amused me by the originality of the impossible clothing, by the dances which reminded me of those of [line omitted] . . .

I recall among others a tiny old man about fifty years of age, adorned with a moustache which would have befitted a retired captain of the Imperial Guard, and wearing a blue coat and red cravat. He jumped like a man hanging on a rope, all the while making entrechats worthy of the great Chicard; he cast furious looks on all sides, as if to say: Mock me if you dare. . . . There were several very pretty ladies, but they were decked out like performing dogs.

If you complain in Paris about the cold, the thaw, and the mud, you should spend a little time in this country and you'd know what winter really is. First of all, we've had weather from 16 to 20 degrees with a foot of snow, so we could go sleigh-riding. Americans are very fond of this sport. For myself I have enjoyed it several times, but it is necessary to dress up like an oyster, because your hands, nose, and ears get frozen and the wind cuts through your body like a razor blade. Apart from that, it's a great deal of fun.

But much more unpleasant than the cold here is the thaw; the public-works administration does things only to enrich its own employees. When the streets are covered with snow, it is left to Him who sent it also to clean up the city. To make the snow melt more quickly, however, great quantities of salt are thrown on it. As soon as the melting begins, this salt forms a kind of black mud; in some places it is so deep that you literally risk your life. One of my friends wanted to cross Broadway; his foot slipped, he fell, and disappeared. The mud covered his head, and if it had not been for several kind souls who devoted themselves to pulling him out from this annoying

situation he would have smothered. The mud lasts such a long time that it doesn't get frozen by the cold again, and finally the wind blows it away and you get covered by it again in a new form. These little inconveniences don't frighten the American women, who go walking all the time; some wear great rubber boots, others give free an exhibition of their dirty unmentionables that one would pay a great deal not to see.

The latest news is of the death of Lola Montez. . . .³

1. Her husband, the Honorable Julian Fane, was secretary of the British Legation at Vienna.

2. The anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans was celebrated by a ball at the St. Nicholas Hotel, at which Bdmont was present, and by a banquet at Tammany Hall. The *New York Times* hoped that the memory of Jackson and New Orleans would be one of "the strong links that unite the South, the West and the North in the bonds of fraternal suffering and triumph." Jan. 8, 1861.

3. Lola Montez (1818-61)—really Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert—died in poverty in New York city, and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery. A dancer and actress, she had been, as the *New York Times* called her, an "ultra-republican" who had at the same time been mistress to kings.

XXVIII

Havana, 12 February 61

. . . I left New York February 1 on the *Bienville*, in the midst of an intense cold spell which every day allowed hundreds of thousands of skaters to enjoy themselves on the ponds of Central Park.

During our entire passage we had a contrary wind, which made our trip last six whole days while giving us the enjoyment of consider-

able rolling and pitching. I was not really sick except one day, the second, but to console myself I knew I had many companions in misery. Among them were Frezzolini, who had signed a contract with the impressario of Havana; but the poor lady had no mind to sing on board. Discipline is very great on the ships of this line, so the day after our departure there was a small tragedy. The second officer got tipsy and he was immediately reduced in rank by the captain.

After three days we spied the coast of Florida, which we followed for a long time; but unfortunately we were scarcely able to enjoy the view, for a relentless rain followed us remorselessly, adding to the pleasures of the trip.

Finally we sighted Havana, which affords a delightful panorama. I think, though, that the enthusiasm one experiences on seeing sea-ports attests more to the length and boredom of the voyage than to the beauty of the site.

One must, however, give justice to Morro, the fortress that commands the entrance to the port, which offers an imposing spectacle. Once having entered, you feel yourself immediately in the tropics, and your eye wanders with enchantment over houses of every color surrounded by palm trees; over the innumerable multicolored barques that clog the harbor and gather like a swarm of ants around the steamship that has just arrived. The most discordant cries invite us to take this boat rather than another, and Negroes, like monkeys, are perched high on the masts the better to importune the traveler.

The formalities with the health officials and the police are long; the Havanans shout a lot but do not hurry. At last one gets permission to land. Several piastres soften up the customs official and one can then go to the hotel.

I won't try to describe this barbaric establishment to you. The rooms are truly public places where anyone can enter and usually have the pleasure of seeing you dress. The beds are of sacking, without mattress and sometimes without straw. Service is a thing unknown and cleanliness too expensive, but bahl war is war! The heat was not great when we arrived, but now it is 80 or 90 degrees Fabien-

heit; there are no fevers, however, and the houses are so airy and shielded from the sun that you suffer less than in more temperate countries.

The streets are narrow and poorly paved; what is quite diverting is that the people live on the ground floor, with all the doors and windows open, and a passer-by is a witness to everything that goes on inside the houses. I must confess that one often sees some very strange sights! . . . Only the Negro and the stranger go on foot; the Havanan uses the old-fashioned *volante* with long shafts.¹ The horse is harnessed half a league in front, and is mounted by a more or less filthy Negro. The latter, even when he belongs to a rich gentleman, wears black down-at-the-heels shoes without stockings, the man's own skin advantageously replacing gaiters. These Negroes perpetually have cigars in their mouths and generally have a spare cigarette behind their ears; they offer it to you from time to time. How engaging this is! The streets are infested with lottery-ticket sellers, who pursue you with their impertunities.

The Serranos² have been delightful. I had brought Madame the beautiful box of bonbons that you were kind enough to send me—and it had a very good effect.

I dined at their home with a mass of 'great guns,' and the marshal put himself completely at my disposal, sending me cigars and having me invited to soirées. His wife is always pleasant.

Serrano is well liked, and he is one of the best captains-general to govern the island; nevertheless, people steal just as much as under his predecessors. Here everything is monopoly and privilege and the contractors pay public officials in order to get good terms.

The captain-general makes around 2 million francs per year, in an almost legal way. What might his income be if he wanted to increase it!

I dined at Serrano's home with the celebrated Miramon, former president of Mexico.³ He is quite little and is not thirty years of age, but he has the face of a hyena. After dinner there was a great reception. Most of the society ladies are not pretty, but there are some exceptions of an almost perfect beauty.

The marshal's wife came to the ball only when everyone was already there and at table. In imitation of the Empress, she has a tall footman exclusively for the use of her own tiny self; he takes the plates and dishes from the other servants and he alone has the privilege of serving Her Excellency. After dinner we danced to piano music. The current rage is called the "danse intime" and really it's appropriately named; it's a kind of very slow waltz in three-quarter time, accompanied by a swaying motion. I have never in my life seen anything more indecent, and at public dances I have been literally shocked; so you can imagine that it must really be quite something.

We were present at a ball at which, at the beginning of the evening, the men wore dominos and masks. Instead of flirting with the ladies, they contented themselves with shouting and making the noises of hell, which ~~seemed~~ to please the young people very much but which produced an exceedingly disagreeable effect on me—all the more so since the infernal music is played mainly by pounding a huge drum and blowing imperfect saxophones. We also attended the carnival and I must tell you that it is the most unusual thing I've seen here.

Picture thousands of masked people, rather dirty too, roaming the streets for three days and three nights and parading with a band at their head, and, on the other hand, the whole colored population dancing, singing, making a devilish racket, thousands of tents filled with people drinking and eating. I do not need to tell you how much the originality of the spectacle deserved attention, but during all this time it was impossible to sleep, for my bed was separated from one of these public dances by only a paper-thin wall.

1. The *volante* was "once as essentially Cuban as the gondola is Venetian." It was a "very angular-looking vehicle . . . with its wonderful spider-web-like wheels, its long shafts, and its horse or mule, upon whose back the driver [perched] in a clumsily-made saddle." Richard Davey, *Cuba Past and Present* (New York, 1898), p. 137.

2. Francisco Serrano y Dominguez (1810-85), after a distinguished military career, was appointed captain-general of Cuba in 1859, an office he held until 1862. For his work in Cuba and in the reconquest of Santo Domingo he was made Duque de la Torre. In 1869, after leading the rebellion in which Queen Isabella II was deposed, he acted as Regent of Spain.

3. Miguel Miramon (1833-67) had a meteoric career in Mexican politics. The Clerical candidate for the presidency against Juarez, he led the rebellion against the latter for four years. In December 1861 he was decisively beaten by Juarez and fled first to Cuba, then to Europe, where he attempted to encourage the intervention of the European powers in the affairs of Mexico. He entered the service of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico and was captured at Querétaro. He was executed with Maximilian and General Mejia. Public exhibition of the famous painting of the execution by Edouard Manet was forbidden by Napoleon III.

XXIX

Havana, 7 March 61

Since the last time I had the pleasure of writing you, I have traveled so much through this country that I don't really know where to begin.

It is best to take things as they happened, so I will tell you first of my visit to the Cabañas and to the citadel at Morro.

At Serrano's order, the commanding general gave us his aide-de-camp so we could go everywhere. We formed a charming group with several American ladies. The Cabañas is a modern fortress on a very handsome scale, but it does not differ at all from other fortresses of the same type. We arrived just at the time when the troops were having target practice. The ladies claimed that we would never be able to reach the target, which was 200 meters away, but to their great astonishment and above all to mine, my companion, Mr. Bre-

voort,² and myself were each able to hit it with a dozen bullets without missing once.

Morro is one of those old castle-fortresses, quite picturesque, with its double view of Havana and the sea making it a most interesting place. The old commandant, aged eighty, to whom this post had been given as a place of retirement, offered his arm to one of the ladies and took us everywhere with the greatest amiability, imagining he could speak French and insisting that he chat with us in that language, because he had been a prisoner of the French for nine years, some forty years ago. To spare us the return trip across the mountains, he had a boat brought to the foot of the rock; and although the descent was quite long, the ladies went ahead bravely—but one of them slipped while boarding the boat and almost had an unexpected bath.

Brevort grabbed her and pulled her into the boat just at the moment when a black, shapeless mass appeared between two waves. We asked what it was, and were told that it was one of the many sharks which had chosen to live under the rocks of the fort in order to grab the food that is thrown out there. You can imagine how terrified the poor girl was when she learned of the danger she had barely escaped.

We also visited the docks, where the sugar casks are piled up; and the president of the company tried to persuade me to have our house lend him a mere million on his goods.

Along with the sugar were innumerable sacks of rice, which the owner must defend day and night against a voracious army of rats. These animals, twice as big as the French variety, have a very particular and highly intelligent way of appropriating this colonial staple. They make a hole in the sack and wallow around in the rice; since their hair is very long and coarse the rice collects in it. The rats then carry it out and deposit it in their holes. In this way an active rat can empty an entire sack in one night.

The Cubans, who are not a very brave people, stuff your head with stories of robbery and nighttime, even daylight, attacks. Nothing in the world can make one go walking in the evening at the Paseo; and

people speak with terror of such and such a woman, who at four o'clock in the afternoon had been stopped and robbed at the gates of the city, of the man who had been asked, in one of the more frequented streets of Havana, with a knife at his throat, to turn over everything he had on him. So far I have not seen anything of this kind; still, we are careful never to go out except armed with a good pocket revolver, which I think would give the greatest pleasure to thieves if they should get hold of it while robbing us.²

The other day I was peacefully taking a stroll when I felt a hand heavily descend on my shoulder. I said to myself: I am pinched. With a sudden movement, I broke loose from this slightly too familiar grip and, jumping a good distance away, I turned around, preparing to introduce my assailant to the friend I was carrying in my pocket. Upon looking at my antagonist, I realized that his purposes were not very hostile and he seemed a bit disconcerted by my bellicose actions. I asked him what he wanted and he answered [several lines omitted] . . .

Americans are the same everywhere, and that one can boast of having given me such a shock that I dirtied my pants. Besides, it is usually in the country that these thieves are dangerous; they break into a house at night and then demand fifty or sixty ounces of gold from the owner under the threat of burning his fields. If the owner refuses, they tie him up and take at their convenience what they can find. The people generally have so little courage that they just stand by without saying a word; the next day, if the authorities or their friends ask them if they have been robbed, they answer imperturbably that they have not, for fear that the bandits will take revenge.

A rich planter, M. Dalcour, son of a Frenchman and naturally, therefore, courageous, told us the following story. One day, while making a tour of his plantation on horseback, he met a hidalgo [*sic*] who first asked for several doubloons, then asked for the road to the Dalcour house. Dalcour told him he had no money with him and that the owner of the house was not in. He had forgotten his weapons that day and did not want to identify himself. Nevertheless, he prepared that evening and on the following days to give a hot reception

to his friend and to kill him like a dog without any formalities. If he dared come to the house, he would never leave it. Several days later, however, at Matanzas, a well-known bandit leader was hanged; it was the traveler.

Despite the surveillance by English ships and despite international treaties, the slave trade flourishes. Almost all Cubans are involved in it, and those who do not profit from it directly are completely in favor of it. As a result, no English ship has made a capture here for the past two years and yet every day new arrivals are landed somewhere on the coast. Just one league from Havana itself, there is a large shed where a man can supply himself with black flesh. Nearby there is another establishment filled with Chinese.³ The number of 'coolies' has so increased during the past years that it causes serious uneasiness among the Spanish authorities. Their customs are quite strange. They are imported by Chinese companies who rent them out for so much a month; the sole obligation of the planter is to feed them. They have an 'overseer' of their own race whom they choose themselves and from whom they accept whatever harsh treatment he metes out. After eight years they generally return to their country, as poor as when they arrived, having eaten or gambled away all they earned.

Their sole concern is that they be buried at home. Families are generally put to great sacrifice to return their dead relatives, and the best freight a ship can get is two or three coffins filled with Chinese bones. The Americans have a virtual monopoly on this disgusting commodity. The Chinese here have a peculiar propensity for suicide. They kill themselves because of a terrible boredom, or very often because they have lost at gambling, or sometimes because they have been beaten by a lash instead of by a stick.⁴ They do away with themselves in a strange way. They generally sleep on a plank, and when they have had enough of life they attach a rope to that piece of wood, put their head through the noose, and lying on their back, pull it until they are dead.

Our visit to Matanzas⁵ and the neighboring plantations interested me very much. Matanzas is a little city, delightfully situated be-

tween the sea on one side and the San Juan and the Yumurí on the two others. The main thoroughfare is the valley which takes its name from the latter river.

We left by horse at seven in the morning to make the trip. The sun had just risen; the freshness of the morning was delightful and the traveler could fill his lungs with the perfumes of the tropics. In the background, rather high mountains, variously shaded by the light, outlined the horizon. At our feet the Yumurí kept the plain fresh and verdant; on all sides were coconut trees and date palms covered with their fruit; orange trees, presenting at the same time the perfume of their blossoms and the sight of their luscious fruit; fields of ripe pineapples carrying into the distance a strong smell of vanilla; large hedges of aloes showing to the traveler their pistils, which looked like daggers; and finally, thousands of tropical flowers with the most delicate aromas and most brilliant colors. The countryside was livened by many peasants on horseback, dressed in the strangest fashion, who would have given a thrill of pleasure to my dear sister's drawing crayon.

Behind them, long lines of mules, burdened down by maize and other fruits of the countryside that they were carrying to the city, wound among the trees and rocks. We returned along the coast, and the view of Matanzas and its magnificent bay, filled with sailing ships, presented a different picture, but one no less grand. In the evening we had an expedition of another kind; we went by boat to a plantation twelve miles from the city. We started out as the sun was setting; the sky was aflame and its hot colors were reflected on the water. The palm trees, thrown into relief in the tropical background, seemed to assume gigantic size. What a sight for this poor Decampsl⁶ But unfortunately, if he had dared to copy nature, the truth would not have been believable.

You know how short twilight is in the tropics; there is hardly any interval between night and day. Soon the sky was filled with the most brilliant stars and the full moon shone above our heads. Our boat glided silently between the banks lined with immense bamboos. At our pleading, a young American girl, just married, who was traveling with us and who was endowed with a magnificent voice,

sang us some German ballads. These songs and the sound of oars were all that could be heard in the surrounding silence. Any of us could easily believe he had been transported to the middle of one of the scenes so well described by Méry.⁷ But I must stop, for I fear that you will end by laughing at me.

We arrived at the plantation. The scene changed as if by magic. Two huge 'blood-hounds' met us at the dock and proved their loyalty to their master by the most discouraging growls. The owner called them, but they seemed disappointed at not being able to make their teeth acquainted with us. The planter, who was one of the friends of Tolmé, greeted us with extreme graciousness and was eager to show us his sugar mill. A hundred Negroes, the night gang, and some Chinese were working in the light cast by the moon and flaming torches. They looked like black devils moving about in a hellish cauldron, but it was late and we had to think about returning. That was less poetic, for instead of soft singing, we heard only the noise of the forks working on two emaciated chickens that we had had the foresight to bring with us. Then suddenly Mme Field recalled a story that a creole nurse had told her. When someone exposes himself to the light of the moon, he awakens in the morning with a distorted face or three weeks later he is stricken with fever. So she covered herself with an enormous umbrella which the Americans never fail to carry, whatever the weather might be.

The next day was Sunday and we were taken to see the cockfights. I don't like to see this spectacle—it disgusts me—but if you want to see the Cubans in their true colors, you must study them in the arena where two unfortunate birds tear at each other with beak and spurs.

What noise, what furious shouts from those who bet on the loser, what applause for the conqueror. The spectators encourage the birds by voice and by gesture; they give them advice, as if they could be understood. At the fights, all social classes mix together and the Negro in rags bets gold with the richest property owners in the neighborhood. During intermissions, lottery-ticket sellers try to appropriate to their own profit the gains of the winners. That evening we had quite an amusing tragedy.

Mme Field had brought with her an English chambermaid, a

lanky, bony, prudish old maid. Her face resembled one of those antediluvian fossils that Cuvier² reconstructed and placed among the carnivores. It's impossible to guess her age. The house was filled; she had to be given a bed in a room occupied by a Spanish couple, and the husband had been asked to sleep in another room. The Spaniard, who had stayed out rather late in the city to console himself with the juice of the grape, felt a vague need when he returned to go to his chaste wife. To the terror of the Englishwoman, he took possession of the bed he had slept in the night before.

I feel that the wrath of the old maid came from the fact that he did not make a mistake with respect to the bed! Be that as it may, we had to leave early the next morning and we were all ready when we heard Mr. Field call through the door for the third time, "Emily."

Emily answered 'Yes,' but did not appear. After about an hour, everything was explained. Emily did not want to dress in front of an unknown man; you can imagine the scandal that the incident created in the house. The unfortunate, but too amorous, couple was thrown out, and I am still laughing.

The sugar refinery that we were to have visited is several leagues from Matanzas, and to get there it was necessary to go by one of those impassable roads—huge stones piled upon each other—which only a bird could cross. It belongs to M. Dalcour, son of a Frenchman who established himself in this country fifty years ago. Furnished with letters and in our capacity as fellow countrymen, we were received by him with old-time hospitality. He made us stay at his house all day, concerned himself with showing us everything, and gave us most patiently all the information we asked of him. There we saw all the fruits and all the plants produced in this part of the island: sugar cane, whose juice we sucked all day; fifty different fruits, whose names I don't remember; rubber trees; ipocac; castor oil, which is an important article of trade; 130 different kinds of palm trees; bananas of all kinds. He owns 330 Negroes, and I was really astonished by the affection these slaves seem to have for him. It must also be said that he is one of the most humane of owners and that he will spend hours at the side of a sick Negro to comfort him by his care. What is most unusual is that he practices mainly homeo-

pathic medicine. Still, since there are only four whites on the plantation, he is obliged to be very firm and sometimes he is forced to use the lash on his slaves.

We visited the houses of the Negroes; the workers being out in the fields, there were only about sixty brats about three-fourths, and often almost entirely, naked, crawling among the chickens and pigs. We saw a Negro woman with a splendid figure and a face which, if it had not been jet black, would not have marred the beauty of one of our elegant Parisian ladies.

M. de Ballet, Dalcour's brother-in-law, pointed her out to me and told me her story. She was a house slave and was liked very much by her owners; she was closely watched. But the cook found a way of reaching her heart and after some time the same accident befell her that had happened to the Abbess du Comte Ory. Her master was inclined to forgive her, but the father and mother of the too susceptible Negress demanded that, as punishment, she should be sent to the fields like the ordinary slaves. As for the cook, he was given twenty-five lashes, which did not, however, keep him from cooking his master's dinner that evening. Though there is neither Mayor nor Curé on the plantation, when a Negro man and woman please each other, they generally approach the master to ask permission to be married, and the whole ceremony consists of the master's saying: "Go, my children, and have many of them." The parents of the poor Negress felt themselves disgraced because this ceremony had been omitted.

Dalcour's sugar mill is superb, and, like almost all establishments of the same kind, operates by a very simple process. It consists of crushing the cane under a steam-driven press. The syrup is run off into several boilers, being purified each time, until the point is reached at which the sugar is entirely rid of all impurities. It is then allowed to dry and harden and is put into casks. These barrels have an aperture, and the molasses, which runs out, is collected later.

Dalcour produces 3,000 barrels a year. He also employs some Chinese, but these eat more than they work, and we were shown one of them who was not satisfied with twelve pounds of meat and fruit a day.

The great scourge of these plantations is deliberate arson in the sugar cane fields. In two weeks, five fires were set in the fields.⁹ There is excellent hunting on the plantations for guinea fowl, partridge, quail, and turtle doves. I am sending you some to try to acclimatize at Ferrières.¹⁰ We also shoot agoutis, which look like large rats and are the size of a large rabbit. One of my companions, who was very clumsy and completely unsuccessful in bagging even a single piece of game, seeing an agouti on a tree, stood directly under it in order to be absolutely sure not to miss. He drew near without fear of being seen because the animal had his back turned to him, but at the moment the hunter drew aim, the animal inundated him with a deluge that blinded him completely and forced him to return to the house amidst the laughter of all the spectators.

We went back to spend the night at Matanzas in order to return the next day to Havana. We spent eight hours on the railway for a trip that in France would have taken two. I first thought that since it was very hot they were afraid of wearing out the engine, but when I stuck my head through the carriage door, I noticed to my displeasure two cars upset at the bottom of an embankment twenty meters high. Farther on, there were two or three more and then still others, until I made out that it was an entire train, with a locomotive at the front; fortunately, it was carrying only freight. I was then thoroughly able to appreciate the slowness of the trip and I felt satisfied when I had arrived. But I must say that one cannot find many amenities in our hotel. We have three rooms and live a dog's life, eating revolting meat killed that morning and fighting cocks that died on the field of honor. Since the bill is made out not on the basis of the comforts provided but on the estimated size of the purse of the traveler, we must pay the moderate sum of 100 francs per day, with the other expenses being comparable. The beds have no mattresses; you lie down gently on a webbing without mattress and awaken in the middle of the night to the soft buzzing of mosquitoes. The mixture of guests at the hotel is quite picturesque.

All the male and female singers of the Tacon,¹¹ who practice scales and trills all day long, are there, each one in turn offering to sell you a ticket to his concert—for his own benefit—at a price aver-

aging an ounce of gold for a seat. Add to them some American journalists, some railroad entrepreneurs, a very pleasant lady writer who has come to draw new poetic inspiration from the milk of the coconut, a slaver accompanied by his Newfoundland dog with a black spot on its forehead, and I don't know who else! But that makes the variety of this landscape and I do not complain.

Tomorrow we leave for a coffee plantation and I hope that in my next letter I will have some interesting details to write you. . . .

1. Probably James Carson Brevoort, an artist and member of a socially prominent Dutch family of New York.

2. "There can be no doubt," wrote the Havana correspondent of the *New York Times* on December 21, 1860, "that the environs of this City are infested by as dangerous a set of rascals as ever existed—so much so that our gentry speak of arming themselves when they take their evening drives."

3. Cuba was one of the last great slave markets; it was estimated that despite the illegality of the slave trade, 30,000 Africans were shipped to Cuba in the first nine months of 1860, while nearly 50,000 Chinese coolies arrived alive of the 59,000 who had been shipped. The coolies were technically not slaves, but their condition was "little, if any, better than absolute slavery, and [they] are entirely cut off from all hope of ever returning to their native country." So barbarous was the trade that Congressman Elliot of Massachusetts introduced a bill to bar American participation in it. "When we remember the manner in which [the coolie] was kidnapped," commented the *Times*, "and the fate to which he finds himself irrevocably doomed, it is not surprising that suicide should be so frequently resorted to, or that . . . in consequence of the frequency of this crime, the Asiatic population of the island has not assured all the purposes that their introduction was designed to effect." April 17, July 31, 1860.

4. When Richard Henry Dana was in Cuba, he was told that "it would not do to slog a Coolie. Idolatrous as they are, they have a notion of the dignity of the human body, at least as against strangers, which does not allow them to submit to the indignity of corporal chastisement. If a Coolie is slogged, somebody must die; either the Coolie himself, for they are fearfully given to suicide, or the perpetrator of the indignity, or some one else, according to their strange principles of vicarious punishment." Dana, *To Cuba and Back* (Boston, 1859), p. 99.

5. The port of Matanzas was the main center for the production of raw sugar and had close commercial connections with New York merchants.

6. Alexandre Gabriel Decamps (1803-60), along with Delacroix and Roqueplan, was one of the three great French colorists of the period. He "produced the rarest and most various works of art, and has entirely surpassed all his companions in coloring." Vincent Nolte, *Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres* (New York, 1853), pp. 386-87.

7. Médéric-Louis-Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry (1750-1819), who was born in Martinique, wrote several treatises on the history, laws, and topography of the French West Indies.

8. Baron Georges Léopold Cuvier (1769-1832), the great French naturalist.

9. By law, slaves were not permitted to carry fires or lights into the sugar cane fields. Violation of the law was punishable by death.

10. The Rothschild estate near Paris.

11. The Tacon was the opera house in Havana; it was the largest theater in Latin America, with a seating capacity of 5,000. In the winter of 1860-61 both an Italian opera company and a Spanish Zarzuela troupe performed there. When Frezzolini, who arrived in Cuba on the ship with Rothschild, sang the role of Lucia there on February 19, "the house was a perfect jam." *New York Times*, Mar. 7, 1861.

XXX

Havana, 17 March 61

. . . I haven't anything very interesting to tell you since my last letter, although I spent several days at a coffee plantation where starch and castor oil were also made. All these manufacturing processes were new to me and interested me very much. The plantation is fifteen miles from the railroad and one must go by horse.

Since the train was late, we had to go at night. There was no moon and it was so dark that we were not able to guide our animals and had to let them go where they wanted. Suddenly we heard a

"Who goes there," and a white mass threw itself at the head of the pack horse, upsetting the guide. We thought we were being attacked by thieves, and Brevoort and I were going to fire without waiting to be killed first, when Tolné called out to stop. It's a good thing we did, for it was two soldiers posted to stop the thieves who several days before had killed two other guards. After having parleyed several minutes and having examined our saddle holsters (we had prudently put our guns in our pockets), the guards were satisfied that we were not the ones they were looking for and allowed us to continue. When we arrived at the plantation it was so late that we were no longer being expected and we were received by 'blood-hounds,' who gave us a reception not at all encouraging.

We had resigned ourselves to being devoured or at best to seeking safety with the speed of our horses when fortunately the master, awakened by the barking, came to admit us and put an end to our delicate and embarrassing position. M. de Lauvalle, the owner, is French by origin, and he offered us friendly hospitality in everything, which pleased us in every way. . . .

XXXI

New Orleans, 2 April 61

I arrived here in perfect health, after a rather poor passage. It seems that the ocean has it in for me and that every time I step on a ship it takes pleasure in making it dance the most eccentric jig. Still, I am sick only for the first one or two days, for one grows accustomed to everything. The trip was not long, but it was nevertheless full of surprises.

We had only been gone a couple of hours when a passenger died. He had left New York without wishing to give his name and had remained in his cabin the whole time, drinking only whiskey to keep

him going. It seemed that he wanted to commit suicide in this way; at least that is the explanation that was found in his bag and it satisfied the other passengers. His mortal remains were consigned to the sea; that ceremony is always sadder than the usual burial.

I cannot describe my feelings when the body, sewn up in a shroud, disappeared under the waves, leaving no trace behind. Several hours later we had an emotion of another kind. Our ship was coasting the Florida shores, studded with rocks and low-lying reefs, when the captain thought he saw a distress flag on one of the rocks.

He ordered the bow to be swung around in that direction and approached it as closely as he dared. We could distinctly see a 'schooner' shipwrecked on a rock, and further back on the beach we could see people violently waving bits of cloth. The steamship could not get any closer; the sea was turbulent and we were in the full current of the Gulf Stream—it was perilously dangerous to try to launch a lifeboat on such a rough sea. The first officer came forward and asked for six volunteers to go with him; they left with our most sincere and ardent prayers. For three-quarters of an hour these courageous men struggled against the furious waves which seemed ready at any moment to engulf them and dash them against the rocks. Finally, they reached the beach, gathered a group of the shipwrecked people, and returned to the ship; the boat was overcrowded and the danger much greater.

We followed the fortunes of this drama with ice in our veins. In an instant the fury of the waves pushed them back the distance that it had taken twenty strokes of the oars to cover, and they were forced ever closer to the terrible rocks. An enormous wave approached and engulfed the frail little craft, which completely disappeared. A cry of terror arose from our throats, but suddenly the boat reappeared. Several strokes of the oars pulled it out of danger and all were saved. Two women and three children were put on board, while the brave sailors went back to get the others. After a thousand dangers their efforts were crowned with success and they returned to the ship with two men. They were just in time, for the

sea was swelling more and more and a few seconds later rescuers and shipwrecked would have shared the same terrible fate. These people were the family and troupe of a poor devil who directed a group of strolling players. Their country was the ship, which contained all that they owned. They went from port to port putting on plays.

Their ship had piled up on the shore, and to make the beach they had had to leap into the water without being able to rescue any of their belongings. They were on the deserted beach for eleven days, exposed to the foul weather and to the attacks of wild animals which came at night to howl at them. Their only food was palm roots and a few shellfish gathered up along the edge of the beach. To find water they had to dig down fifteen feet into the sand, using only their hands and a few sticks. They knew there was a lighthouse eighteen miles away; one of the men left to ask for provisions which were callously denied to them. Several ships passed, but did not see or did not want to see their distress signals. They would have died of hunger and despair if our ship had not happened along. They were totally destitute when they came on board. We took up a large subscription for them. They put on an extraordinary shipboard performance. The stage was separated from the room by the same sheet that had been used for the burial the day before.

Herrmann, the famous sleight-of-hand artist, who was one of the passengers, put on some performances for their benefit. This Herrmann is quite a superior fellow: he is extraordinarily talented in his profession, and his great charity has brought him honors from kings and the most flattering recognition from others. He is covered with decorations and medals.

An Israelite by birth, he has remained strongly attached to his religion. After having taken care of his entire family and given more than 800,000 francs to the poor in the various countries in which he has traveled, he is going to retire at Hamburg with a fortune of a million.¹

The excitement of the voyage made one poor devil go out of his mind. He thought that he was going to be thrown overboard and

he came to me for protection. I reassured him as best I could and I kept him with me so that he would not be tempted to do something crazy.

We also had two very pretty Spanish ladies on board; one, the wife of a Havanan, the other, the widow of a Mexican general who had been poisoned by the opposition party. But unfortunately they were followed by a clever thief, and they had not been on land an hour when they were robbed of all their jewels and money. . . .

*

1. In 1858, Alexander Herrmann (1844-96), "the celebrated prestidigitator of His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia," gave a notable series of performances in Brussels. He held several benefits for the poor, and "he crowned his philanthropies with a farewell performance for the benefit of the Jewish Welfare Society; our poor will cherish his memory for years to come." *Archives Israélites*, XVIII (1858), 359.

XXXII

New Orleans, 5 April 61

The entrance to New Orleans is rather unusual, with all those immense three-decked ships drawn up alongside each other; they look like bucentaurs¹ and those ancient Spanish galleons. They are veritable floating fortresses, alongside which our ships look like pygmies.

New Orleans is a very French city that has kept the customs of the mother country. In spite of the Anglo-Saxon element, which is beginning to dominate, there is still an old French city. I asked what language I should speak in the city and I was told French on the right of Canal Street, English on the left.

The creole women are extraordinarily beautiful and exceedingly

lovely. They have the most beautiful eyes and the most beautiful feet in the world; they are generally uneducated, with the exception of those who have been brought up in Europe. Their conversation consists always of banalities. At the racetrack, where they got together last week, they occupied—decked out in their finest clothes—a platform like that at Chantilly. There were two or three hundred of them, each more beautiful than the other, and all of them in society. I have never seen a more beautiful or more gracious spectacle.

I have been admirably received. In Newport and New York I had become acquainted with the most important families, who sought to make my visit pleasant. The E² . . . and the Johnstuds [*sic*], whom Alphonse knows, gave me a dinner at Lake Pontchartrain to which they took pains to invite all the most delightful people here. Moreover, Mr. J. McCall,³ a rich planter whom I had met at Newport, has made it his business to do me the honors of his city and of his state. The other day he took me to his plantation eighty miles above New Orleans, and he had invited several people to accompany me.

We left on the *Hiberville*, which carried a load of cotton in addition to its passengers. We were all up above in one of the rooms reserved for the planters, smoking peacefully for several hours and chatting about the accidents that happen to Mississippi riverboats.

They were speaking of shipboard fires and I said it seemed to me that there was great carelessness, having seen just two hours before a passenger throw a cigar butt not far from the cotton bales. 'There is no danger,' one of the officers had told me. At the very moment I recounted this story to my companions, one of the stewards burst through the door crying, 'Fire, fire!!'

You can imagine that we didn't waste much time thinking. We wanted to leave by the stairway on the left, but the heat was too great and smoke billowed around us. We had either to go all the way around or to jump about twelve feet—which was our preference.

We were all completely calm and ready to jump into the water if that should become necessary. The scene on board the ship was one of complete disorder; some were running about, others were

trying to rescue a pack or a trunk; many women were shrieking and crying but took good care not to faint.

As I had foreseen, the cotton had caught fire. They tried to hose down the bales, but, as usual, the pump was not working and nearly ten minutes passed before it was possible to pour water on the flames. In an instant the smoke was so dense that one of the mechanics had to leave his post. We should all have been drowned or roasted if it had not been for the presence of mind of the pilot, who, seeing that the wind was blowing the flames into the interior of the ship, turned it about in such a way that the flames were blown the other way. Naturally we put on steam and maneuvered to run aground on the riverbank. We got out of it with only the loss of about a hundred bales of cotton that were thrown into the water.

During all the excitement created by danger, you feel no emotion whatever, but when it is all over, your heart is full of weakness, and it is also full of gratitude toward the Supreme Being who saved you from the danger. I cannot tell you how rapidly the fire spread after it had broken out in the bales of cotton. I saw a cotton warehouse containing 2,000 bales burn here, and never have I seen such a fire.

Mr. McCall's plantation is well kept up and managed. He has 250 Negroes and I must freely admit that they seem better fed, in better health, and happier than many of our peasants and certainly than the free Negroes.

There is a striking difference from the Cuban slaves, a difference similar to that between a stupid peasant from the mountains and the intelligent worker from the city. I cannot deny that the Negroes are punished when they misbehave, but it is also true that the greatest care is taken of their health and even of their welfare. Each plantation has its own hospital, its own doctor. The Negroes do not work on Sunday, and as a reward they are often taken by wagon to a nearby town where they can dance and amuse themselves as much as they like. A Negro prefers being given twenty-five lashes to being kept in on Sundays.

The slavery question in the United States is not understood in Europe; still less is it understood in the Northern states, where po-

litical passions and inherited prejudices obscure judgment on this issue. Even I, in New York, did not have an exact picture of the situation, and it is only as a result of being here that I can form an impartial account of the situation.

The South could not do anything but secede; the aggressive element in the North would have destroyed and ruined them, and they would not perhaps have had the strength and resources they have now.

There is no going back now on that decision, and no matter what the administration does, the Southern states will defend their independence to their last penny and their last drop of blood.

The European powers should intervene in order to prevent a shedding of blood that will be useless as well as prejudicial to our trade. I am at the very center of the flow of news, which arrives continuously and contradicts itself with each new report.

We expect the bombardment of Charlestown [sic]. How fascinating it is to see this new government being formed! People enlist in droves, but money is scarce. . . .

1. Venetian state galleys.

2. Probably the Eustises, who are mentioned again in a later letter (XXXIV). Eustis, John Slidell's son-in-law and a member of the Louisiana state legislature, was part of the circle in which Rothschild traveled.

3. McCall owned Evan Hall, one of the great plantations of Louisiana. Russell, the correspondent of the *London Times*, visited it in June 1861 and was intrigued. "The more one sees of a planter's life," he wrote, "the greater is the conviction that its charms come from a particular turn of mind, which is separated by a wide interval from modern ideas in Europe. The planter is a denomadized Arab;—he has fixed himself with horses and slaves in a fertile spot, where he guards his women with Oriental care, exercises patriarchal sway, and is at once fierce, tender, and hospitable." *Diary*, p. 285.

XXXIII

New Orleans, 20 April 61

. . . The political news is so important that it completely occupies people's minds, so much so that there is little inclination to be concerned with trivial news or with chitchat. Nevertheless, people continue to be very friendly to me and they are anxious to show me that the South is not inhabited by savages. Indeed, I have never in all my travels seen anything which looks as much like Paris.

It is true that the many creole families, which came here at various times to seek their fortune or to escape from political and religious persecution, have kept up those old traditions that, unfortunately, tend daily to disappear from our own country.

Plantation life surrounded by Negroes is the life of a country gentleman, the greatest of comfort but without the slightest luxury. Houses in New Orleans are generally small, but elegant and comfortable, and entertaining is done very well. What is most characteristic of society here is horse racing. It lasts for a week, but there is only one race each day and it isn't very interesting because of the small number of horses entered. But the racetrack is the meeting place of all the ladies in town and I cannot tell you what a pretty picture they present. It isn't the four-legged creatures who are the heroes of the day; it is rather the two-legged ones with whom one is much more concerned.

Since the track is the property of a special group—something like our Jockey Club of Paris—the members admit only gentlemen to their company, and they have a large and beautiful gallery reserved exclusively for themselves and their 'invited guests.' This gallery is connected with another one where all the ladies gather. Under this gallery is a large hall where a magnificent 'lunch' can be had by the

ladies at any time, paid for by the members of the Society, who, as you can see, are very gallant.

The great mania in both the Confederacy and the Union is the organizing of fairs. The women give themselves over to these matters with an ardor worthy of our most indefatigable charity collectors. If you don't go, you are badly treated; if you do go, you are overwhelmed. I must admit, though, that the salesgirls are very pretty and that they all have what it takes to clean you out. Some sell; others handle lotteries; the prettiest are at the refreshment stand or at the supper table. I saw one of these women ask 25 piastres for a chicken wing!!! They do a very good business for their favorite organizations. One of the cutest inventions is the post office run by three young girls, one of whom is an acquaintance of Alphonse, Mademoiselle Gustie. Under this novel administration, the most extraordinary correspondence is carried on, but always under the cloak of anonymity and with disguised handwriting. This is the great amusement of the unmarried girls. So everyone goes to look for his letters. You should know that I have received several, some in verse, others in prose; generally the verse was either plagiarized or bad.

One of these letters struck me first with its witty impudence, then by the care that the post-office ladies had taken to have me notice it. It was a model declaration, signed The Pearl. I amused myself by answering it—I enclose a copy of my answer—and I was rewarded by another letter. For several days I was quite intrigued. The young girls of New Orleans have very little solid instruction or education, but they have a great deal of natural wit.

The great diversion in New Orleans is to dine at Lake Pontchartrain, and it is indeed a charming place. If you like to amuse yourself by fishing, you can catch 200 in two hours. I have never in my life seen anything like it. But all these amusements are now forgotten in the concern with the war.

What is really quite astonishing here, or rather what is not so astonishing, is the high position occupied by our co-religionists, or rather those who are born in the faith and who, having married

Christians, without being converted have forgotten the practices of their fathers.¹

Benjamin,² the Attorney General of the Confederate states, is perhaps the finest mind on the continent; Hyams,³ the Governor of Louisiana, and Moyses,⁴ the Secretary of the Interior, etc.—what is extraordinary is how all these men have a Jewish heart and show an interest in me because I represent the greatest Jewish house in the world. Hyams, for example, who is a man of the first rank and on whom rests all the work of governing Louisiana, comes to see me almost every day—or has me come to visit him—and has given me virtually a course in American politics and in Southern politics. He has read me I don't know how many chapters of books written twenty years ago, so that I can properly understand the real issues; he gives me all the pros and cons, making me read all the statistics that he is able to get by virtue of his position, and giving me all the information there is on the tariff question, which is now the major issue of the day. Thanks to him and to other obliging people, I can flatter myself with the thought that I understand the American question more deeply than any foreigner and even many natives.

The other day we had a new little scare. The storms in New Orleans are like those of the Antilles; they are terrible—there is nothing like them in Europe. The lightning is red and lights up the whole city; the thunderclaps are fearful.

In the middle of the night a storm of this kind broke out over the city and woke everybody up; it was simply impossible to sleep. I was lying in my bed half-awake, when I suddenly found myself on my feet outside the bed. I learned the next day that the shock had been felt everywhere and that we had had an earthquake. You can imagine how that awakened me. I lay down again, but in a few moments I heard a dreadful noise accompanied by a sudden flash of light. I was sure that lightning had struck our house and thrown me out of the window. The gas pipe of the house opposite us had been struck by lightning; in five minutes the whole house was aflame. You should have seen the men and women rushing out, wearing

whatever clothes they could find and floundering in a veritable river of mud.

We stay here till Thursday, go up the Mississippi as far as Memphis, and take the railroad to Louisville in order to avoid Cairo, where the Republican troops are concentrated; from there we go to Cincinnati, Buffalo, and New York, by way of the Erie Railroad. I have booked passage on the *Uerna* for June 5, so that I hope very much to have the pleasure of being with you by June 20, a pleasure that will be very welcome indeed after an absence of nineteen months.

I am writing you a separate letter on politics, which is even more complicated here than in Europe; but I cannot urge you enough to use all the influence of our family and our friends to recognize the Republic of the Southern Confederacy as quickly as possible. You will tell me that my ideas have changed; when you will have read my other letter, you will tell me that I am right, for in this way one would stop both the shedding of blood and an immense destruction of property.

1. I. J. Benjamin, a Jewish traveler who was in New Orleans in 1860, also observed the relatively high social and political position of the Jews of the South. It was due, he argued, to the fact that all "white inhabitants felt themselves united with, and closer to, other whites" than to Negroes, as well as to the fact that the Jews "did not do the humbler kinds of work which the Negro did." In the North, Jews sought "political office less because their official position is neither so highly respected nor so profitable as that of merchant, manufacturer or craftsman." Not all felt this was desirable. "One of the evils which afflicts the Louisianians, they say," Russell wrote, "is the preponderance and influence of South Carolina Jews, and Jews generally." The Jew in New Orleans was no doubt more visible because of his elevated position, but he seemed willing to take his chances. "In New Orleans, talent is the passport to distinction," wrote Joseph Lyons in his diary in 1834; "Oh Lord I wish I was there." Benjamin, *Three Years in America, 1859-1862*, Charles Reznikoff, trans. (Philadelphia, 1956), I, 76; Russell, *Diary*, p. 242; Charles Reznikoff, *The Jews of Charleston* (Philadelphia, 1950), p. 105.

2. Judah P. Benjamin, who was married to a Catholic.

3. Henry M. Hyams (1809-75) was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and in the 1820's moved to New Orleans, where he practiced law and engaged in banking. Originally a Whig, he switched to the Democrats in 1854, served four years in the state senate, and was lieutenant-governor from 1859 to 1864.

4. Edwin Warren Moise (1811-68) was also born in Charleston. He was a member of the Louisiana legislature and served as Speaker of the House for several years. In 1861 he was made judge of the State Court and then attorney-general of Louisiana. He was, said Russell, "a vehement politician." *Diary*, p. 232.

XXXIV

New Orleans, 28 April 61

. . . Here it is a month since I came to New Orleans and I counted only on spending several days here. But the political events which have occurred with such rapidity were of such passionate interest to me that I thought it my duty to prolong my visit and to make a thorough study of this so difficult and delicate question. Having been in both the North and the South, having heard all the conceivable arguments in favor of each side, I had the desire to form a completely independent opinion. I am going to try to communicate it to you, although to do it in writing is very difficult. To do this I must start with events that took place some time ago.

You know that the former United States were made up of two great parties, the Democratic and the Republican. These two parties were further subdivided into groups, only a few, but extremely violent ones. The Abolitionists were the extremist Republicans; the 'fire-eaters' or secessionists, the extremist Democrats. Fanaticism and the extremist parties always win out, and, exactly as I expressed my forebodings to you a very long time ago, abolitionism on one side and

secession on the other dragged along the moderate neutrals despite themselves. The point of departure was, as you know, the slavery question. Naturally, this institution, on which the wealth of the South was based, was defended to the limit by those who profited from it. Two reasons pushed the people of the North to seek to destroy slavery by any means. The first, which was advanced by those who wished to dazzle, to win over the chivalrous hearts and gain the sympathies of Europe, was a simple humanitarian reason. In a free country like America, there must be no slaves, and complete equality must reign in all ranks of society. The proof that this reason was not sincere is that the Abolitionists spent millions to incite uprisings among the slaves or to induce them to flee their masters, but let them die of hunger when they were free and gave them no means of improving themselves morally. But the real sentiment that guided them, and that they did not dare to admit at the time, was the spirit of leveling; everyone must be equal in abjection. They cannot tolerate someone in the South having 200 arms for his use while they have only their own two. This sentiment was the first seed of the social revolution which is at this very moment taking giant strides behind the political revolution. You will recall that I have for a long time been speaking to you about this. The cause of the South had many supporters in the North, but these supporters were more inspired with self-interest than one believed; they knew that with the support of the Southern states they could retain power. This state of affairs might still have lasted for many years, if the two divisions—North and South—of the Democratic Party had not split at the last convention. Each supporting a different candidate, they abdicated power to a third thief, Lincoln, the choice of the Republicans. The cotton states understood that there could be nothing more for them, no security in a union in which the chief of state and all his ministers were their most implacable enemies.

They seceded; unfortunately for them, secession was handled as everything is handled on this continent, illegally and boastfully, and their braggadocio alienated many moderates and prevented the slave states of the Center from joining them immediately.

The Republican administration, thinking it had to handle only a few states with a small population, and supposing that even in these states Unionist sentiment was still very deep-rooted and was silent only in the face of violence and the coercion of some demagogic leaders, began to take repressive measures, something that the Constitution of the United States did not authorize.

The first effect of these measures was to make secessionist sentiment unanimous in the Gulf states and to antagonize the Center states. The latter made a final effort to bring the two sides together, but they foundered on two counts. After having promised to evacuate Fort Sumpter [*sic*], the administration tried to supply it. Several warships appeared in the harbor; the population of Charleston was excited and was perhaps too quick to bombard the fort and capture it. The first cannon shot decided the issue.

Lincoln issued a proclamation ordering the rebels to disperse in twenty days and to restore the flag of the United States on pain of being punished and coerced by force of arms. The situation began to take shape clearly. The whole extremist South was united; the North was becoming more so, but it still had in its midst many supporters of Southern rights. Financial interests took care of that. The great question over which the representatives of the South and North had fought desperately for thirty years was the tariff issue.

The South was a producer of raw materials and a consumer; the North was a manufacturer. Free trade or at least a very low tariff was the desire of the South. The North fought for protection, often even for prohibitive tariffs. As a result of the old tariff law, the Eastern and New England states furnished manufactured goods to the other states which the latter could get in Europe at a reduction in cost of 25 to 30 per cent.

As soon as the Republican administration (which favored protective tariffs) came to power, Congress passed the Morrill Tariff, which raised rates to an unheard-of level.¹ The states that seceded responded with a great reduction in the same rates, forecasting complete abolition of the tariff at the time when the restoration of peace would make it unnecessary for them to have recourse to emergency measures.

The North understood that if secession persisted and made progress, it was lost. Who then would buy Pennsylvania iron, or New England manufactured goods? Not the South, for it would buy in the markets of Europe and would find ways of transporting its purchases to the Western states. From that moment on, the South had no more supporters in the North; Republicans and Democrats rallied around the Union flag. Patriotism and old memories counted for something, but believe me when I say that the prime mover was the pocketbook.

It was therefore necessary at any cost to put an end to this spirit of rebellion which, making additional progress each day, was bringing the North closer to ruin. The states of the West and East offered the government their troops and their treasuries. No sacrifice was too much for them, but this call reverberated in a different manner in the states that had still not made up their minds. Virginia seceded at once and, bringing to the Confederacy the support of its large population and its inexhaustible granaries, sought to make up for lost time by seizing the federal arsenals. Tennessee and Kentucky responded by saying that not a single person was available to aid the administration in coercing the Southern states, but that they would find a hundred thousand to defend them. Governor Jackson² of Missouri, on which no one was counting, for that state—completely surrounded by abolitionist populations—is only half slave, replied to Lincoln 'that his request was illegal, unconstitutional and diabolical.' Maryland rose in insurrection, and federal troops had to fight their way through Baltimore amidst a deluge of cobblestones which killed several of them and injured an even greater number.³

Here in Louisiana—and I am told it is the same in the other states—there is a veritable armed uprising. Everyone from the ages of fourteen to seventy-five who is able to bear arms is enlisting in the different companies. The young people are at the disposal of the President of the Confederacy, to be sent wherever the service of the state demands. The old folks remain in the cities to defend their homes against any surprise attack.⁴

The sons of the best families, accustomed to a soft and indolent life, sign up as common soldiers and, packs on their backs, leave with

their companies to defend Pensacola, attack Fort Pickens, or fight in Virginia. People speak only of battles, armament, attack. Even the women, who, without hesitation, have given their sons and their brothers to the common cause, work all day sewing sandbags and cartridge boxes. Miss Eustace [*sic*] alone has made 140 hoods to protect the soldiers from mosquitoes. One company that had only recently been formed did not have time to get uniforms; it had received the order to proceed at once to Pensacola. The wife of the Governor with twenty other ladies bought the cloth, took their 'sewing machines,' embarked with the troops, and when the company arrived at Mobile it was fully equipped.

The most important women in the city—and there are some who are very pretty—have volunteered to care for the wounded. There is, in short, a strong determination here to resist to the last gasp any foreign invasion. And, as I've told you, this is not true of this place alone.

In Texas, for example, they have seized all the forts and several ships belonging to the United States, and they have sent here fifty or sixty men who were taken prisoner. These were treated very well and returned to the North.

Combined with the 'Border States,' the seceding states will have a population of from 10 to 12 million; this is almost half the population of the United States.

Leaving aside the discussion of whether federal law sanctions or denies the right of secession—a discussion that either side can turn to its own advantage with a little subtle quibbling—it seems to me that when America held out its hand to all people wishing to revolt against their rulers; when it supported with its voice and with its pen the dubious rights of Hungary and of Italy; when its legists and its orators proved that in cases of oppression, rebellion is not only a right but a duty; when it declared a hundred times that the states were sovereign and that no state had the right to encroach upon the interests of another—after all this, how can the North now prevent thirteen states from seceding when it is in their interest to do so? And even if they do not have the legal right to do so, there is the

natural law that Congress has invoked a hundred times. If 12 million people want to secede, you cannot stop them. So, the war that the North is going to wage against the South is an unjust, barbarous, fratricidal war. In order to save a few pennies for its arrogant manufacturers, members of even the same family are going to find themselves opposing each other; old friends will cut each other's throats; rivers of blood will flow. The North and the South will attack each other like two locomotives under a full head of steam meeting on the same track. Nothing will be able to satiate the brutal passion for vengeance but death and destruction. When the two sections have exhausted all their resources, when they have seen the flower of their youth die, when millions have been engulfed in the bottomless pit of civil war, they will find themselves again at the same point at which they started and now, moreover, with a yawning gap between them. It will be necessary to end the war, to write a treaty, to grant mutual concessions; for, no matter who the conqueror will be, there will be no vanquished. Each side will struggle to the bitter end for the rights it claims to have.

On the one hand, all the South asks is to be left in peace and to be allowed to govern itself as it sees fit. It will attack only to defend itself; it is insane, therefore, to think that the South can be subjugated. On the other hand, the blindness of the North has reached such a point that it wants to fight the South despite everything, and it hopes to bring it to its knees by blockading its ports. But it is not the South alone that it will be wronging—all Europe, which needs the South's cotton and its other products, will be wronged.

It is therefore in Europe's own interest, as well as in that of humanity and civilization, to intervene in one way or another. It must use every effort to stop this obstinate and useless war. The sooner the great European powers recognize the Confederacy, which can invoke in its own favor the theory of *fait accompli*, the sooner they will have fulfilled a mission of peace and humanity. Even more, it is in their own interest to do so, for the independence of the South will bring about free trade and will create an immense outlet for all our products and for those of England. On the other hand, the longer

the war lasts and the more embittered the hatreds become, the more difficult it will be to reconcile these onetime brothers, now enemies.

I am therefore begging you to use all your influence to have the Confederacy recognized as quickly as possible. It is the greatest impartiality that leads me to speak in this way, for I have not allowed myself to be influenced by any consideration other than those of humanity and good sense; and if my original ideas have been modified a bit, it is because circumstances have changed. Events have moved forward, and I alone have convinced myself of everything I say here. . . .

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1. The Morrill Tariff Act, which raised tariff rates particularly on iron and wool, was passed on March 2, 1861, in consequence of the secession of seven Southern states. It had been passed by the House of Representatives during the session of 1859-60, but was not taken up by the Senate in the same session. Its tariff schedule, therefore, had been drawn up before any serious expectation of war was entertained.

2. Claiborne Fox Jackson (1806-62), elected Governor of Missouri in 1860.

3. April 19, 1861.

4. On February 14, 1861, a state militia was formed in Louisiana consisting of "active" and "sedentary" forces, the latter—men over forty—required to serve only in their own parish. On April 18 the Confederate Secretary of War requisitioned 3,000 Louisiana soldiers for one year of service. By April 1861 New Orleans was a city under arms.

XXXV

Boulogne, Sunday, 23 June 61

My dear Cousin,

I told you of my happy arrival in Paris, but I have been able to write you only a few words in all the confusion of the first few days; and I profit from the first hours of freedom granted me by the

countryside to commend myself to your remembrance in a little more leisurely fashion. Since I continue to suffer a great deal from my eyes, Mr. Mayraques is kind enough to hold my pen for me. It has been a long time since I had the pleasure of giving you the details of my journey, and events in America have moved fast since my last letter.

I left that country in a state of extreme disorder, and I cannot tell you how calm Paris life seems to me after these political excitements which, though they do not touch you directly, involve you in spite of yourself and force you to take the interests of others as much to heart as if they were your own. My voyage from New York was a mess; it was handled with as much shoving as a maritime cargo shipment; it was far too disagreeable. It is called a summer crossing, but you must furnish yourself with the thickest furs, which barely protect you against the cold and the damp. At one point you find yourself surrounded by mountains of ice which have detached themselves from the North Pole and move along toward the south; at another you find yourself surrounded by the densest fog. Further on, a nasty wind rises and makes you dance like a jumping jack, producing the most disastrous effects on your stomach.

I had a cabin above the engine. One night—at two in the morning—I was awakened by a terrible cracking sound. I jumped quickly out of bed (one dresses rapidly at sea) and left my cabin. The engine was out of order and the steam had made its way into my cabin—a few minutes more and I would have suffocated. But what the devil! All these little incidents only make the voyage interesting. I don't think, my dear cousin, that I have written you in detail since my stay in New Orleans. Since then I have traveled through the whole South, West, and North; I have paid close attention to the course of events; I saturated myself in the ideas which prevail in the different sections of the country. I have been able to form an impartial judgment in the midst of the exaggerations of the two opposing parties.

Now the issue is joined between the North and the South. It is a struggle of giants, or rather of bulldogs; a struggle in which no one will yield, and in which, after months, perhaps years, of bitter fighting, the two sections will find themselves once again where they

began, but both of them now enfeebled, having exhausted their resources, ruined the country, and sacrificed the best of their blood, and having obtained no other result than that of digging an even deeper abyss between them.

The Constitution of the United States is such that a good lawyer can easily make out a case for or against it. The South claims it has the right to secede; in New Orleans, a foreigner who listens to these arguments will be persuaded by them. The North asserts that the union of the states is an unassailable principle; if you go back to New York you will find that this argument, too, is completely convincing.

I don't want to discuss the question from the legal point of view; I want only to give you an idea of the facts and my evaluation of the conflict now under way.

Several Southern states, as you know, were purchased by the original states, which were mainly in the North and West. These were Louisiana, ceded by France for the sum of 80 million; Florida, bought from Spain for 60 million; Texas; and New Mexico. In order to keep these states, the federal government has been obliged to spend additional large sums of money and to sacrifice a great number of troops to expel the Indians. It made all these sacrifices in order to possess the Gulf of Mexico and to be master of the mouth of the Mississippi. As the Constitution says that all sections integrated into the United States must have equal rights, these new states were put on the same footing as the old, were given all the privileges the others possessed, including the theory of state sovereignty.

This theory, which is one of the important aspects of absolute liberty, presented no danger to the existence of the federal government so long as each state was too weak to defend itself and complete unity was necessary for defense against foreign invasion or enemies from within, so long as their interests seemed to be the same and the population did not attain the stage of development that it now has. Today the Southern states, which had been delighted to make use of the money and power of the North to promote and defend themselves, find that their interests are no longer the same.

I leave to one side the slavery question—to which I will return later—which has been the major pretext for secession; but it has been only a pretext and is now of secondary importance. The real reason that pushed the Southern states to secession was the tariff question. The South is merely a primary producer and consumer; the West and the North and above all the East are manufacturing areas, and they are in great need of strong protection. The South could supply itself in Europe with everything it needs at prices 25 to 40 per cent below what it has paid up to now. It claims that these duties are of no profit to it; they enter into the pockets of the Northern manufacturers. It wants, therefore, to be exempted from these duties. The elimination of or even a considerable reduction in these duties would utterly ruin the provinces of the East, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, which would not be able to compete with the cheap prices of England and even of France. Thousands of men would find themselves without work and as a result would threaten the fortunes and even the existence not only of those who employ them, but of any merchants and manufacturers who find themselves in their midst; the danger of social revolution would be imminent, and the North must avoid it at any cost.

This question of the tariff has been discussed in the deliberative assemblies for more than twenty years, and in spite of the efforts of the South, in spite of the majority which its supporters in the North gave it, it tended rather toward protectionism than free trade. A Republican President having been elected, the South thought that its cause was lost, that the encroachments on its principles, being protected by the federal government, would become greater each day. It therefore preferred an immediate struggle to being paralyzed by the policies of the President.

In accordance with the theory of state sovereignty, the South has declared that since the federal government has not lived up to the terms of its compact and has threatened its liberties, it has the right to secede; and it has done so—pushed to this extreme position by ambitious politicians, who exploit for their own profit the passions of the masses and who hope in this way to retain the power that

escaped them owing to the election of the Republican candidate.

The North says that certain states have the right to secede if the majority of the states assembled in a general convention permit them to do so, but that they cannot do it without this authorization. It says that union is one of the principles of the Constitution and that it must be maintained at any price. And in truth, if it is not maintained, the North will cease to exist as a nation. If the principle of secession is recognized, there is no reason why—in the two new confederations that would be formed—there should not be separation of any state which happened not to be satisfied; or, within a single state, secession of cities or of counties. Anglo-Saxon America would thereupon be reduced by the operation of this unfortunate principle to the miserable situation that Spanish South America now finds itself in. Even supposing that things would not go so far, all the advantages would be found on the side of the South and the North would not have any outlets: 1—an imaginary and geographical line being the only separation between two countries of the same origin, the same race, and the same language, the most trivial question could plunge the country into war again; 2—why did the North spend millions and fight many years to have the South in the Union? Certainly not out of philanthropic feeling toward the people who live there, but rather to be master of all the ports on the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico,¹ as well as those of the Pacific, from Canada to the Rio Grande, as well as to have at the mouth of the Mississippi a guaranteed outlet for the products of the West. In recognizing the Southern Confederacy, the other states would commit themselves to the good will of a rival nation which, one fine day, might block all commerce in order to get some new concessions.

The North would be committing moral suicide. It prefers therefore to destroy itself weapons in hand, with a chance at preservation, than to die of a lingering illness.

Many people think the struggle won't last long because of the important question of the 'Almighty dollar.' But it is precisely the 'Almighty dollar' that will prolong the struggle.

You see, therefore, my dear cousin, that it is a life-and-death ques-

tion for the North. It will make the greatest sacrifices and will yield nothing. It is unanimous on this question—Republicans and Democrats fight side by side, but from a different point of view.

The Republican who restricts the extension of slavery, not from love of the Negroes but in order to give more territory to the whites, really wants to push back the slaves within the limits of the cotton states and to free those of the Middle states. In the blindness of political passion, he feels he is strong enough to achieve this goal.

The Democrat fights for the reconstitution of the Union and only for that; he wants to give the South every possible concession in order to get it to re-enter the Union. He does not want to make of it a conquered country, but he does not want to face any hidden dangers from it.

The question has been so envenomed, the facts so distorted by those who find their advantage to lie in civil war, that the two sections of the country do not understand each other, do not know their mutual intentions; and the longer they go on, the less they will understand each other. Because political party considerations are getting mixed up in it, one will soon forget what started it all; and, as I have already seen, everything will become a question of personalities and pride. I have traveled through the whole South, and I found complete unanimity in favor of secession: the more or less imaginary injuries at the hands of the North loom larger and larger in the minds of the secessionists, and very distinguished men—generally peaceable and calm—have told me that they prefer to live under the liberal government of Louis Napoleon rather than submit to the unbearable oppression of the North. They say that they will fight to their last breath, will spill their last drop of blood, and—what is most important—will spend their last cent. On the other hand, mediation by foreign powers will only exacerbate the question. In the North I was told that if it should become necessary the slave would be urged to insurrection and a slave rebellion would be aroused in the South.

So you see that this is a struggle that has no escape; with people so determined and with principles so incompatible, reunion is im-

possible, secession no less so. The North, with twenty million people and much more money, will have the upper hand, but eight million people can prolong the struggle for many years.³

I do not see any possibility of a reconciliation, short of some event, which cannot now be foreseen, in the decrees of Providence.

1. "Shall We Have Mexico?" asked the *New York Times* on December 26, 1860—and it devoutly hoped for an affirmative reply. The acquisition of Mexico, it said, would be indemnification for the loss of Southern trade, and if its annexation required disruption of the Union the price was not too high. "It is a consolation to know that that sad event would remove the last obstruction to the consummation of the obvious policy of the American Republic."

2. Rothschild's anticipation of future events was remarkably similar to the forecast and the policy recommendations for the French government made by the author of the pamphlet *France, Mexico, and the Confederate States*: "The northern idea of the abolition of slavery, by making the negro food for powder or by exiling him from his home to die of hunger, is now thoroughly understood in Europe. Our notions of philanthropy and our moral sense alike revolt from these ferocious exaggerations of the love of liberty. . . . [The American War] can be useful to us only if the North and South part company definitively; and for these reasons: 1. The Confederate States will be our allies, and will guarantee us against attack by the North. 2. Mexico, developed by our efforts, and sheltered from the attacks of the North, will reward all our hopes. 3. Our factories will be assured the supplies which they absolutely require. . . . [The North] cannot and will not absorb the South. We see, then, that neither peace nor absorption nor conquest is possible. There is nothing left but secession at the end of the war." M. M. Chevalier, *France, Mexico, and the Confederate States*, William Henry Hurlbut, trans. (New York, 1863), pp. 14-15. Hurlbut, however, doubts that the pamphlet was written by Chevalier, the noted French economist.

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